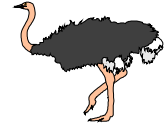


# STRAUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



Volume 3 Number 2

Newsletter

February 2002



## "Soldiers in a War That Never Ends"

### The Kruger and Firemen's Memorial

*New York, March, 1908*

*My Dear Sir:*

*The General Committee of the Kruger and Firemen's Memorial Fund has been formed for the purpose not only of erecting a monument to the memory of members of the Fire Department of New York City who have gone to heroic deaths in saving the lives and property of their fellow citizens, but also of establishing a permanent trust fund the income from which will be used in providing for needy firemen's widows and for the care and education of firemen's orphans.*

*While heroes in the Army and Navy have been honored, the heroes of our own Fire Department have been neglected, and it is the belief of the Committee that every New Yorker will be glad to participate in this movement which appeals directly to the civic pride of the residents of Greater New York.*

These words were written in 1908, almost one hundred years ago. The devastating terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11<sup>th</sup> refocus our appreciation of the dedication, courage and selfless public service of our fire-fighters.

The Kruger and Firemen's Memorial was first suggested in 1908 by the late Bishop Potter. He preached a sermon at the funeral of Deputy Fire Chief Charles W. Kruger who lost his life while fighting a fire. The memorial's purpose soon became that of honoring all of New York's fallen firemen. Isidor Straus

served on the Kruger and Firemen's Memorial Committee and became its chairman in 1910.

The pink New Jersey granite and pink-white Knoxville marble monument was erected on 100<sup>th</sup> Street at Riverside Drive by H. Van Buren Magonigle, architect. It is in the form of a votive tablet twenty five feet long, twenty feet high and eight feet deep. It is flanked by two statues symbolic of Duty; a mother seated next to a fire hydrant,



holding a fire helmet and raincoat in her lap, comforting her young son, and Sacrifice; a woman holding the body of her dead husband. There is a flight of steps leading down to a broad platform from which a wide ramped pathway descends to the level of Riverside Drive. Flanking the steps are two granite walls to retain the bank on each side, surmounted by marble balustrades. On the easterly side of the monument, facing the street, there is a carved inscription:

**TO THE MEN  
OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY  
OF NEW YORK  
WHO DIED AT THE CALL OF DUTY  
SOLDIERS IN A WAR THAT NEVER ENDS  
THIS MEMORIAL IS DEDICATED  
BY THE PEOPLE OF A GRATEFUL CITY**

#### Inside this issue:

- **Nathan Straus Pasteurized Milk Laboratory**
- **Profiles: Donald Blun Straus**
- **Friends of Straus Park**
- **And much more.....**

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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 Chairman of the Board: Paul A. Kurzman**

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have left us all with shock and anger. Even in World War II, the 48 states of mainland America were not attacked, and civilian lives were not lost by an assault on our soil. The perpetrators of this evil must be found and punished, and our free country must be made secure from repetition of this moral perfidy.

But I have another fear. It is that Arab-Americans (and persons of Moslem faith) may now suffer harm and blanket prejudice from their fellow Americans. In the newspapers and on television we already can see evidence of such indiscriminate bias.

After a trip to Talbotton Georgia last fall with fellow Strauses, I was reminded of the welcome that Lazarus and Sara had received - as Jews emigrating from oppression in Europe - when they arrived with their four young children, Isidor, Hermine, Nathan and Oscar. Laws restrictive to Jews in Germany and France had been enacted in 1806, sharply curtailing their rights as citizens. And after the liberal forces of Western Europe failed to achieve constitutional government in 1848, Lazarus knew that his family would need to come to America to enjoy liberty and equality.

Hence, my great, great grandfather left Otterberg in 1852 - exactly 150 years ago. And he came to America for the same reasons that our neighbors and coworkers from Arab nations have come here: to experience political, religious and economic freedom. In our collective reaction to what was recently perpetrated by a few, I hope we will not generalize to the many, and that our brother and sister immigrants from the Near East will continue to enjoy the same opportunities here today that our family did when they came ashore. Working to ensure such a spirit of fairness is not only American. I think it also is part of our family's legacy, of our heritage, as fortunate descendants of Sara and Lazarus Straus.



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

In response to the horrific events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, I am reminded that our world has shifted. In many ways, we have grown up as a nation and as a people. We have been forced to acknowledge and accept our own mortality. Now, as never before, we realize the fragility of life.

Suddenly, the history of those who came before us seems more important. We cherish the legacy of social awareness, responsibility and generosity bequeathed by our ancestors. And the goal of honoring that legacy takes on a profound importance. The mission of the Straus Historical Society is to research, document and preserve evidence of the past in order to remind us of who our ancestors were, where they came from, how they lived, and the associations and institutions they created.

Our country has taken an heroic stand in the wake of a great tragedy. One way we can do our part is to renew our commitment to our country and, therefore, to its history. Because of the courage and strength of our ancestors, we have enjoyed a life of freedom. They made this country great. We honor their memory.

## The Kruger and Firemen's Memorial - continued

On the southerly side of the monument there is a bas relief sculpture on a bronze panel about eighteen feet long and eight feet high depicting a team of three horses dashing from the background ahead of a fire engine with the driver strapped to his seat. Under the tablet, a mask spouts a stream of water into



a fountain basin. The contract for the two heroic statues of Duty and Sacrifice and the bas relief sculpture was commissioned through the recommendation of Mr. Magonigle. The award was given to Mr. Attilio Piccirilli whose studio was at 147<sup>th</sup> Street in the Mott Haven section of New York City. The firm of Combes & Ward were granted the contract for the remaining work.

Funds for the monument were raised by the committee. It was noted that Isidor Straus was one of the most generous contributors. By October 1910, it was clear that no more than \$51,000 could be raised. The remaining \$40,000 was supplemented by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment through the issue of corporate stock of the city which was voted on and approved by the Board of Aldermen in December 1911. As the resolution states, this issue of Corporate stock is intended "to provide means for the erection of a foundation for the Firemen's Memorial on Riverside Drive, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks, Boroughs of Manhattan and Richmond."

Isidor Straus chaired his last meeting of the Kruger and Firemen's Memorial Fund Committee at 5:30 PM on January 4, 1912 at his apartment, 524 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Two days later, on January 6, 1912, Isidor and Ida Straus sailed for Europe on the Cunard Steamship Company's "Caronia." This was their final journey. On April 15, 1912, the Strauses were aboard "Titanic" when it sank. Within months, a committee was formed for the purpose of erecting a memorial to the Strauses. Straus Park, just a few blocks from the Kruger and Firemen's Memorial, graces the city as a testimonial to the courage and honor of Isidor and Ida Straus.

The dedication of the Kruger and Firemen's Memorial took place September 5, 1913. The annual convention of the International Association of Fire Engineers was being held in the city at that time and the Memorial dedication was scheduled as its climax. 10,000 people attended the ceremony. A parade of 7,000 firefighters, including 1,500 from the uniformed services of New

York City, were reinforced by delegates representing the fire departments of Jersey City, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Portland OR. More than forty pieces of fire apparatus were displayed in the parade including the latest in fire engines as well as old fashioned horse drawn wagons. The oldest piece of fire equipment in the parade was a hand operated pump on four wheels built in 1725. The parade, which began at 47<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue, was two miles long and took two hours to pass before the reviewing stand.

After the benediction, four young girls drew away the two large United States flags that were strung over the monument. All four were daughters of firefighters who had lost their lives in the line of duty. Because of the high winds that day, four firefighters were stationed on top of the monument to hold the flags in place. As the flags were taken down, the men stood at attention, silhouetted against the late summer sky. Fifty eight young girls, all daughters of the "heroic dead" placed flowers on the rim of the fountain. Jesse Straus, oldest son of Isidor and Ida presented the Memorial to the city. He said, "We erect monuments to our war heroes and it is fitting that we should erect them to men who fight in the war that never ends."

In May 1927, the ASPCA dedicated a tablet "To The horses That Shared In Valor And Devotion And With Mighty Speed Bore On Heroes Cue." It was laid into the brickwork platform that leads up to the monument from Riverside Drive. The tablet includes artwork depicting a horsedrawn fire wagon racing to a fire and the dedication inscription.



Immediately following the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, spontaneous tributes began appearing at the Monument. It became a place where local residents and visitors tried to cope with the enormity of what had happened. People left flowers, candles, notes and offered prayers. The official annual Memorial event was delayed this year due to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>: the fire department has 343 missing or confirmed dead.

This year, more than any in the past, the public has realized the heroic selflessness of these servants of public safety. They come to honor the strength, courage and commitment to duty of the city's bravest. And this year, the people of the city will mourn their loss and honor the memory of our fallen heroes as never before in the war that never ends.

## Nathan Straus Pasteurized Milk Laboratory

A collection donated to the Straus Historical Society  
by Vivian Y. Sheehan

In October of 1998, I received a note from Vivian Y. Sheehan explaining that she was in possession of "papers placed in an early Macy cornerstone. My father was a building contractor and found them during a construction project. When he tried to return them, no one was interested. But time has passed - probably 60 years - and I hate to destroy them."

Although Vivian and I were unable, at that time, to arrange for the transfer, we agreed that the Straus Historical Society would be happy to receive the documents and that she would donate them to the Society once our 501(c)(3) application was approved. We met at her Sag Harbor home in the winter of 2000 and she generously donated the entire packet to the Straus Historical Society, Inc. We are lucky that Vivian found my name and contacted me. It would have been a pity to destroy this truly fascinating piece of history.

Once these documents were placed in archival protective envelopes, organized and catalogued, it became apparent that the collection had come from the cornerstone of the Nathan Straus Pasteurized Milk Laboratory at 348 East 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York City. They had been placed there under the guidance of Nathan Straus to document his effort to bring pasteurized milk to the world, to highlight some of his other philanthropic work and to document family events. The material includes personal letters, testimonials, newspaper articles, photographs, booklets and speeches. The collection dates from June 7, 1893 through November 9, 1907.

The background: After the Civil War, there was some recognition that the quality of the milk sold to the city's poor was substandard. Small, but unsuccessful, efforts were made to improve sanitary conditions. Milk continued to be an agent that carried diphtheria, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, tuberculosis and the "summer complaint," diarrhea. Thousands of children died each year, especially during the summer months, as a result of drinking unsterilized milk.

Nathan became interested in milk pasteurization for several reasons. Two of Nathan and Lina Straus' six children, Sara and Roland, died in early childhood. Although the family could avail themselves of the best and most modern medical treatment of the day, there was nothing that could be done to save

either child. The Strauses owned farm animals, including cows from which the family's milk was obtained. When a seemingly healthy animal died suddenly, Nathan wondered if the germs that caused the animal's death could be transferred to her milk. This led to his conviction that pasteurization was essential.

Nathan was New York City Parks Commissioner from 1889 to 1893. When his wife Lina bought milk for her children in Central Park, and noticed the bluish color of the milk, she wondered what kind of dairy the cows had come from and in what way the milk had been adulterated. Nathan, with responsibility for the city's parks, and the milk sold therein, was immediately interested in the question. He investigated what could be done to sterilize milk and began a program that eventually changed the way milk is processed around the world.

Nathan's first pasteurized milk depot opened at the foot of the East Third Street Pier on June 1, 1893. It was a small building



THE FIRST INFANT MILK DEPOT IN AMERICA.  
Nathan Straus Pasteurized Milk Station, East Third Street Pier,  
New York City, 1893.

Photo from *Disease in Milk* by Lina Gutherz Straus  
Courtesy of Ann Straus Gertler

containing a refrigeration unit, storage rooms, a pasteurization laboratory and salesrooms. The goal was to distribute low cost, high quality pasteurized milk to the city's poor. Milk was sold in bottles, by the glass and in cans. Modified formulas were also sold for babies. These formulas were devised by Nathan's medical advisors and often contained barley water, milk sugar, white sugar, lime water and salt. Modified milk was sold in deposit bottles provided with a nipple, both being sterilized in the pasteurizing laboratory. Ice was also supplied so that people keep the milk from spoiling once it was brought home. The milk bottles had rounded bottoms so that no uncorked bottle could be left standing, thereby becoming

contaminated by unsanitary conditions in the homes. Lectures were provided in the many languages of the city's residents to educate them about the benefits of pasteurized milk. Nathan had coupons printed so that doctors could "prescribe" the milk which would then be given at no cost.

The program was an immediate success among the city's poor. Nathan set up his laboratories and milk depots as a demonstration model to prove to governmental officials and the medical establishment that the large scale distribution of pasteurized milk would make a difference in public health. He wrote, "The tragedy of needless infant slaughter, desolating so many homes and wringing the hearts, lies like a dark shadow on our boasted civilization. It is nothing more or less than permitted murder, for which the responsibility must lie at the door of the agencies of government that fail to recognize its existence and demand its prevention."

A pasteurization laboratory and plant had been operating at 151 Avenue C in New York City. In September 1908, a new and

larger Nathan Straus Pasteurized Milk Laboratory opened at 348 East 32<sup>nd</sup> Street in New York City. This building was erected and equipped especially for the purpose of providing pasteurized milk to all the city's residents, of training health officers and other public officials, physicians, medical students, nurses, high school classes and others interested in the welfare and health of babies, and as a demonstration model of what could be done. Nathan personally solicited the materials that would be laid in the building's cornerstone. The following is not intended as a description of Nathan's work with regard to the pasteurized milk laboratories or depots. It is a brief description of some of the items found by Vivian Sheehan's father in the cornerstone of the milk laboratory building.

On July 15, 1907, Nathan wrote: "To Posterity." We are on the eve of leaving for Europe, sailing on the S.S. Amerika of the Hamburg-American Line on July 18<sup>th</sup>. The work on our new laboratory is so far advanced that the cornerstone will be laid while we are abroad. This is intended for the cornerstone, to convey a few ideas to future generations. The laboratory I am building is to enable me to carry out my work of "supplying the children of New York with pure milk" more extensively. As can be deduced more explicitly from newspaper clippings contained in the same box, I have been engaged in this work for the last fifteen years. Beginning with one central station where the milk was pasteurized and from where it was dispensed on East Third Street (where a recreation pier is now) I am to-day running seventeen different stations, covering all the crowded districts of the city. These are located in six stores, five parks and six recreation piers (among which one roof garden). The history of the inception of my work is all described in the newspaper clippings and in the main points entirely correct. I have always insisted that the benefit of my charitable work shall be extended alike to gentiles and Jew, without distinction or race, color or nationality. I have tried to live up to my principle of "The world is my country - doing good is my religion." I have tried to impress the same on my children and I am confident that they will carry out my wishes and perpetuate this milk work in making the same request to their offspring and so on."

Included in this collection, at Nathan's request, are letters of testimony and photographs from some of the prominent people of the day including: A. B. Gwathmey, N. Y. Cotton Exchange;

Alfred J. Cammeyer, Sixth Avenue, New York; John Foord, Newspaper Editor, American Asiatic Association; Rev. J. J. Curran, Pastor, Holy Saviour Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA; H. Cohen, Secretary of the Hebrew-American Volunteer Association at the time of the Spanish American War; A. Jacobi, MD, LLD, College of Physicians and Surgeons; Arthur R. Green, M.D., The Nathan Straus Laboratory, 151 Avenue C, New York; Rose and Abraham Abraham, relatives and business partners of Isidor and Nathan Straus; C. Hyatman, 1917 W. 18 Street, New York; John Spargo, Gustav Stickley: The Craftsman Editorial Room; Joseph Krauskopf, President, The National Farm School, Bucks County, PA;

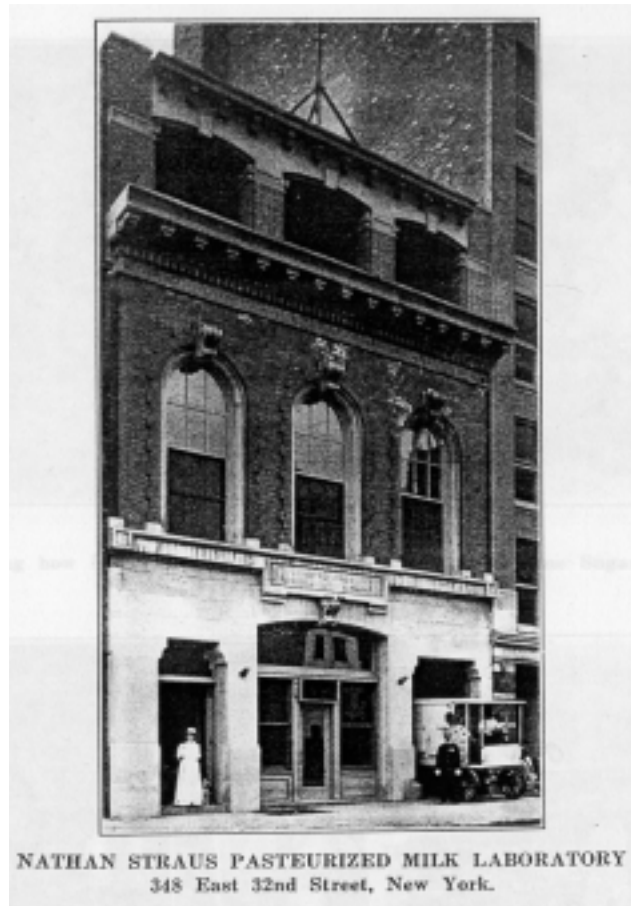


Photo from *Disease in Milk* by Lina Gutherz Straus  
Courtesy of Ann Straus Gertler

Mr. A. L. Kinkead was Nathan Straus' secretary at Macy's and became the manager of the Third Street Pier Milk Depot. On July 25, 1907 Mr. Kinkead wrote two articles for inclusion in the cornerstone. The first is a typed description of how Nathan Straus directed him to learn everything there was to know about pasteurization. He found Dr. Rowland G. Freeman's process the best. Nathan agreed and obtained permission from the Board of Dock Commissioners to erect a small laboratory on the newly completed pier at the foot of East Third Street. Thus began the first milk laboratory and depot. Also contained in this article is information about Nathan Straus' supplying an ice machine to Santiago Cuba in August 1898 for the benefit of the army of occupation and the sick soldiers there. Nathan also supplied a complete pasteurization plant for the city of Galveston after their disaster. The second article by Mr. Kinkead is addressed to the Democratic State Convention of New York. It describes why Nathan opposed

the nomination of the Hon. Bird S. Coler of Brooklyn. The reasons include Mr. Bird's opposition to allowing any of the city's money to be appropriated from Nathan's pasteurized milk depots. Kinkead also describes how Nathan intervened to end the Coal Strike of 1902.

On June 7, 1893, Kinkead wrote, "Mr. Nathan Straus has establish on the pier at the foot of East Third Street a depot for the sale of milk in its natural state, and also sterilized. The price of un-sterilized milk is 4cts. a quart and 2cts. a pint, and will continue at that figure during the summer, unless the price of milk should be advanced by the Milk Exchange. The sterilized milk is subjected to a temperature high enough to kill all contagious disease germs; but not high enough to render the milk undigestible and un-nutritious. The process used is the inven-

tion of Dr. R. G. Freeman of 147 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street and a portion of the milk is diluted for young children according to a prescription written by the same physician. The sterilized milk is sold in eight (8) ounce and six (6) ounce bottles- The six (6) ounce bottles, containing the dilution for young children, are sold at one (1) cent each - a deposit of two and a half (2 1/2) cents being required on each bottle. The eight (8) ounce bottles, containing pure milk sterilized, are sold at the rate of four for six (6) cents, with a deposit of three cents on each bottle. The money deposited for bottles is refunded when the bottles are returned. I take the liberty of calling your attention to this depot, as it may aid you in your work among the sick children of the deserving poor. Tickets properly stamped will be sold on the pier." Unsterilized milk was sold on the pier because many people did not believe that pasteurization was important and they would not buy the sterilized milk. Nathan wanted people to buy clean milk and so he provided some unsterilized milk at first that came from carefully supervised sanitary sources.

In an article for Aggressive Christianity dated February 10, 1894, Nathan is called "A Benefactor." "... has made possible, by his open purse, the successful carrying on by the Metropolitan Forward Movement management of the great shelter department, which is nightly housing between 500 and 600 worthy men and women, and in addition giving them breakfast before they go out in the morning for the almost hopeless search of work. ... Many stories are told of his help to those in need about him, in which the name of the benefactor was withheld."

Newspaper articles placed in the laboratory cornerstone include: "Nathan Straus, Philanthropist; How One Gentleman Responded to the Emergency Caused by the Hard Times," in The Mail and Express, New York, Saturday evening, April 14, 1894; "Mr. Straus' New Charity; Sterilized Milk Provided at a Small Cost for the Poor of the City," in the New York Herald, July 22, 1894; "A Great Undertaking," in The American Hebrew, July 20, 1894; and "The Milk of Human Kindness," in New York City, September 22, 1894. A cartoon that appeared in The Evening Telegram of October 15, 1894 shows Nathan Straus feeding pasteurized milk to a sick tiger. A banner reading Tammany Hall is displayed over the tiger's head. The caption of the cartoon reads: "Mr. Straus trying to save the tiger's life."

In a letter to the Mayors of the cities of the United States dated June 8 1895, Nathan wrote: "I have received so many letters of inquiry from municipal authorities, physicians and others throughout the country in regard to my work providing pure milk nourishment for the sick children of New York, that I have been prompted to prepare the following items of general information for the guidance of those whose public position or personal sympathies may give them a special interest in trying to

reduce the sum of infant mortality. ... any person of moderate intelligence can become thoroughly familiar with the methods and processes of my Sterilized Milk Laboratory in less than a week and can readily apply the knowledge thus acquired to the duplication of its work on any scale that may be attempted. I shall be glad to give any such person, duly accredited to me by some responsible authority, free access to every department of my now completed system of preparation and distribution, and all possible data needed to guide him in adapting the work to different conditions." A pamphlet, "How The New York Death Rate Was Reduced," reprinted from The Forum of November 1894 was enclosed with this letter. "My efforts to do something to lessen the appalling sum of human suffering and sorrow which the figures of infant mortality in New York but faintly indicate were begun in the summer of last year, when I opened a depot of pure milk, both in its natural state and sterilized form were sold. From this experiment I received



Nathan Straus - A Benefactor  
Photo from Aggressive Christianity

such striking demonstration of the good that could be accomplished by raising the standard of the milk supply of the poor, that I resolved, if it were at all possible, to resume the work on a greatly enlarged scale this year. ... I beg leave to repeat here what I have else where said, that I consider the furnishing of pure milk the most important benevolent undertaking with which I have been connected, and I may be pardoned for referring with some personal satisfaction to the fact that my New York experiment has been in all of its details repeated with most satisfactory results in Yonkers and Philadelphia." The first page of this pamphlet contains a letter by Dr. Moreau Morris, of the Office of the Chief Inspector of Contagious Diseases; "We are out of milk tickets for use of the Summer Corps. There has been an unusual demand for them of late, the inspectors finding the use of

your different formulas in the treatment of sick babies one of the most important adjuncts in curing disease and by proper nourishment in saving lives."

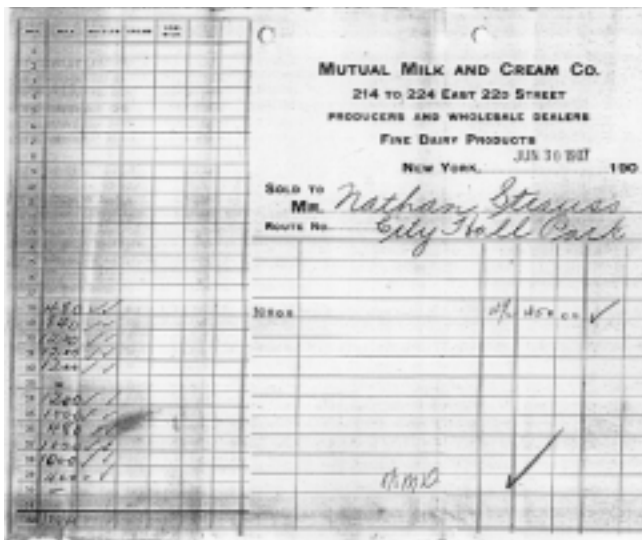
Nathan wrote to the Boards of Health of the cities of the United States on March 22, 1897, "Some eighteen months ago I took the liberty of addressing a letter to the Mayor of every city in the United States, setting forth at some length my conviction of the absolute necessity of making the supply of sterilized (pasteurized) milk for the children of the poor an object of municipal solicitude. I received sympathetic responses from so many quarters that I am encouraged to believe in the existence of a widespread interest in the subject. I feel it, therefore, to be my duty to supplement the appeal then made by a more complete and exact statement of the reasons which prompt me to believe that there is no field of public effort whose neglect admits to so little excuse. I address this communication to you as the agency of local government whose purpose it is to provide against all preventable loss of human life and to en-



able the people, from childhood to age, to live under sanitary conditions alike as to their food supply and their surroundings." In a paper read before the National Conference of Mayors and Councilmen at Columbus Ohio September 22, 1897 Nathan said, "Among all the forms of waste in the world, there is none so reckless as that of human life."

In 1897, Dr. Rowland Godfrey Freeman, Pathologist for the Foundling Hospital and for St. Mary's Free Hospital for Children in New York City and the man Nathan Straus credited with inventing the formula used by his milk laboratories, wrote an article for the Archives of Pediatrics. "The Straus Milk Charity of New York City," describes the process of pasteurizing milk. It also describes the bottling and distribution process and cites figures of reduced infant mortality."

From June 3, 1893 to September 30, 1897, 2,077,212 bottles of milk were distributed. It was estimated that 860 lives were saved in Brooklyn alone because of the use of pasteurized milk. Nathan began to collect figures to substantiate his claims that pasteurized milk was saving lives and he inserted these into the many letters, articles and speeches he gave during the years of his campaign to sanitized the milk supply. Once he had proven that his milk saved lives, he began to assert that this was a governmental responsibility. A November 15, 1900 article by Nathan is titled; "Why The Distribution Of Pasteurized (Sterilized) Milk Should Be A Function Of Every Municipality."



Store and Now the Largest Retail Enterprise in the World." The full page accompanying text describes the opening of Macy's 34<sup>th</sup> Street store and explains some of its departments.

On July 31, 1903 the Evening Journal ran an article with photographs in an effort to educate people about the need for sun, fresh air and a healthy diet, including pasteurized milk. An editorial in The New York Evening Journal of September 16, 1903 includes the following: "Pasteurized milk at a penny a bottle for every school is the Board of Education solution of the impure water problem of Chicago."

As the popularity of his milk depots caught on, Nathan began traveling to Europe, trying to establish his programs there. "Benefaction for Children; Purified Milk in New York Heat; Mr. Nathan Straus Tells British Medical Association of Depots for the Public: Fewer Children Die," from the New York Herald, Tuesday, August 5, 1905 reports one such trip. Nathan spoke before the "Congres International des Gouttes de Lait" in Paris in October 1905. "Millions of dollars annually are spent to counteract the evils of popular ignorance. Why not treat physical ailments in the same manner? PREVENT THEM. ...The enormous sums paid annually to hospitals and like institutions should, as far as possible, be saved. AND A GREAT DEAL IS POSSIBLE. It is milk - raw milk, diseased milk - which is responsible for the largest percentage of sickness in the world. I hold that the only safe rule is - PASTEURIZE THE ENTIRE

MILK SUPPLY AND MAKE IT A FUNCTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY."

Nathan used every means possible to get his message delivered. Two cards, printed by the Department of Health of New York, describe food preparation and the care of infants and young children during the summer. "Keep this card and hang it up in the kitchen." Distributed in 1902, they list Straus Milk Depots at 151 Avenue C, 241 East 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Hebrew Institute Roof Garden (Jefferson St. and E. Broadway), Foot of East 3rd Street, Foot of Barrow Street, North River, Battery Park, Tompkins Square, 65 Market Street, 235 West 60<sup>th</sup> Street, Foot of East 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Foot of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street, City Hall Park, Central Park (near the Arsenal), 305 East 114<sup>th</sup> Street.

In 1902 there was a coal strike. Nathan distributed food and coal to the city's poor and food to the strikers. An article included with the cornerstone materials is, "Unwritten History of Coal Strike; Mr. Nathan Straus's Extraordinary Offer Which Preceded The Settlement; How His Aid Sought By Both Sides, His Offer to Give Employment to Every Minor Denied Work by Operators if the Rest Returned to Work."

Another full page color "Pictorial Supplement to the New York Journal of May 23, 1903 proclaims, "The Original Department

"Pure Milk or Poison?" is the title of an address Nathan delivered before a Milk Conference held at the New York Academy of Medicine on November 20, 1906. "What I am anxious to accomplish at this meeting is to get your co-operation in securing legislation that shall deal in a more practical way than we have yet been able to do with this question of pure milk. ... I have had the satisfaction of seeing the death rate among the children of the City of New York under five years of age reduced from 96.5 per 1,000 to 63 per 1,000 per annum. ... I have done as much as one man could to establish and promote the use of pasteurized milk everywhere, but all that has been accomplished is merely a fraction of the good that could be done were the supply of pure milk made a municipal function as much as the supply of pure water. There can be no question but that the supply of milk everywhere should be pasteurized, not only that intended for infants, since the use of raw milk for adults is almost equally fraught with danger."

This collection includes 1907 bills for the supply of milk from the Mutual Milk and Cream Co. Producers and Wholesale Dealers, Fine Dairy Products. Routes included City Hall Park, 112<sup>th</sup>

Street Pier, Battery Park, Mount Morris Park, 115 Avenue C, Central Park and Tompkins Park. American Ice Company 1907 bills show ice was delivered to the foot of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Central Park, 112<sup>th</sup> Street and East River, Mt. Morris, City Hall Park, 45 Monroe, Tompkins Square, 151 Avenue C, foot of 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Battery Park, 169 West Houston, foot of Barrow, 441 West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, 322 East 59<sup>th</sup> Street and 300 East 111<sup>th</sup> Street. 500 Milk Depot Books were ordered July 1907 from the Monarch Manifold Book Co.

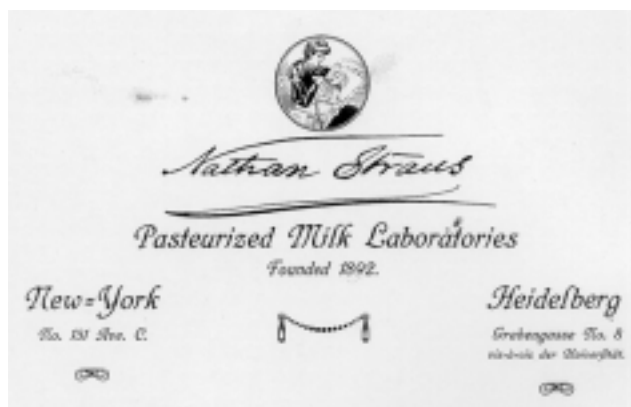
In July, 1907, Nathan wrote to Mayor Fagan of Jersey City, "I have noticed with much pleasure and gratification that your city has taken up the providing of pasteurized milk to the babies of the poor. It is encouraging and refreshing to find a municipality with officials imbued with a proper sense of their responsibility and with the energy to put into practical use a plan which has proven efficacious in other cities in protecting the lives of the young."

"Straus Tells Plans To World's Milk Congress, His Plan Adopted After Strong Arguments in Its Behalf," The New York Evening Journal, September 12, 1907. Articles are included from newspapers in Brussels, Heidelberg, Paris, Karlsruhe, London, Berlin and Dublin. "Mr. Nathan Straus, the American millionaire, will tomorrow open a laboratory at Heidelberg to exhibit the apparatus which he uses in New York and other American cities to prevent the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases by milk. He hopes to show German medical men, officers of health, municipal reformers, and philanthropists how infantile mortality has been decreased in the United States by the use of his methods." From The Standard, Thursday, October 31, 1907, "Mr. Straus, who is an enthusiast, intends to proclaim the dangers of raw milk until the people of European countries recognize that his system of pasteurizing milk, employed with such conspicuous success in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, is the most effective method of preventing the spread of not only tuberculosis but also of other malignant diseases. ... One feature of the crusade is a general offer to present a big pasteurization plant to any town in Europe where infant mortality is exceptionally high, and where the money for the plant cannot be raised by local effort. In consequence of this offer, Mr. Straus will shortly present his plant to Liverpool and Dublin, and to Munich, Brussels, and Ostend. ... Coincident with the increased use of pasteurized milk, infant mortality in New York decreased from 96 per thousand in 1892 to 55 per thousand in 1906." The Daily Telegraph, London, Thursday, October 31, 1907, "Liverpool will be among the towns which will shortly benefit by Mr. Straus's generosity."

In an article by Lina Straus, Nathan's wife, dated November 6, 1907, she states; "We attended the International Congress of

the Gouttes de Lait, which was held in Bruxelles, Blges, from September 12 to 15th 1907. Nathan delivered an address ... and the general attitude of most of the delegates was not at all to our liking. There seems an utter lack of the seriousness of the questions involved; and when the most important matters were being discussed they were tabled never to be taken up again if it happened to be the time for going on an excursion or some amusement. ...the presiding officer saw fit to close the question without taking a vote or hearing the wishes of the delegates. Thereupon N. arose and said in a very few words, that he did not come 3000 miles to go on excursions, and if this all important question of pasteurization was so trifling that the Congress could dispose of it so lightly, all his (N's) work of fifteen years was of no avail. In this as in every other question very little result would be obtained, except by strategy and management, what ought to have been brought about on the merits of the questions. ... Finally a resolution was adopted - but read off in such a mumbling way, and mixed up with other matters of far

less importance, that its passing was not realized either by the Congress nor ourselves until we read it in one of the papers. ... we had decided to remain in Europe for a year, and to let Charlie (Nathan Jr.) take two semesters at the University. ... I visited several of the largest farms, farms where Heidelberg is furnished with milk. The first was the one that supplies the "Luise Anstalt" the University Klinik for children. The conditions I found in the stables of this farm were appalling, the animals looked



Invitation to view a demonstration of the pasteurization process in the Nathan Straus Laboratory set up in Heidelberg

disgustingly dirty, and so did the troughs containing their wretched feed and drink, the floors, walls and everything. The odors hardly were bearable for remaining in the stables for a few minutes and there these cows are kept with little light and no air, never being taken to pasture. What sort of milk can such cows produce! And the stable is under the supervision of the authorities, on account of the milk being used in the city hospital. ... the milk from the cows who are proven to be more or less infected with tuberculosis, is sold to the general public. ... The results attained in spreading the knowledge of the dangers of raw milk have been marvelous lately. We have obtained the good will of the press all over Europe, and every day brings us new evidence that this important question as a consequence of Nathan's efforts is being taken up all over. He had promised to donate Pasteurizing Plants to Bruxelles, Liverpool, Munich, Karlsruhe and is at this moment in correspondence with Belfast (Ireland) Cairo (Egypt) Athens (Greece) from where applications for plants have been made by personal representatives from those cities. - The highest people in the country both in the profession and out of it, have come forward and shown their interest in the milk work, and the knowledge of it is spreading all over Europe." This article was enclosed in a large envelope with several newspaper articles about Nathan's milk work in Europe and about the Congress and an invitation to see a demonstration of the pasteurization process at the Nathan



Straus Laboratory in Heidelberg. The envelope reads: "For the Cornerstone of The Nathan Straus Laboratory, Sent from Heidelberg (Germany) November 9, 1907.

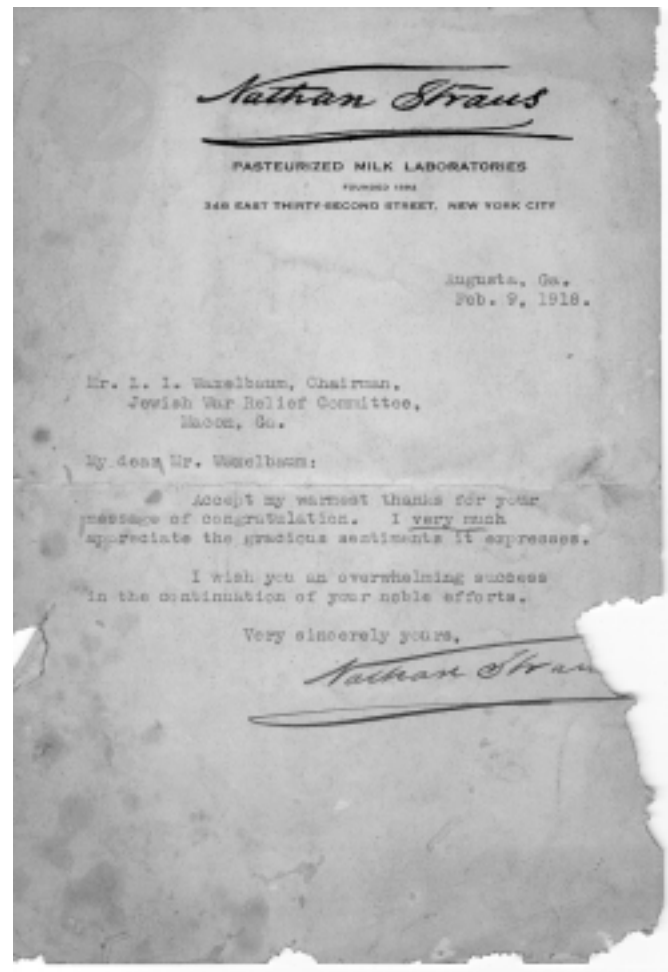
Although the following letter has nothing to do with the Pasteurized Milk Laboratory, Nathan found it sufficiently important to include in the material he chose for the cornerstone. It was written by Oscar S. Straus at the Banff Springs Hotel in Banff, Alta Canada to his brothers Isidor and Nathan and is dated July 9, 1907. This handwritten letter was written by Oscar after assuming his duties as Secretary of Commerce and Labor under President Theodore Roosevelt.

"I cannot tell you how much I was depressed when I left, to think there rested a cloud upon our brotherly affection and relations. We have pulled together in affection so many years and attained a measure of success which few, very few families have attained. Neither of us could have achieved what we have all achieved. The success of one has, as it should, reflected upon the others and in unity has been the envy of many and the admiration of all. I am proud to acknowledge my gratitude to my brothers and I hope I shall never even in moments of imitation allow a cloud to obscure the recognition of my indebtedness or the treasuring of my affections towards my brothers. I hope Nathan will forgive me if I have done anything he may measure against me. This I know, whatever I have done has not been through ill will or from lack of affection. By holding together and teaching our children to guard the sacred chain that binds us, we will build up a family that will live to further exalt the name and fame we have all achieved and shall continue to heighten during the years, which will not be many, while we have health and strength. Affectionately your brother, Oscar. "This line of inspection and observation in view of the our relations with Japan is important and has far reaching possibilities. I have for some time past and so expressed my views in cabinet meetings regarding war with Japan most probable unless we change our policy and it will not be with Japan alone, Russia and probably Germany also. I have been feeling very nervous perhaps due to some strain on assuming office, but I am regaining my grip. We remain here 5 days then I am to examine the immigration stations around Puget Sound and then to Honolulu to look into Japanese immigration there & from there to the mainland. OSS"

Nathan chose several personal items to include in the cornerstone. There is a photograph of the house in Otterberg Germany where he and his siblings were born. Photographs of Sissie Straus and Irving Lehman are included as is their June 26, 1901 wedding invitation and a newspaper article, "Miss Straus and Mr. Lehman Wed; Will Spend Honeymoon in Japan," from The World. Other photographs are of Grant Straus, second son of Nathan, taken in the summer of 1906 and of Nathan Straus Jr., taken in 1907.

I hope this brief overview of the material donated to the Straus Historical Society by Vivian Y. Sheehan of Sag Harbor, New York gives you some feeling for the importance of her gift and of Nathan Straus' work. It has made a wonderful addition to the Straus Family Collection.

## A Donation from Gus B. and Marian Kaufman



I recently received the letter shown above from Gus and Marian Kaufman. Gus' note says, "It's a very small world. This note is to Marian's father, Lewis I. Waxelbaum."

**Nathan Straus**  
**Pasteurized Milk Laboratories**  
**Founded 1892**  
**348 East Thirty-Second Street, New York City**  
**Augusta, Ga.**  
**Feb. 9, 1918**

**L. I. Waxelbaum, Chairman,**  
**Jewish War Relief Committee,**  
**Macon, Ga.**

**My dear Mr. Waxelbaum:**

**Accept my warmest thanks for your message of congratulations. I very much appreciate the gracious sentiments it expresses.**

**I wish you an overwhelming success in the continuation of your noble efforts.**

**Very sincerely yours,**  
**Nathan Straus**

## Profiles: Donald Blun Straus

When I first met Don Straus, he was preparing to give up his New York office and had offered to donate his professional papers to the Straus Historical Society. I was overwhelmed by the wealth of information I was about to accept on behalf of SHS. One small article could not possibly do justice to Don's life accomplishments, nor really give you a flavor of the charm, intelligence, wit and warmth Don possesses.

Donald Blun Straus is the third and youngest son of Percy S. Straus and Edith Abraham. He was born in Red Bank NJ on June 28, 1916. The house in Red Bank burned to the ground when Don was eight and the Strauses then bought property on King Street in Port Chester, NY. Don spent summers at his family's estate, Hilholme, learning to ride and jump. He spent most of his teenage years with the trainers and grooms, going to horse shows. Don's world revolved around the circus-like tent world behind the scenes.

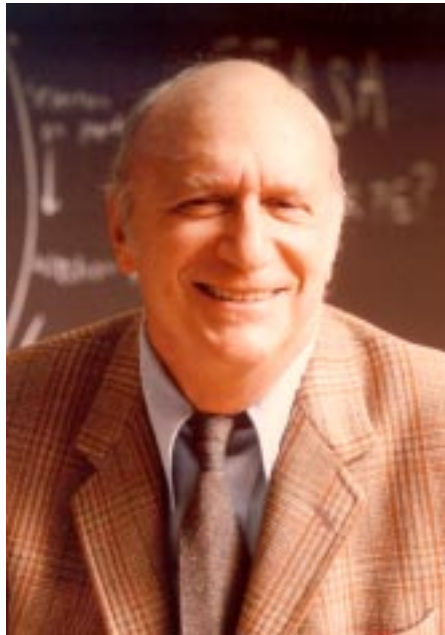
He began his formal schooling in the third grade at Browning in New York City. The best part of his day was walking to school with his father who then continued on to Macy's. From Browning, he went to Milton, Harvard and Harvard Business School, following a long family tradition. However, Don had no interest in retailing. During one summer, he worked for *The New York Times* in London. He was offered a job on the spot but this was only his sophomore year at Harvard and Percy admonished him that he had to go to Harvard Business School.

Like many other Strauses, Don was fascinated with flying and earned his pilots license while in college, against his parents wishes. When he graduated from Harvard Business School, Percy and Edith gave him a Mercury Roadster, a convertible, as a graduation present. He immediately drove to Armonk Airport, traded it for a brand new Luscombe airplane and flew to San Francisco to see Beth Allen whom he had met in Honolulu three years earlier and with whom he had corresponded frequently, but seldom saw. Within three days, the couple was engaged.

Don and Beth's honeymoon in 1940 was spent traveling around Central and South America. They called the trip "Five and A Duffel Bag." After landing at each country's capitol, they would count their bags as they got off the plane; one, two, three, four five and the duffel bag. "It was a wonderful trip. We went to every capitol. The plane would just fly from capital to capital. We'd check into a good hotel, take off our good clothes, leave them in the hotel and get onto a bus and ride in the country until we either got dysentery or tired of the scenery. Then we'd come back in our scruffy clothes having really seen the country first hand and enjoy the bright lights and then go on to the

next place." Don and Beth recorded the trip on a portable typewriter. They had their journal bound when they got to Buenos Aires.

Don went through Executive Training School at Macy's but knew that retailing wasn't for him. After six weeks, he returned to Harvard Business School to work in the Fatigue Lab researching what made a good pilot. Since his eyesight wasn't good enough to become a Navy pilot, Don joined the Civil Aeronautics Board after Pearl Harbor. One day, while there as chief of personnel, the medical director of the agency called him on the phone and urgently requested five more secretaries. Don saw this as an opportunity to finesse a waiver and prom-



ised to fulfill the doctor's request if he would certify that Don's flying experience justified a commercial rating, 20/100 vision notwithstanding. With this waiver in hand, Don quit his job at the CAB and signed up for civilian flight instructor training. After about six months of enjoying himself doing loops and landings with his students, his application for naval duty officer was accepted. He became an air combat intelligence officer. He spent time in British Guyana, Paramaribo in Dutch Guyana and in Puerto Rico with various anti-submarine warfare squadrons.

Don had always been interested in labor relations and personnel relations. After VJ Day, Don and George Kirstein opened Management Employee Relations Incorporated. Although the firm eventually folded, Don says he learned a good deal about negotiating and labor relations that way. For about three years, he also wrote a column for *Women's Wear Daily* on retail employee/employer relations. Don has been the Executive Director of the Atomic Energy Labor Panel, Executive Vice President of Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, Vice Chairman of the Review and Appeals Committee of the Wage Stabilization Board, a member of the NY State Mediating Board, President of the American Arbitration Association and Chairman of the Board of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. He has served on the boards of many associations involved with arbitration including the International Commercial Arbitration Commission and the Inter-American Arbitration Commission. He has always been actively involved in public service, serving on the boards of the Educational Alliance, the visiting committees of various Harvard departments, the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton and the College of the Atlantic where he is still active. There he taught courses in arbitration, dispute resolution, decision making and population. He was one of the first to teach on-line through a program called Connect Ed that was a branch of the New School for Social Research. And, as if this is not enough, Don is still actively writing and publishing. His

current interest is in a program of AMERICA SPEAKS that is experimenting with the use of computer assisted and facilitated discussion involving thousands of citizens.

Don and Beth's home is in Somesville on the Island of Mt. Desert, Maine. They recently sold their last bit of New York property, a list that included an apartment on Beckman Place, several large apartments on Park Avenue, a Brownstone house on East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street and, finally, a three-roomer at 1 East 66<sup>th</sup> Street. Beth continues her work on behalf of the Museum of Modern Art and the New York Botanical Gardens, and she is Chairman of the Azalea Gardens of Northeast Harbor, ME. Five years ago, when I interviewed Don, the couple had just returned from a rigorous African safari. The couple were hikers and avid sailors. Weather permitting, they still row several miles every morning in a 14 foot rowboat with Beth as stroke.

Don seems to find everything interesting. He has made his own opportunities and takes delight in sharing. A mini-biography written by Don for "wholedamfam" appeared in February 1994.

## Friends of Straus Park

By Leon Auerbach, Edited by Joan Adler

Just like the rest of America and the world, the tragedy of the World Trade Center on Thursday, September 11, 2001 shocked and moved the people of the neighborhood around Straus Park.



The Park became an unofficial center for individuals to bring candles and memorabilia and to be together with other people to share. It became the place where a group of about 50 got together around the "reflecting pool"

on the following Saturday for a moment of silence to remember the heroes and victims. What a moving time!

Friends of Straus Park completed the year of activities with our Fifth Annual "ART IN THE PARK" a day long celebration of Music, Art, Dance and Food on Saturday, October 13, 2001. The central theme of art: paintings, photography, drawings and sculpture were set up on display panels around the "reflecting pool." Marjorie Auerbach did her usual excellent job of organization. She involved the talented artists, setting up the exhibition and sale with the help of FSP members and then taking it down at day's end. There was a full program of music and dance starting with Soh Daiko - an exciting performance of dancers doing a "ballet" with giant Japanese drums. We were joined by Bota-Fogo, a Brazilian Bossa Nova Quartet followed by



the Helios Alves Jazz Trio and the salsa sound of Sonido Costeno with the Juan Ma Group. We were revisited by Theo and Ganine Derleth of the Fred Astaire Studios. The Derleths gave demonstrations and instruction in Ballroom, Tango, Cha-Cha and Salsa dancing. Karl Finger, world famous teacher, led the Folk and Square Dancing Hour with "do-zee-doeing" on the street. Kids had their faces painted and, in turn, did chalk drawing with special prizes and games. Local chefs and bakers plus neighborhood eateries offered delicacies of note.

Leon Auerbach, along with Jo Abrams and Mary Walsh, have been co-chairs of Friends of Straus Park (FSP) these last five years. Leon has decided to "step aside" as of January 2002. In a meeting of the Board of Directors on January 29, 2002, he described the timing of his decision. FSP is now at its strongest organizationally and financially. There is an Executive and Steering Committee to follow established and new directions. FSP treasurer reports a strong position to support our horticultural and entertainment commitments. A plan has been established for forming important committees to insure and support present and future activities. Leon restated the important need for a Membership Chairperson and Membership Committee to involve more of the neighborhood to develop new ideas and directions, to spread out the responsibilities so they are divided around and don't just rest on a small hard-core group.

FSP is now five years old and Leon has spent another 18 years with the West 106<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association, working with Community Board No. 7, the Parks Department and the Office of the Manhattan Borough President for the new, "refurbished" Straus Park inaugurated in April 1997. He feels it's time for new people, new input and new ideas.

Three events are planned for the year 2002. The anniversary celebration in the Park will be held Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. A musical concert will be presented in the Park on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> and our annual "Art in the Park" celebration is scheduled for Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. These dates will be confirmed as the events draw near.

An informal celebration for Leon Auerbach was held Friday, February 8, 2002 at the home of co-chair, Jo Abrams. Friends and local dignitaries attending included former Parks Commissioner Henry Stern, NYPD Detective Heidi Higgins and present Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, and representing Parks was Director of Operations Liam Kavanaugh. Also attending was noted author Andre Aciman. Friends of Straus Park presented Leon with a tribute for his service, a certificate that states a standing clock will be placed in Straus Park and dedicated to him.



We want to keep Friends of Straus Park interesting and exciting. We can't do it without you. We hope you will contact members of FSP committees with your suggestions and ideas. Jo Abrams 212-666-6244, Mary Walsh, 212-749-4029



## Straus Cradle Found



Photographs of a cradle were sent to me by Dr. Hans Steinebrei of Kaiserslautern Germany. Dr. Steinebrei explained that, in around 1920, the cradle was given to a family by the owner of the Straus' former house on Hauptstrasse in Otterberg; the house where Lazarus and Sara Straus lived when their children were born. The cradle was found in the loft

of the Straus' home. It now belongs to the son of the family that received it in 1920. He has it on display in the "sleeping room" of his home.

Dr. Steinebrei had an opportunity to photograph the cradle. He brought the photographs to the museum in Kaiserslautern, where he is on the board. The director of the museum dated it circa 1830-1840, placing it in the correct time period to have been the cradle in which Isidor, Hermine, Nathan and Oscar spent their earliest hours. I've made an inquiry as to whether this cradle may be purchased. I'll keep you informed.

What an exciting find! We sincerely thank Dr. Steinebrei who has been a wonderful friend to the Straus family for many years and has been instrumental in providing the Straus Historical Society with research into the earliest history of the family.

## Available from the Straus Historical Society, Inc.

"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

Color photograph album of the Straus family's trip to Talbotton and Columbus GA, October 24-26, 1997 - \$50.00

Color photograph album of the Oscar S. Straus Memorial rededication ceremony and reception, October 26, 1998 - \$50.00

Videotape of the Oscar S. Straus Memorial Rededication Ceremony - October 26, 1998 filmed by Alan F. Hockstader - \$25.00

Videotape: "Titanic on Broadway," a television special about the making of the Broadway play that includes Joan Adler speaking about the Straus family and a CNN segment in which Paul A. Kurzman is interviewed regarding the play "Titanic" - \$25.00

Color photograph album of the Straus family's trip to Talbotton and Columbus GA, June 22-24, 2001 - \$50.00

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

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

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## Let Your Voice be Heard Become a Member of the Board

The board is directors of the Straus Historical Society, Inc. is actively seeking people who are interested in serving on its board. A nominating committee has been set up for this purpose. If you are interesting in learning more about the duties and responsibilities of board members, wish to make a nomination or are interested in participating on the board of directors, please contact Robin Dillon at 914-337-8787, Rana Nutku at 914-939-1078 or Oscar S. Straus III at 212-570-2733. Consideration and voting will take place at the next board meeting, scheduled for May 21, 2002 at the office of Paul A. Kurzman in New York City.