

The Great Jewish Families of New York: A Journey Through Modern Jewish History

The arrival of Jewish immigrants to New York City in the late 19th and early 20th centuries marked the beginning of a profound transformation in the city's social and economic landscape. Among these newcomers were a group of extraordinary families whose wealth, influence, and philanthropic endeavors would forever shape the character of New York and leave an enduring legacy on American Jewish history.



"Our Crowd": The Great Jewish Families of New York (Modern Jewish History) by Stephen Birmingham

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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The Lehman Family: Titans of Finance and Philanthropy



The Lehman family was one of the most prominent Jewish families in New York City, with a storied history in the world of finance and philanthropy.

Henry Lehman, the patriarch of the family, arrived in New York from Germany in 1844. He worked as a peddler before establishing his own dry goods business. His son, Emanuel Lehman, joined the business in 1858 and together they expanded their operations into the cotton brokerage and investment banking sectors.

Under the leadership of Emanuel's son, Philip Lehman, the family business evolved into Lehman Brothers, which became a global financial powerhouse. Philip was also a renowned philanthropist, supporting numerous Jewish and non-Jewish causes. He established the Lehman

Fund, which provided grants to organizations working in education, healthcare, and social welfare.

The Lehman family's legacy extended beyond finance. Herbert Lehman, Philip's brother, served as Governor of New York from 1933 to 1942. He was a staunch advocate for social justice and economic equality, implementing a number of progressive policies during his tenure.

The Straus Family: Retail Revolutionaries and Civic Leaders



The Straus family, founders of the Macy's department store chain

The Straus family was another influential Jewish family in New York, renowned for their contributions to the retail sector and their civic

leadership.

Lazarus Straus and his wife, Sarah, immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1852. They opened a small dry goods store in Terre Haute, Indiana, which they later moved to New York City.

In 1893, Lazarus and Sarah's son, Isidor Straus, and his wife, Ida, purchased the bankrupt Macy's department store. Under their leadership, Macy's grew into one of the largest and most successful retail chains in the United States. Isidor was also active in civic life, serving as President of the New York Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the Park Board.

In 1912, Isidor and Ida Straus tragically perished in the sinking of the Titanic. Their son, Jesse Straus, succeeded his father as President of Macy's and continued his family's tradition of philanthropy. Jesse was a major supporter of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and served as President of the American Jewish Committee.

The Schiff Family: Banking and Cultural Luminaries



The Schiff family was a prominent Jewish family in New York, renowned for their wealth, cultural patronage, and philanthropic endeavors.

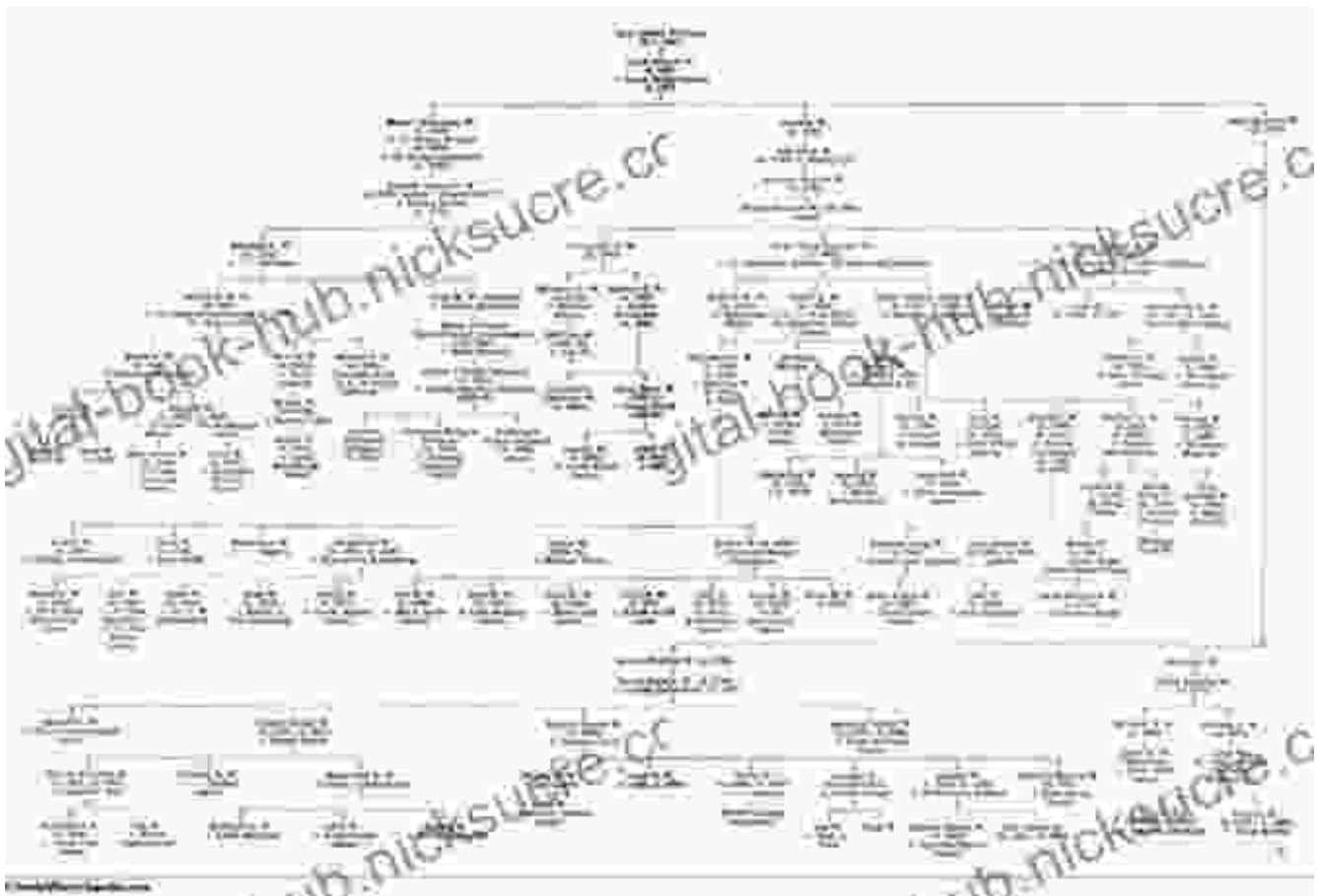
Jacob Schiff, the patriarch of the family, arrived in New York from Germany in 1865. He established a successful investment banking firm, Kuhn, Loeb & Co., which played a major role in financing American railroads and industrial development.

Jacob Schiff was also a passionate patron of the arts and a generous benefactor of the Jewish community. He supported the Metropolitan Opera

and the New York Philharmonic, and funded the construction of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Mortimer Schiff, Jacob's son, continued his father's legacy of philanthropy. He was a major donor to the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and served as President of the American Jewish Committee. Mortimer was also a collector of rare books and manuscripts, which he donated to the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The Warburg Family: Financers, Diplomats, and Scholars



The Warburg family, a dynasty of financiers, diplomats, and scholars

The Warburg family was a distinguished Jewish family in New York, active in the worlds of finance, diplomacy, and scholarship.

Moritz Warburg, the patriarch of the family, arrived in New York from Germany in 1839. He established a successful banking firm, M.M. Warburg & Co., which became a major player in the American banking industry.

Paul Warburg, Moritz's son, was a leading figure in the creation of the Federal Reserve System. He also served as a financial advisor to President Woodrow Wilson during World War I.

Felix Warburg, Paul's brother, was a renowned philanthropist and diplomat. He was a major donor to the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and served as President of the American Jewish Committee. Felix also played a key role in negotiating the Balfour Declaration, which laid the foundation for the establishment of the State of Israel.

The great Jewish families of New York City played a pivotal role in shaping the city's economic, social, and cultural landscape. Their contributions to business, philanthropy, and the arts left an enduring legacy that continues to inspire and shape the city today.

Through their wealth, influence, and commitment to social justice, these families helped to create a more vibrant and prosperous New York for all. Their stories are a testament to the power of immigration, entrepreneurship, and the transformative nature of philanthropy.

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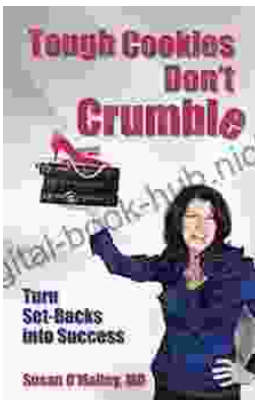
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