



# STRAUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



Volume 6 Number 1

Newsletter

August 2004

The Straus Historical Society, Inc. is pleased to announce  
the launching of our new website:

**<http://www.straushistoricalsociety.org>**

Our new e.mail address is:

**[info@straushistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@straushistoricalsociety.org)**

The board of directors of the Straus Historical Society, Inc. is pleased to announce the creation and launching of our new website:

**<http://www.straushistoricalsociety.org>**

Please note that the URL of our website and of our new e.mail address end with .org, not .com. We recognize that our new name is a long one. If you bookmark the site in your Favorite Places and add our e.mail address to your personal on-line address book it will make access easy.

The board of directors has worked closely with Shannon Brown of Shannon Brown Website Designs, Sunnyside, NY to make this site attractive, comprehensive and interesting. We are indebted to Shannon for her creative use of our materials and for her patience with me, Joan Adler, as I learned to "speak" a new language.

The Society's website is a work in progress. Updates will be posted as new information becomes available. The current issue of the Straus Historical Society's newsletter will be available there in PDF format by mid September. An Archives page will contain past issues of the newsletter, also in PDF format. It will also contain many photographs and articles. This page will be one where additions are frequently made as the Society's site is developed and expanded.

You can expect to see pages devoted to the mission of the Society, the names of the members of the board of directors and of the executive committee, an annual summary of the accomplishments of the Society, articles about the history of the family and about events relating to the family. One page will include a list of materials produced by the Society that are

available for purchase. You may now pay for these purchases and also make your annual contribution to the Straus Historical Society, Inc. using Pay Pal. A link is included on the Donations page.

Links to other relevant websites will be added continuously. We expect that other sites will want to us to link to their sites as well. Therefore, we urge you to check our website frequently.

Our development of the Straus Historical Society, Inc.'s website is one more way that we seek to fulfill our mission of research, collection, dissemination and education through the use of our materials and the sharing of information about the Straus family and its history.

As the Straus Historical Society takes this important step into the future, we continue to look back with gratitude to those of you who have made this leap forward possible with your suggestions, contributions of materials and your financial support. We hope you will visit our site often. Please contact us with suggestions for future articles and inclusions to our site.

**[info@straushistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@straushistoricalsociety.org)**

**The past is always with us.  
It behooves those who were part of it  
or remember  
to pass the experience and memories  
on to those who follow.**

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**Executive Director**

Joan Adler

The Straus Historical Society, Inc. is dedicated to advancing the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Straus family and the historical context in which they lived through research and education. You are invited to submit articles and materials relating to the Straus family and to their history.

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



**A Message from the Secretary:  
David H. Kurzman**

In the last issue of the newsletter I described some of the thoughts of the Straus Historical Society's board of directors with regard to giving. A Fund Raising Committee has been formed to explore some of these options. Board members Al Berr, Robin Dillon, Alan F. Hockstader, Hugh Grant Straus III along with myself are the members of this committee. Paul A. Kurzman will chair.

Our new website is launched. It includes a page describing some options for making donations. One new option is to make your annual contribution through PayPal. It should be noted that PayPal takes a small fee for this service and so direct contributions continue to be best. Items for sale are also described on this page.

As we begin the fall season, the Fund Raising Committee will be meeting to formalize plans for a Legacy Society that will be our umbrella for short, mid and long term giving. One suggestion is to memorialize a loved one through a named grant in his/her honor. An annuity of only \$25,000 will bring the society much appreciated guaranteed annual income. We hope you will think about how your long term support will further enhance the programs of the Society.

The Fund Raising Committee is also considering grant writing options that will bring the Society a greater ability to enhance and expand our programs. We hope to seek grants for writing curriculum, working on library format archiving, and for the writing of articles and formal presentations. We are looking at several foundations that support grants for historical societies and for educational programs. If you know of any foundations of this kind we would appreciate hearing about them. If you serve on the board of a foundation, you could explore how receptive they might be to receiving a grant application from us.

We will be writing to you in further detail as we formalize our fund raising options. In the meantime, we hope you will generously support the Straus Historical Society. The history of the Straus family, with its connection to the merchandising, public service and philanthropy, echoes the history of this great country. Preserving this legacy is a mandate we cannot ignore. Your continued financial assistance makes this possible.



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

The first half of 2004 has been extraordinary. The Society has moved to a new era with the launch of our website. We hope this website will make it easier for you to obtain information and to become more involved. Visit our new site often. We plan frequent upgrades and additions.

Nothing would have been accomplished without the active and enthusiastic support of our board of directors. What started as a small project directed by Robert K. Straus in 1990 has grown into something that would amaze him. My thanks to all the board members who make my job such a pleasure. And thank you to those of you who let us know through your comments and financial support that we are serving you in a manner that is both important and valued.

## Jesse Isidor Straus 1872 - 1936

Isidor Straus and Ida Blun were married July 12, 1871 at the home of the bride's father. Nathan Blun. A page from Isidor and Ida's family prayer book shows that Jesse Isidor was born at eight minutes before 5 o'clock Tuesday morning on June 25, 1872 at their home, 28 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan. Jesse was a devoted son who modeled his life after his father's.

Ida worried that the overcrowded city air was unhealthy and so the Strauses bought a house on West 105<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway with an acre of land in 1883. There was a German tutor for the girls and a French tutor for the boys. Jesse attended Dr. Sachs' School and Collegiate Institute in New York City from 1882 through 1889. The Collegiate Institute's curriculum was modeled after the German gymnasium. Jesse had no aptitude for language although he was happy to be able to speak French when he was named Ambassador to France. He also learned to play the piano, mandolin, guitar, viola and violin well enough to make a "more or less melodious noise." Once the family moved uptown Jesse became part of a large group of boys who called themselves the One Hundred and Fifth Streeters. They played baseball and spent a great deal of time outdoors. Jesse was always self-disciplined. He left the group each day at 4:30 to return to his studies. After a few skirmishes, where he made it clear he could not be dissuaded from this path, the group respected his dedication.

Isidor and Nathan's families spent their summers at Lower Saranac Lake in the early 1890's. Ida wrote to Isidor daily when he was in the city. From these letters we have a good picture of Jesse during his late teens.

On September 30, 1889 Isidor wrote to his freshman son at Harvard. "Mamma would be better pleased if you would write her more in detail supporting your mode of life - who your companions are at table, how you spend your leisure hours." Jesse went to Europe the summer after his freshman year. This was the first of what became annual trips. Ida wrote to Isidor, "What a silly boy to spend his time visiting the small places in Germany. I half suspected he would do it you know his reverence for everything concerning our early days." Jesse traveled home with his cousin Lee Kohns on the SS "Umbria" arriving in New York August 25<sup>th</sup>. Ida wrote, "I look forward to a very interesting time with my boy, and if he relates as well as he has written his experiences in outline we will have enough to talk about." On the 28<sup>th</sup> Jesse wrote from Saranac Lake to Isidor, "Arrived here on time Tuesday evening, and found all looking fine in spite of the miserable weather. The principal pastime seems to be closing doors to keep out the draughts, and opening & closing umbrellas."

Ida wrote on August 31<sup>st</sup>, "Jesse has not yet returned from across the lake where he has been spending the afternoon ... I

did not require much force either - he was over with me on Friday afternoon and immediately tacked on to the pretty Nathan girl." On September 2<sup>nd</sup> Ida wrote, "Jesse has the younger members this morning, two daughters of Nathans." They were Belle and Irma. On September 9<sup>th</sup> Ida wrote, "Jesse had the two Misses Nathan in his boat so you may imagine he was happy." September 17<sup>th</sup>, "Jesse regrets so much his not being able to have any time with you; it is the ideal of his life to be a companion to you to be able to gain your confidence."

During July 1891 Jesse went on a camping expedition. He begged that his brother Percy and Nathan's son Jerome be allowed to join him. He promised, "There is not the slightest danger from guns, boats or anything else. I shall be very careful & obey all instructions. Not bathe, not wash, not swim, in short I shall do nothing but eat & breathe & sleep. The only risks I can imagine could arise from these 3 activities are doing them to excess."

Jesse wanted to graduate early from Harvard. On August 4<sup>th</sup> Ida wrote to Isidor, "What do you say to the notice Jesse received from Harvard? I think it shows he has acquitted himself to say the least very creditably. ... His marks are only moderately fair but the courses he took were very difficult." The dean felt Jesse's grades were not good enough and denied his request.

I am grateful to Barbara Levy, Jesse's granddaughter, who allowed me to photocopy two volumes of Jesse's Harvard compositions written during 1890-92. Each composition is accompanied by a grade and comments from the class' professor, each written in Jesse's hand. Jesse thought about a career in "theoretic economics" but honored his beloved father by going into the family business.

On December 11, 1892 Jesse wrote to Isidor, "It seems as though every second letter I write you must contain a request for assistance to a worthy fellow who is trying to get an education at Harvard. This seems to be the 2nd letter, and does not break the rules for it contains a 'charity request.' The fellow now in question is a Jew though not a Russian. He was born in New York, where his parents now reside, and is of German extraction. He is a Senior in College, and hopes to get his degree this year, and go into business in the city next summer or fall. He is an average student, I think, who works hard, but seems to have poor luck on examinations, so that his rank has not been particularly high. I have known him quite some time, and like him very well. He has no extravagant vices or habits. He spends a great deal of his time in my room, and is on the whole, with me a great deal. By the way, you may know him yourself. His name is Jesse I. Straus."

Jesse made a point of keeping strict accounts. He carried a small notebook in his waistcoat pocket, jotting down his expenditures as they occurred. When questioned about a two-cent entry, Jesse was able to tell Isidor it was for a stamp. He was more than six feet tall, a dapper dresser with a fondness for



Letter from Isidor to Jesse - mid 1870's

ascots. He played chess and shied away from athletics; later participating in tennis, golf, swimming and fishing. Although serious in nature, Jesse loved a practical joke. He read non-fiction avidly and almost exclusively.

Jesse graduated from Harvard in 1893 with an A.B. degree. He and Percy traveled to Chicago to see the Columbia Exposition the summer of his graduation and then to the western states. Upon his return he was given a job at the Hanover Bank. After getting business experience at the bank Jesse was eager to enter Macy's but Isidor insisted he work at Abraham & Straus. There he learned that hard work was exciting if it was work one loved. He started as a salesman and would have to earn each promotion. He was finally permitted to move to Macy's in 1896, the year the family become sole owners of the firm. He said it was the happiest day of his commercial life. He was assigned to the Receiving Department in the basement and, once again, had to work his way up. Jesse remained at Macy's for 35 years.

On November 14, 1893 Isidor paid one thousand dollars to the Manhattan Club for Jesse's dues as a Life Member.

Jesse Isidor Straus married Irma Nathan November 20, 1895 with Felix Adler of the Ethical Culture Society officiating. The announcement in the *New York Times* states, "The bride, who is tall and stately and beautiful, wore a white satin dress with appliqué lace." Irma Nathan was, in fact, diminutive; under five feet tall and wore a size two shoe. The wedding was held at the Nathan home with a reception following at Delmonico's. The couple's wedding trip included a visit to Talbotton, GA, the town where Jesse's grandfather first settled in the United States. The newlyweds lived at the Netherlands Hotel for a year and then moved to 111 West Fifty-Seventh Street where Beatrice Nathan Straus was born September 27, 1897. Jesse wrote to Isidor and Ida in Cairo, Egypt at the end of the year, "Baby is splendid. She gains 4-8 ozs a week, and grows proportionately tall and long." The rest of the letter details business matters. Jesse was in charge of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street store while Isidor was away and filled Isidor in on all matters.

For the next fifteen years the Strauses lived at 49 East 74<sup>th</sup> Street in a house given to them by Max Nathan, Irma's father. Jesse Isidor (Jack) Straus II was born January 13, 1900 with Robert Kenneth (Bob) Straus following on October 22, 1905. Jesse determined that Jack would go into the family business while Bob would follow the course of Jesse's dreams. Bob would be educated in politics and economics. For the remainder of his days Jesse was a devoted family man who took an interest in all facets of his family's life. Irma traveled with him, even on business trips, and the children heard from them almost daily. He never missed an opportunity to send a note for a birthday, graduation or just to stay in touch.

By 1901 Jesse and his brother Percy were both actively involved in the executive levels of Macy's. The store was still

located on 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Sixth Avenue but rapidly outgrowing its space. They decided that it was time to move uptown. 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway would suit their needs. By November 1902 Macy's at Herald Square was built and open for business. It is telling that in such a short time the older generation had come to trust, respect and rely on the opinions of the younger generation. In the next few years Jesse bought and sold various properties in upper Manhattan for personal investment.

Jesse and his family left on the SS "Cincinnati" for Hamburg on June 12, 1909. They spent the summer months in Europe, His letters to Isidor tell of motoring around Europe in Isidor's Mercedes with stops in Munich, Nurnburg, Cortina, Paris and London. When in Paris he visited R. H. Macy's office each morning. He described the difference in shops in London and Paris and suggested using methods that were accepted in Europe but uncommon in New York. He also described the ease of travel, was much pleased with the car, but suggested that Isidor bring his own chauffeur when he next visited Europe as the men hired there did not take good care of the automobile.



Beatrice, Irma (Jesse' daughter and wife,) Vivian, Minnie, Sara, Jesse, Percy, Herbert - about 1900

Jesse wrote a brief biography for the Harvard Alumni report of 1910. "I am engaged in a business which absorbs most of my time and attention, and, because my seniors devote a large part of their time to charitable, philanthropic and municipal work, the details in a business that consists largely of details devolve on the juniors, of whom I am one."

In 1910 he joined Deal Country Club in NJ. This was a year when Jesse became involved in many organizations in the city. He headed a group of the leading property owners on 34<sup>th</sup> Street who wanted to prevent the widening of the street without first studying how much sidewalk space would be needed to handle the foot traffic expected at the new Pennsylvania Terminal.

Jesse wrote a "roast," a poem to celebrate Isidor and Ida's fortieth anniversary. The first few stanzas are reproduced here.

*We gather today to celebrate, Forty years of a happy married life. They say it was hot in '71, When papa took mamma as wife.*

*To be blessed with twelve children, (six and six spouses) and such ones as these, To be sure 'twas I set the pace, Is a feat to be proud of, you all must agree,- Just look at mamma's pleased face.*

*To get down to cases, we're a good looking lot. 'Tis a well known fact I've expressed, Most scientists say the race should improve, How can it be better than best?*

*Mamma can you recollect when we were all petite, the various kinds of medicines you used to make us eat? earliest recollection is that Caster Oil was king, 'If I had headache, prickly heat or mumps, it was the only thing.*

*To it ipecac succeeded, Twenty drops was all prescribed. But mamma gave a pint for full measure, and despite it we all survived.*

*Well, all those cures have had their sway, and straight and tall we grew. But it was love and care that won the day, And reared this healthy crew.*

In 1911 Jesse and Irma bought "Northview" in Mt Kisco, NY. This large country estate had enough acreage that Jesse could give each of his children land for a house once they married and had families of their own.

When Isidor and Ida were in Europe the winter of 1912 Jesse, Percy and Herbert wrote to their parents almost daily. Jesse was president of R. H. Macy's. His letters were devoted mostly to business. Percy wrote news of the city and of merchandising and Herbert wrote about family activities. In this way their parents were completely informed.

On March 28<sup>th</sup> Jesse wrote to Herbert, "Irma and I suddenly decided to sail on the "Amerika" on the 11<sup>th</sup>, crossing Papa in mid-ocean. We came to this determination because Papa is coming home earlier than usual, and I wanted Irma to get away from house-keeping for a little while before the summer, and as I have not been sleeping well I think the sail will do me good. Irma wants to take Beatrice and put her in the Beer girls' school at Neuilly for a few weeks for the sake of the French. We will be back here the first week in June." On the 29<sup>th</sup> he wrote to his parents, "I hope that you will both return in as good health as you appear to have been in all Winter, and that the "Titanic" will give you a smooth crossing. My only regret is that our proposed trip abroad will postpone our meeting you for a few weeks longer." On April 14<sup>th</sup> he wrote from the "Amerika" by telegram, "fine voyage fine ship feeling fine what news" Irma wrote to her sons back in New York on April 17<sup>th</sup>, not knowing that "Titanic" was lost "Two days ago the Captain knocked at our door at seven o'clock in the morning to tell us to come on deck and see two ice-bergs. We only had time to put on wrappers and fur coats and go on deck."

After the loss of his beloved father Jesse continued Isidor's mercantile, philanthropic and civic work. He was on the board of the Jewish Protectory and Aid Society of Brooklyn and a member of the board of The Educational Alliance. Jesse, Percy and Herbert donated \$10,000 to Harvard in honor of their father. "The income accrued from the gift was to be used for lectures on commercial practices and business organization in the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration," reported the *New York Times* on September 27, 1912. He presented a monument to the City of New York in 1913 honoring the city's firemen. He was one of the inaugural directors of the Chamber of German-American Commerce organized in 1914 and a director of the American Importers' Association. He was appointed chairman of the Broadway Association Committee to confer with the Public Service Commission about the proper way to ventilate subways. His association also suggested that the Committee on Franchises, Board of Estimate, modify the planned routes for motor buses to include a route down Broadway. He

was on a committee looking into the formation of a Federation of Contributors to Philanthropic Institutions potentially made up of twenty-one Jewish organizations in New York City. He was secretary of the Tax Reduction Committee formed in 1916 to "propose ways and means by which not only a further protest can be made but active measures may be promoted to reduce the financial burden of the city," said committee Vice Chairman Alfred E. Marling. He was treasurer of the Wilson Business Men's National League in September 1916, director of the National Thrift Bond Corporation and the New York Merchants' Liberty Loan Committee in 1917. He set up booths within Macy's where Liberty Bonds were sold. In 1918, Jesse chaired the Department Store and Retail Dry Goods Committee of the New York War Savings Committee.

In November 1913, Nathan Straus formally withdrew, along with his sons Nathan Straus, Jr. and Hugh Grant Straus from R. H. Macy's & Co., Inc. They retained their interest in L. Straus & Sons and in Abraham & Straus. Jesse, Percy and Herbert assumed sole senior partnership at R. H. Macy's. They were called a "triumvirate" and "Merchant princes" by the press. Jesse said, "Whenever my brothers and I aren't unanimous, we let the majority rule; then the third man changes his vote and we are unanimous."



Jesse I. and Irma N. Straus  
Passport photos - 1920's



In 1915 Jesse took a ten-year lease on a 25-room apartment on Park Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street. The apartment was large enough to earn comment in the city's newspapers.

The Victor Company brought suit to try to force the Strauses to sell their Victor Talking Machine at a fixed price. This case was decided in March 1915 and became a landmark decision with the Strauses prevailing. A 1916 suit brought by the government against the Strauses for undervaluing Limoges china imports was dismissed in Federal Court.

Charles Bertram Webster was head of R. H. Macy's until 1896 when the Strauses became sole owners. When Webster died without issue he left a quarter of his estate, \$1,325,637 to build a hotel for working single women in the heart of the retail dry goods district. Jesse was one of the executors of Webster's estate and treasurer of the corporation building the apartments.

When Jesse became president of R. H. Macy & Co., Inc. in 1919 he said, "It is in the preparation for the succession of today's and tomorrow's that retailing first becomes a science. It dawned on some that better methods of organization, better methods of hiring, greater study of troubles and their correction, might lead to less firing and more training for all jobs, from executive right down to the youngster and least important junior." In later years he delivered a Cyrus Fogg Brackett Lecture at Princeton University. He laid out these scientific theories and principals of management, control, publicity and merchandising in his talk, "The Economics of Modern Metropolitan Merchandising."

Speaking at the annual convention of the National Retail Dry Goods Association in February 1919, Jesse urged, "If our stocks are handled conservatively as nearly as possible, depending upon our proximity to market, from hand to mouth, we will be able to place before the consumers of the country their needs at lowering prices with greater helpfulness and safety to them and with safety to ourselves." On July 4, 1920 the *New York Times* reported, "Higher prices as a result of the cut in prices by department stores all over the country is the paradoxical prediction of Jesse I. Straus. ... the distributors are bulling the market against themselves."

Jesse was active in the Democratic Club. A bipartisan committee was formed in 1922 to raise \$1,000,000 for the establishment of annual prizes for public service as a tribute to ex-President Wilson. Jesse, a Democrat, was a member of the Founders' Committee of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. His uncle Oscar S. Straus, a Republican, was also a member. In 1924, as the presidential election loomed, Jesse urged the 7,500 employees of Macy's to vote saying, "It would certainly be far from my thoughts to suggest or recommend any particular cause or candidate to you, but I do feel you should, as good citizens, all register and vote next November. The franchise we enjoy is more than a right; it is an obligation as well."

Before sailing for Europe on the "Mauritania" September 30, 1920 he said, "Holders of large stocks must prepare for a widespread fall in prices. The downward trend has begun. Let us hope that the liquidation will be gradual." In 1921 New York City Mayor Hylan proposed a plan to hold "Buyers' Week" as one method for relieving unemployment. Chairman of the committee Jesse I. Straus said, "One cannot expect to change over night an economic state which is the result of conditions such as the world has never before seen." Jesse was elected president of the National Retail Dry Goods Association for 1922. In April he announced a National Merchandise Fair would be held the following August. The fair was intended to bring retailers and wholesalers together. It was deemed a huge success and plans were made to hold this event annually.

In October 1921 Jesse, a member of the National Council of American Importers and Traders, came out against the Fordney Tariff plan. He felt it would encourage speculative manipulation of prices. In February 1923 Jesse said, "The American valuation plan is unbusiness-like, un-American, and most of all, dishonest in that it deceives the public.... We need friendly competition and if we ask no governmental subsidies we demand governmental equality." Jesse introduced a resolution at the Merchandise Fair of 1923 "which called for the establishment of an arbitration tribunal to adjust differences between buyers and sellers." The National Retail Dry Goods Association formed the Joint Committee on Trade Relations based on his recommendations. Jesse was elected to its executive board. He continued speaking before merchandising groups and contributed a chapter to "the most comprehensive" handbook on

retail store operation in December 1923 published by the National Retail Dry Goods Association.

In December 1921 Mayor Hylan proposed removing the elevated trains from the streets as one means of alleviating traffic congestion. Jesse supported this plan. In their place he advocated the construction of subways.

In March 1923 Jesse I. Straus announced to stockholders that R. H. Macy & Co., Inc. had a record year. The corporation completed a new twelve-story warehouse and factory building and increased its sales floor space by fifty percent. The new nineteen-story addition was opened September 6, 1924. On April 1, 1925 he said, "A year ago I reported the purchase of a substantial interest in LaSalle & Koch & Co. of Toledo, Ohio. I now report a second step in the plan of extending Macy's operations beyond New York City. Negotiations for the purchase of a substantial interest in Davison-Paxon-Stokes Company of Atlanta are practically completed. ... It will be our policy to further expand in promising centres when the right opportunities arise."



Herbert, Jesse, Percy - Red Bank, NJ - 1920

The Straus brothers, Jesse, Percy and Herbert, donated \$300,000 to Harvard in 1924 for the construction of a dormitory to honor their parents. Straus Hall is a freshman dormitory today and was the last on campus to go coeducational.

Jesse believed Judaism was a religion, not a nationality. He made a point of supporting worthy causes that were not Jewish in affiliation. He was elected to the Board of Trustees of the United Hos-

pital Fund on February 1, 1924 and to the active committee to raise funds for the Hampton-Tuskegee Institute in March 1925. The same month he gifted the Atlanta Art Museum 5,000 annotated photographs of paintings, mostly by old masters of the Italian Renaissance School.

Jesse's talk at the Advertising Club on March 10, 1925 was titled, "Retail Advertising from the Store Owner's Point of View." His article, "Why We Treat Salesmen Like Customers" appeared in the September 1926 issue of *System, the Magazine of Business*. In 1926 it was announced that American textile buyers would be invited to Paris in 1927 in an effort to form closer Franco-American trade accord.

In March 1927 the Davison-Paxon department store opened in Atlanta, GA. A February 13<sup>th</sup> article in *The Constitution*, an Atlanta newspaper stated, "Atlanta was selected by the Strauss (sic) brothers, as a point for the location of an affiliated branch of R. H. Macy and company for both business and sentimental reasons. The Strauss (sic) brothers have unlimited confidence in the future of Atlanta and also have long cherished a desire to own a store in Georgia where Lazarus and Isidor Strauss (sic) began their business careers more than two-score years ago." Jesse and his brother Herbert used the trip south as an opportunity to visit Talbotton GA, the town where their grandfather Lazarus first settled.

In the fall of 1927 Jesse wrote to Percy, "It will interest you to know that I am starting the apartment house proposition with Brown, Wheelock, Harris, Vought & Co. as managing agents." Jesse built 720 and 730 Park Avenue in New York City in 1927. He, once again, wanted to provide a place where his family could all live in close proximity.

At the beginning of 1928 Jesse said, "The outlook for 1928 is promising. Though unemployment is slightly greater than a year ago, wages have remained at peak; the farmers are in better financial condition than for some years past, and producers as well as distributors have learned to operate conservatively. In both production and distribution, however, insufficient progress has been made in management processes, despite the fact that there is great opportunity. Realization of the opportunity will depend on the mental approach to the problems involved on the part of major executives or store owners."

Jesse was part of a delegation of the New York State Chamber of Commerce that went to Cuba as guests of Cuba's President Machado in January 1928. He wrote a chapter for *A Century of Industrial Progress*, a book commissioned to celebrate the centenary of the American Institute and an article for the September 1928 issue of *The Living Age* explaining the European's view of Governor Al Smith as the Democratic candidate for President. In August 1928 he was suggested as a possible candidate for Governor of New York.

In June 1929 Jesse announced that R. H. Macy & Co., Inc. bought L. Bamberger & Co. of Newark, NJ making Macy's the largest store in the country. In October he joined the businessmen's committee to re-elect Mayor Walker, Controller Berry and Aldermanic President McKee. In November he participated in a gathering of heads of industry and corporations to meet with President Hoover at the White House to discuss means of furthering the president's efforts to stabilize business. He was on the board of trustees of the Society of Phipps Houses, a group that provided housing for workers.

He was a member of the New York State Commission for the Revision of Tax Laws. The commission became operative April 23, 1930. Recommendations that became public in February 1932 included a complete readjustment of the State's tax system. The Senate decided not to act on any of the tax revision bills in 1932 but reserved the right to do so any time it became necessary to raise additional funds for work relief. The Senate passed a bill doubling personal income taxes.

Jesse was chairman of the notification committee of the Independent Citizens' Committee for the re-election of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt and Lieut. Governor Herbert Lehman of New York in October 1930. In March 1931 he announced that Franklin D. Roosevelt was the leader in a poll of delegates and alternates to the Democratic National Convention. Although

never holding office himself, he proclaimed, "I should give all of my energies to the Governorship of New York and nothing else." By the time of the election there were five polls. This was the first time political polls were used. In his multi-volume biography of Roosevelt Frank Friedel wrote, "The poll was a magnificent gift to Roosevelt from Jesse I. Straus, president of R. H. Macy and Company department stores. Straus, a businessman and philanthropist of finest repute, was one of the most active of the "Friends of Roosevelt."

Jesse was elected to the Board of Overseers of Harvard University in 1925 and chairman of the Visiting Committee in 1930. At that time he wrote, "It has always appeared to me that the knowledge of method "To Know How" is more important in the development of a career than mere scholastic attainment." When Jesse was appointed Ambassador to France in 1933 he resigned from the Overseers Board citing his inability to attend meetings. "I have never had any honor given me that thrilled me more than my election to the Board - even the present appointment." The University of Georgia awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in June 1931.



Jesse & Irma Straus family - June 1936  
Front row: Jesse, Pamela, Beatrice Levy, Gerald Levy,  
Patricia, Kenneth, Margaret, Jessica Levy, Irma  
Back row: Barbara Levy, Robert Levy, Jack, Robert

Jesse was a director of the New York County National Bank, the Lincoln Trust Company and the New York Life Insurance Company. He was a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, the Educational Association of New York, the National Economic League and the Business Historical Society to name just a few of his affiliations. He took his appointments seriously, learning everything he could about each organization and its purpose

and then acted accordingly. He personally gave the award to graduates of the Brooklyn Junior High School No. 109. He supported the Isidor and Ida Straus Scholarship at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, VA. He gave generously to the American Red Cross, the National Committee on Prisons and Prison-Labor, the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association, Mt. Kisco Police Department, the Boy Scout Fund and countless other causes.

With all of his business, civic and philanthropic activities, Jesse Isidor Straus was a devoted family man. He tried to be home each evening for dinner. Although he couldn't prevent his mind from wandering to the problems of the day, he was always available to his wife and children. He was a serious man who still found it possible to bring humor and music into his world. Jesse Isidor Straus was a merchant, public servant and philanthropist. And in each he excelled.

The next issue of the newsletter will include the remainder of this brief biographical article about Jesse Isidor Straus beginning with his appointment as head of the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (TERA) of New York State in 1931 and through his appointment as Ambassador to France by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

## Villa Olympia, Cherry Island, Thousand Islands NY

In the early 1890's Nathan and Lina Straus owned a house on Lower Saranac Lake in Franklin County NY next door to that of Isidor and Ida. We have many letters written by Ida telling of the close relationship between the families and of their daily activities during their summer months in the country. When Nathan and Lina's son Jerome died in 1893, Ida and her oldest son Jesse closed Nathan and Lina's house. On October 12<sup>th</sup> Ida wrote, "One is so forcibly reminded of Jerome on all sides." On the 14<sup>th</sup> she wrote, "It breaks one's heart to think that all the care, and forethought and heart-love which every portion of the house bespeaks on Lina's part, should now go to strangers. There are as many delicate little arrangements which her kind heart alone dictated, which it is such a pity that she should lose all benefit of."

Nathan and Lina bought Villa Olympia on Cherry Island in New York's Thousand Islands sometime after 1893. We have a guest book dated 1897-1913. One of guests was Mr. Williams, architect for Villa Olympia. The Straus villa was one of his firm's major commissions in the Thousand Islands.

John Harwood contacted me in November 2003. He explained that his family has owned Villa Olympia since 1937. His grandfather, Abe Cooper, bought the property with two houses and several out buildings on it. Abraham Abraham once owned the twin house. James Dawes from Philadelphia bought the houses and property from Nathan about 1916 and Abe Cooper bought it from him in 1937. The expense of maintaining both houses was too great for John's grandfather and he demolished one house. The family has been trying to reconstruct the other. They were not certain which house belonged to which family or what name went with the remaining house. When John contacted me he was looking for information and photographs so that their reconstruction would be accurate. Based on photographs in the Straus Historical Society's archives, we were able to ascertain that the remaining house was Villa Olympia, the summer home of Nathan and Lina. After viewing our photographs John wrote, "Our house is the house indicated as Olympia. The Gazebo still stands and the house is exactly the same architecturally. ... Because we have a combination of things from both houses we use a general rule of thumb to determine which piece came from which house. Oak or bamboo came from the other house (now believed to have been the Abraham house which had a less formal interior design) and mahogany or traditional styles with carvings were originally located in our house."

Cherry Island was also the location of Casa Blanca, a house owned by Eugenie and Louis Marx, Lina's sister and brother-

in-law. Mrs. Amsterdam currently owns this house. John wrote that Casa Blanca is a "veritable museum, last decorated in the 1890s and unchanged since then. She welcome groups to Casa Blanca for benefit occasions."

When John Harwood contacted me I was already corresponding with Cindy Furman whose husband's great grandmother was Anna Katherine Ruff Stowell the housekeeper for the Nathan Straus family. Cindy's husband's great grandfather, Fred Stowell, was born in Alexandria Bay NY in the Thousand Islands. It is believed he was Nathan's boat captain. Since that time Paul Malo, a Syracuse University professor emeritus, architectural historian, and author of books about homes in the Thousand Islands has joined our correspondence. John, Cindy and Paul have been energetic researchers. Their goals are different but their combined dynamic has led to some interesting discoveries.



Villa Olympia between 1900-1916

In the early 1990's, Flora Stieglitz Straus, wife of Hugh Grant Straus and daughter-in-law of Nathan and Lina, allowed me to photocopy the guest book from Villa Olympia. It is dated 1897-1913 but the first entry reads, "Moved into Villa Olympia Monday, July 16, 1900. Nathan, Lina, Charles W. Straus (The original name of Nathan Straus, Jr.) and H. Grant Straus signed the page. The first lunch guests, Abraham, Rose and Edith Abraham, came on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Abraham Abraham was a business partner of the Strauses; half owners of Abraham and Straus. In 1902 Edith Abraham married Percy S. Straus, son of Isidor and Ida. Throughout the guest book the signatures of relatives appear. In addition, many politicians from both the Republican and Democratic parties visited as did Jewish leaders and clergy from other faiths. Conversations at the dinner table must have been fascinating.



Villa Olympia today- Southern view  
Courtesy of John Harwood

Pages from the guest book describe the weather, temperature of the lake, daily activities and comments by visitors. From it we get a good picture of what life must have been like during the summer months on Cherry Island. August 8, 1901, "Terrific hail-storm. Hailstones size of eggs. - five to a pound. Made holes in the ground two inches deep." "Friday evening "A thirty pound muscallonge caught at 3:10 P.M. to-day, August 9, 1901 by Mr. Louis Marx, the champion fisherman of the Thousand Islands." August 1, 1902, "Boys began bathing today." On August 7, 1902 thirteen year old Charley wrote, "I caught my first muskallonge to-day. It weighted a little under two pounds." On August 1, 1904, "Launching of Grant's yacht "Elinor" with a large party of guests present." Grant was fourteen in 1904. June 29, 1905, "Arrival of our new launch "Talbotton." July 3, 1905, "Sissie, Irving and Grant took first swim. Temperature of water 58°." August 12, 1905, "Oscar with Sarah leaves us for Portsmouth N.H. The Peace Conference



had been sitting since August 8<sup>th</sup> and naturally has been the topic of conversation at Villa Olympia. Also a proposed meeting of Jacob Schiff, I. N. Seligman and Oscar with M. Witte, the Czar's chief envoy, on request of the latter, to discuss the condition of the Jews in Russia." September 6, 1905, written by Father J. J. Curran, Wilkes Barre, Pa, "who met Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Straus during the great Anthracite coal strike 1902, and from whom he had bestowed upon him their esteem and love. He now assures Mr. and Mrs. Straus of his everlasting gratitude for their extreme kindness to him, and pledged his loyalty to them the rest of his life." July 7, 1906, "First river bath. Temperature 60° F." August 6, 1906, "Father goes cruising on "Wana" with Messrs. Abraham, Blum and Dr. McNaughton." August 21, 1906, "In fond remembrance of the victory of Sisilina over her unworthy rival Stroller; not to be unmindful either of the fact of having made the greatest catch of bass and pickerel of the season." Signed by J. J. Curran. In 1907 and 1908 the Strauses did not return to Villa Olympia for the summer. They noted in the guest book how happy they were to return in 1909. July 10, 1909, "The "Ostrich", our new 35 ft., 23 mile, motor boat arrived. The "Ostrich" was the show boat at the New York Motorboat Show. To celebrate her advent in the Thousand Islands, the "Ostrich" twisted off her propeller-shaft at the bearing in the strut in the stern. Accident caused by propeller-shaft being bent in transit and running hot." July 19, "Mr. Chase arrived from the works of the Electric Launch Co. with a new propeller and shaft, the day before yesterday. Today we took our first successful and satisfying ride on the "Ostrich." Mama, sister, Irving and later Cousin Mary (Marx) joined us for some jolly spins." July 13, "Our neighbors returned from the cruise - We met them on the "Sisilina" and as the river was very rough we stopped at Brockville. We signaled to the Wana which stopped and took us aboard and we returned together." August 30, 1912, "Closing cottage for season and leaving with great regret after a very enjoyable healthful Summer." July 3, 1913 Lina wrote that she, Nathan, Charlie, Grant and Dr. Stieglitz had arrived. "Sissie and Irving follow a day after Mrs. Stieglitz. Flora and Elizabeth arrive a week later on their return from Europe. And the Summer sees the realization of my cherished hope in the engagement of Flora to my dear Grant."

Cindy Furman has done quite a lot of work finding information about "Sisilina." In 1905 Nathan Straus owned a yacht named "Presto." He signed the contract for "Sisilina" October 1905. She was a wood steam yacht identified in Herreshoff Manufac-

turing Company's records as HMCo hull number 249. She drafts 3-6 feet and had a three bladed propeller. The design was taken from the hull of a smaller boat built by the same company in 1897.



Boat House - likely 1950's  
Courtesy of John Harwood



Nathan's yacht "Sisilina"



Clock from "Sisilina"  
Courtesy of Hugh Grant Straus III

for a week's cruise and fishing. On September 19th a *New York Times* article stated, "Nathan Straus's Yacht Runs On a Rock. ... The yacht Siselina owned by Nathan Straus of New York, ran on a rock shoal at Grass Island near Manotick, in the Rideau

River. She was pulled off by the Government tug Shanley. The craft was on her way to Montreal. She was not badly damaged." On February 9, 1911 the *Thousand Island Sun* reported that "Fred Stowell, Engineer for Mr. Straus," had gone to the Charles L. Seabury Co. at Morris Heights, NY to get the new yacht "Vetesse," which he would bring via the Atlantic and St. Lawrence. This new yacht was 125 feet long. Family members report that Nathan donated "Sisilina" to the Coast Guard at the beginning of World War I. We don't know if Nathan bought "Vetesse" or if Fred Stowell was transporting it for someone else.

John Harwood and his three cousins inherited the house and property on Cherry Island. They have been working to restore the house and out buildings. John told me that his grandfather bought the house with all its contents including the furniture, pictures, photographs and papers. He is slowly working his way through the papers and has shared some of them with us. A page of notes written by Oscar describes a trip to Palestine "Left New York Feb. 3, 1912 on S.S. Laconia. Touched at Madeira, Gibraltar, Algiers, Monaco where met Isidor and Ida Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>."

Paul Malo has written a third book about historic houses in the Thousand Islands. He weaves information into a narrative thread that makes the details quite interesting. His new book, *A Floating World: More People, Places, and Pastimes of the Thousand Islands* is available from the author. It includes information about Nathan and Lina Straus and about the Cherry Island houses. Please let me know if you would like a copy.

## Roger Williams Straus, Jr. 1917-2004

The world lost a true original when Roger Williams Straus, Jr. passed away on May 25, 2004. Stephen Miller of *The New York Sun* wrote that Roger was "the founder and for decades the motive force behind Farrar, Straus & Giroux, probably the most distinguished independent literary publishing house in America ... Prickly, stingy, foul-mouthed, and fanatically devoted to cultivating his elite roster of writers..." Obituaries from around the country called him "opinionated," "colorful," "outspoken," and "brash." He was a publishing icon who was also a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, brother and uncle.

Roger Williams Straus, Jr. was born in New York City on January 3, 1917 to Roger Williams Straus and Gladys E. Guggenheim. Roger was not inclined to follow his family's example of academic achievement. His early school career included withdrawing from St. George's in Newport RI after his junior year. He worked for the *White Plains Daily Reporter* in the summer after his sophomore year at Hamilton College and found his life's calling. The University of Missouri School of Journalism, where he completed his college education, provided the vehicle.

Dorothea Liebmann was Roger's childhood sweetheart. The couple married in 1938 while Roger was still in school. Son Roger Williams Straus III was born in 1943.

After earning his degree, Roger again worked for the White Plains newspaper. He left that job to become an editorial assistant at *Current History* magazine. When the war broke out, Roger co-edited *War Letters from Britain*, a collection of first-person accounts of the blitz in London. The book received critical acclaim and Roger was hooked. He and friend James Van Alen ran the Navy's New York Office of Public Relations, Magazine and Book Section. There they wrote speeches, edited magazine copy and cleared reporters for overseas travel. He was a lieutenant with the Navy Reserves when he ended his military career.

Roger realized he was more interested in publishing than in reporting. He used a portion of his future inheritance to start Farrar, Straus & Co. in 1946 along with funds from several friends and investors. He found he didn't have the capital to compete for authors with the large commercial publishers of the day. And so he looked abroad for his material. Early authors included Carlo Levi, Alberto Moravia and Cesare Pavese. Their success encouraged American authors to join Farrar, Straus & Co. Several partners and name changes later, Farrar, Straus & Giroux was established in 1964. Today, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, the firm can claim "21 Nobel laureates, 17 Pulitzer Prize winners, 23 National Book Award winners, 16 National Book Critics Circle Award winners and numerous Caldecott and Newbery medalists." In a December 1978 interview for the *New York Times* Roger said, "Many people have accused me of being an elitist. I'm guilty. I am an elitist. I like good books."

Author Tom Wolfe said Roger "really put his heart into publishing." Roger felt that the larger commercial publishing houses could just as well have been selling spaghetti. Accountants and businessmen were running them. His vision was to publish books of merit. He revelled in personal contact with his authors, often signing them with no agent or formal contract. He oversaw the editing of most books and was always accessible to his authors. In fact, his New York apartment was the scene of evening soirees reminiscent of days past. Roger would move among the literati, commenting on a new book or sharing a bit of gossip.

In his *New York Observer* obituary, Philip Weiss wrote, "Roger loved pleasure and fun and mischief. ... fled bores like the plague and then told you about them. ... Roger wasn't about taste; he had a deeper vision. It was about soul and energy." Author Alice McDermott said, "He was such a character! When I met him, I felt like I had stepped into a Noel Coward play. He was wonderful, everything you imagined a New York literary publisher should be like, with his ascot and his wealthy accent and his charm and his humor."



Roger W. Straus  
Photo credit © Gasper Tingalik, 1996

As one who found herself in Roger Williams Straus' company on several occasions, I can attest to the delight he took in telling anecdote-filled stories peppered with expletives intended to entertain, titillate, shock and educate all at once. He was definitely his own man. I believe nothing could move him from a position once he determined that stance. He was fiercely loyal to his authors, family and friends. His business was his pleasure

and he played to win.

Roger was a devoted tennis player. The *New York Times* reported his winning matches at St. George's school as early as 1934. Recent hip problems forced his retirement from the game. He loved carnations and grew them even though they were not a fashionable flower. When his Purchase NY home burned to the ground, he and wife Dorothea rebuilt it, faithful in every detail to the original. Whatever he did, he did with passion.

In 1976 Roger was awarded an honorary Doctor of Literature degree from his alma mater, the University of Missouri and an honorary Doctor of Literature from Hofstra University in 1989. On April 2, 2003 Roger W. Straus, Jr. was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by Hamilton College. He served on many boards including that of Manhattanville College and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. He was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Artes et des Lettres by the French government. He was a member of the Lotus Club, Westchester Country Club and the Players Club.

Beside his wife Dorothea and son Roger III, Roger Williams Straus leaves three granddaughters, Laura, Tamara and Rachel, a brother Oscar S. Straus II of NY and sister Florence S. Hart of IL.

## Friends of Straus Park

By Al Berr, Photos by Margie Kavanau

Edited by Joan Adler

After a week of rain, the weather cooperated and the sun came out for the annual Brunch in the Park on April 17, 2004. The Friends of Straus Park hold this event every year in the middle of April to commemorate Isidor and Ida Straus and the sinking of "Titanic." Chairs and small tables were set up in the space in front of the fountain facing the musicians. Susy Schwartz and her trio played chamber music throughout the brunch. Suzy and her group have played at many of Friends events and their music is always warmly received. Mostly traditional fare was offered from 11:00 to 2:00 - quiches, bagels and spreads and beverages. More Straus Park T-shirts were sold than usual.

The Park was in full early spring bloom, with yellow forsythia, purple azalea, and white pear tree blossoms. Someone remarked that the Park's horticulturist must have worked very hard through the night to achieve such colorful results. We know that John Olund, our wonderful gardener, works hard throughout the year to guarantee the colorful displays we enjoy in the warmer months.

A good crowd of all ages turned out, some of whom showed their appreciation of the event by filling our contribution canister, which, in turn, fills the Friends' hearts.

From 6:00 to 8:00 on Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> Friends of Straus Park held a summer music event that featured Floyd Lee and his Mean Blues Band. The occasion marked the presentation of a plaque in honor of Leon Auerbach who was chiefly instrumental in the rehabilitation of the Park. The plaque rests at the foot of a tree that was planted in Auerbach's honor earlier this year. A representative of the Parks Department extolled the benefits of the Park and Al Berr read his poem in honor of Leon and the tree. The balmy weather and the infectious rhythms of the band produced a record turnout for the event.

A Book Fair was held in Straus Park on Saturday, July 10<sup>th</sup> between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Everyone loved the event. Margie Kavanau organized the Book Fair and made sure everything went as smoothly as possible. Deirdre Wulf took care of the Friends table of donated books, Straus Park literature and beverages. One group of vendors took over the stone bench behind "Memory." They've expressed interest in expanding this event next year. Margie writes, "My hope is that all the pathways will be lined with tables of books, and that it becomes a major event on the Upper Westside!"

The Friends' Art in the Park is scheduled for Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, rain date Sunday, October 17. This is a fantastic day-long celebration of the Park with art, music, dance demonstrations and lessons performed by local artists, food supplied by neighborhood restaurants and neighbors and vendors selling a variety of merchandise. If you would like to reserve a booth, please contact Friends for information. Al Berr may be reached at: [ABerr@nysca.org](mailto:ABerr@nysca.org) The Park is located at West 106th Street between Broadway and West End Avenue in New York City.

Right: "Memory" and neighbors watching Floyd Lee and his Mean Blues Band perform



Left: Floyd Lee and his Mean Blues Band

Right: In Gratitude to Leon Auerbach  
The Inspiration Behind the Restoration of Straus Park from Friends of Straus Park



Left: Leon Auerbach and Al Berr

Right: Book Fair at Straus Park



Left: Book Fair - beautiful flowers in the reflecting pool

## Straus Center at Frost Valley YMCA, Claryville, NY

Roger Williams Straus and his wife Gladys Guggenheim Straus bought a country home in Putnam County, NY in 1936. The Claryville estate included approximately 1,600 acres with three miles along the eastern branch of the Neversink River. Roger was the chief executive officer of The American Smelting and Refining Company and co-founder of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Gladys established herself as a respected authority on nutrition and was one of the founders of *Gourmet* magazine. The family included children; Oscar S. Straus II, Roger Williams Straus, Jr. and Florence. Many of their vacations were spent fly fishing on the river. Today, grandchildren and great-grandchildren still have fond memories of visiting and fishing in the country.



Roger Williams Straus and Gladys Guggenheim Straus flyfishing on the Neversink River at "Wiltwyck," their country home in Claryville, NY

Roger Straus died suddenly in 1957. Gladys maintained the estate, offering its use to some of her friends. Once the YMCA summer camp in nearby Frost Valley incorporated as an independent YMCA in 1978, and initiated year-round programs in outdoor work and education for children and teenagers, Gladys decided to donate her estate to the YMCA to be used as a residential wellness center.

Leslie Black is director of the Straus Center at Frost Valley YMCA. She is interested in learning more about the Straus family and about the time when they were actively involved in the area. She encourages family members and friends to visit the center. There are only a small number of rooms available for guests so she suggests making a reservation if you would like to stay overnight.

You can contact Leslie Black at:  
845-985-2254 or [lblack@frostvalley.org](mailto:lblack@frostvalley.org)



Straus Center today,  
part of Frost Valley YMCA

## 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

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

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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: [info@straushistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@straushistoricalsociety.org)

You may now make contributions to the Straus Historical Society through PayPal. You can access PayPal by going to [www.PayPal.com](http://www.PayPal.com) or through our new website: [www.straushistoricalsociety.org](http://www.straushistoricalsociety.org) Go to the Donations page and scroll down until you find the side-bar with PayPal information. PayPal charges the Society a small fee for their service.

We are working hard to make our new website user friendly. Please let us know what kinds of information you would like to see posted. The continued success of the Society depends upon your involvement and your financial contributions. Let us hear from you.

## You Are Invited

The board of directors of the Straus Historical Society, Inc. invites you to attend a meeting of the board.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004 at the office of board member Paul A. Kurzman, 129 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, New York at 6 PM. If you cannot be there in person, it is possible to attend via conference call. There is no obligation to join the board or contribute to the Society.

This invitation is extended so that anyone interested in the Straus Historical Society may have an opportunity to participate and to share his/her views. Please contact Joan Adler 631-265-0383 or Paul A. Kurzman 212-452-7035 for further information.