

## Miami County, Indiana's Jewish Population

Miami County, Indiana, located northeast of the state's center along the banks of the Wabash River, was organized in 1834 on land purchased by Joseph Holman from the Miami Tribe of Chief, John B. Richardville, in 1830. The Miami moved from their historical home in Wisconsin to central Indiana over a century before Indiana Territory was established in 1800, but lost much of their land through a string of 1830s treaties, starting with the 1834 treaty which dissolved the Eel Creek Reserve and forced inhabitants to move to other land within Miami County. The federal government quickly purchased the newly-available land and started the Wabash-Erie Canal. Peru, the county seat, was established shortly after Miami County, and became the hub of commercial and social activity in the county as those eager to work on the canal or sell goods to the canal workers trickled into the area. The first canal boat arrived in Peru in 1837, followed by additional treaties culminating in the 1840 treaty which forced the remaining Miami to cede their land and leave the state by 1845. This removal opened up Miami County for more development including the Lake and Western Reserve Railroad which reached Peru in 1854.<sup>1</sup>

Miami County's first Jewish citizen was Moses Falk, an immigrant from Wurtemberg, Germany arrived in Miami County around 1838.<sup>2</sup> Falk was a trader originally based out of Cincinnati who made his living by offering goods to European and American residents, as well as local Native Americans. Falk eventually organized a store known as the "Dutch Grocery" in Peoria, a pioneer Miami County settlement located southeast of present-day Peru, along the shore of Mississinewa Lake. Moses and his brother Loeb were the two of the first three Miami

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<sup>1</sup> "History of Miami County," *Miami County Museum*, <http://www.mcmuseum.org/History.html> [accessed July 3, 2012].

<sup>2</sup> "Zebler Family Among First Jewish Families In Indiana," *Jewish Post and Opinion*. Miami County Historical Society Collection.

County residents to become naturalized United States citizens after filing naturalization papers in 1844.<sup>3</sup> In 1850 Moses decided to move to Peru, starting the Falk Store, which he would manage until his death in 1878. His resulting commercial success made Falk “the first Jewish communal leader of importance” in the state, according to the *Jewish Post and Opinion*.<sup>4</sup> Falk was soon joined by other men from his native Wurtemberg throughout the 1840s, creating a successful pioneer Jewish community centered in Peru.

Early Jewish settlers included the Sterne brothers, the Strouse brothers, and Moses Oppenheimer. Falk originally sent for Charles and Herman Sterne, partnering with the brothers to create the Falk & Sterne Mercantile Firm, which operated from 1850 to 1859.<sup>5</sup> The Sterne brothers then purchased the Peru Woolen Mill. Falk continued to run a store until his 1878 retirement when he passed the company to his son Julius. Moses Rosenthal, Moses Falk’s nephew, traveled to Peru by foot from Carrollton, Illinois to work as a clerk in his uncle’s shop, eventually starting his own mercantile shop and becoming a partner in the Peru Woolen Mills after giving considerable capital to rebuild the mill after a 1868 fire. The Strouse brothers, Harry and David, also got their start in the Peru Woolen Mill after immigrating from Wurtemberg in the 1870s. They ended up building Peru’s first gas plant to operate with their mill and contracted with the city to provide street lights.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the Jewish individuals in Peru became community leaders by owning successful businesses, undertaking civic enterprises, joining fraternal organizations, and acting on various boards of directors. For example, Moses Falk became the first man to receive a degree from the

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<sup>3</sup> Arthur Bodurtha, *History of Miami County, Indiana* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing and Printing Co., 1914), 316.

<sup>4</sup> “Zebler Family Among First Jewish Families in Indiana,” *The Jewish Post and Opinion*, ND, Miami County Historical Society; “Samuel Judah Held State Post in 1827,” *The National Jewish Post and Opinion*, ND, Miami County Historical Society.

<sup>5</sup> *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1889), 235.

<sup>6</sup>Bodurtha, 169.

Miami Lodge No. 67 Free and Accepted Masons.<sup>7</sup> Julius Falk, son and business heir of Moses Falk, was a member of the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Red Men, Elks, Eastern Star, Royal Arcanum Maccabees, Foresters, and Ancient Order of United Workman while still finding time to run his store, be part owner of Peru Novelty Works, and serve on the committee to create the Peru Commercial Club.<sup>8</sup> Julius Falk and Moses Rosenthal were two of the founders of the Miami County Driving Park and Agricultural Society, founded in 1890. Milton Kraus, a local attorney, acted as the Peru Lodge No. 365 Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks's first Exalted Ruler and was a big proponent of a railroad extension, which would have connected Peru directly to Chicago. David Strouse originally wrote to Andrew Carnegie asking him to help fund a local public library years before he eventually gave the community money.

Some of Peru's Jews were active in state and national politics. In the late nineteenth century Harry Sterne served as the U.S. consulate to Budapest.<sup>9</sup> Jerome Herff was the Democratic nominee for Indiana State Treasurer in 1896 and 1900. Milton Kraus, a native of Peru and son of Peru Flax Mill owner Charles Kraus, served as the Miami County Chairman in 1910 and eventually represented Indiana Republicans in Congress.

Even though most of Peru's Jewish community met great commercial success in Miami County, the majority of Jews left Peru by the 1930s. By that time, the first generation of businessmen and mill owners who arrived in Indiana during the 1840s and 1850s had passed on and many of the second generation of store owners, who gained success during and between 1880 and 1910, were also retiring from business. Many decided to move to be closer to their children who had left Peru once they reached adulthood.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 416.

<sup>8</sup> Al. D. Beasley, ed., *Twentieth Century Peru* (n.d.), 11.

<sup>9</sup> Bodurtha, 392.

## Or Zion Synagogue



*North Broadway in downtown Peru. The two-story white building with blue roofline detail in the foreground is 65 North Broadway, former home of the Or Zion Synagogue.*

The Peru Jewish community formed the Or Zion Congregation in 1870, holding its meetings in private residences and sometimes using the local Methodist church for holy day observations as membership fluctuated over the years. In Peru's earliest city directory, the congregation is listed at

19 West Second Street, meeting the first Sunday of each month.<sup>10</sup>

However, by the 1890s the congregation had grown large enough to support its own reform synagogue. On July 11, 1891, Hirsch Baer, a prominent Jewish businessman who served as the congregation's reader and the president of the congregation, gave the dedication address officially opening the Or Zion Synagogue.<sup>11</sup> Located in a second floor room at 65 North Broadway, the Jewish congregation shared the second floor with Mrs. Cynthia Stewart, an African American woman from Kentucky who operated the barber shop on the building's first floor.<sup>12</sup> When first founded, the synagogue hosted weekly Saturday night services conducted by rabbis visiting from Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Lafayette, or students from Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College. In 1894, the *Peru Republican* ran an article about that year's Rosh Hashanah celebration led by Mr. Bottingham, a student at the Hebrew Union College and a distant relative

<sup>10</sup> *Peru City Directory*, 1887.

<sup>11</sup> H. Baer, *Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Or Zion Synagogue* (Cincinnati: Block Publishing and Printing Co., 1911).

<sup>12</sup> *Peru City Directory*, 1892; U.S. Census, 1880.

of Hirsh Baer.<sup>13</sup> However, during the last decade of the nineteenth century many of Peru's Jewish families relocated, leaving only sixteen synagogue members by 1900.<sup>14</sup>

In 1912, the Wilkinson brothers who owned 65 North Broadway requested Or Zion move out of the second floor space so the Wilkinsons could convert the room into living quarters for when they were in town overseeing business affairs.<sup>15</sup> The congregation, which served a Jewish population now hovering around 40, failed to secure another building for their synagogue. While no Peru synagogue or Jewish congregation is listed in 1920s' American Jewish Yearbooks, the congregation continued to meet and host visiting rabbis into the 1930s.<sup>16</sup>

### **Jewish Ladies' Aid Society**

First started in the 1880s, Peru's Jewish Ladies Aid Society was organized with the goal of raising funds for a synagogue or temple to be built in the community, but quickly refocused its efforts to provide relief during emergencies and offer general charitable work. After Or Zion's dedication, the Society was reorganized in 1895 with nineteen members who met on a regular basis in members' homes. By 1914, only three original members were still living in Peru and the organization counted only six members. While a small group, the society still managed to raise a considerable amount of money for the Dukes Memorial Hospital, furnishing a whole room in the new hospital when it was being built in the early 1910s.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "The Jewish Holidays," *Peru Republican*, 5 October 1894.

<sup>14</sup> "Directory of Local Organizations," *American Jewish Yearbook 1899-1900*, 32.

<sup>15</sup> "Or Zion Congregation is Compelled to Move," *Peru Republican*, 14 Nov. 1912.

<sup>16</sup> "Directory of Jewish Organizations in the United States," *American Jewish Yearbook*, 1908; "Rabbi Wertheimer held services...", *Peru Republican*, 14 Jul. 1933; No synagogue is listed in the 1919-1920 or later Peru city directories. The 1919 American Jewish Yearbook only lists Peru's Jewish cemetery.

<sup>17</sup> Bodurtha, 415.

### **Jewish Cemetery- Mount Hope/Zion**

Mount Hope Cemetery, located northwest of downtown Peru along Logan Street, was laid out in 1845 and originally occupied three acres. Being the only burial ground serving the city of Peru, spaces in the new cemetery were assessed at much too low of a cost to sustain the cemetery and sold out soon after the cemetery was established. The Mount Hope Cemetery Association, established in 1884, put an end to the burial plot rush by accessing the land and adding a \$6 per plot charge to go towards the cemetery's upkeep. Oak Grove Cemetery was organized in 1868 and completely surrounded the original Mount Hope acreage. In 1912, Mount Hope merged with adjacent Oak Grove Cemetery, which contained the local Jewish burial ground. The section where most Jewish individuals are interred has subsequently been called Mount Hope, Oak Ridge, the Jewish Cemetery, and Zion Cemetery. The first burials in the Jewish section (Section A of the current Mount Hope Cemetery Map) were the children of pioneer businessman Herman Sterne: Emanuel (d. 1869) and Cora (d. 1872).<sup>18</sup> Burials in this section occurred regularly through the 1930s, with only a few stones dating after this decade.

### **Affelder**

Louis Affelder was born in Bavaria in 1845 and immigrated to the United States with his family while still a young man. He first settled in Pittsburgh, working as a liquor store agent.<sup>1920</sup> In the early 1870s he found his way to Peru, working as a bookkeeper in Peru's Woolen Mill and

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 379-380; "Reveal Mt. Hope Cemetery Was Organized in 1845," *Peru Daily Tribune*, 24 Aug. 1949.

<sup>19</sup>U.S. Census: 1870; There are two Louis Affelders listed in the 1870 census, one in Pittsburgh and one in New York. I assume the Pittsburgh Affelder was the one to move to Peru, since the Redelsheimers had Peru connections, showing up in 1840s marriage records. The New York Affelders came as a family with sons Louis and Leopold, but I found no mention of a Leopold Affelder in connection to Peru's Louis.

<sup>20</sup> The date of Louis Affelder's immigration is unclear; in the 1900 census it is listed as 1851 when he would have been 6 years old, however it is listed as 1861 in the 1910 census, making him 16. If he did indeed travel to America without any family members, as is supposed in the previous footnote, the 1861 date makes more sense.

marrying a woman by the name of Ida.<sup>21</sup> They had five children: Morris (b. ~1872), Henrietta (b. ~1874), Hannah (b. 1875), William (b. 1876) and Eddie (b. 1877). In 1888, Henrietta, described as “the idol of her parents and the pride of her teachers,” died suddenly of typhoid fever when only sixteen years old.<sup>22</sup> Louis continued to work at the woolen mill until its 1896 closure, then taking up the mercantile business.<sup>23</sup> He was also involved with civic matters, being the first treasurer of Peru’s first building and loan association and an active member of the Masons along with his sons.<sup>24</sup>

In May 1891, William (aka Willie) Affelder made headlines after returning home to Peru after going missing on the last day of 1889. The boy, thirteen years old at the time of his disappearance, claims to have traveled to Chicago via Logansport, where he worked odd jobs. Later he went to St. Louis, working in a restaurant for four months, before heading west for a short trip to Denver. When he returned to Chicago he secured a job on a steamboat running between Chicago and Buffalo. At the end of the season, he made his way out to California, where he remained until an acquaintance who overheard the young man was from Peru connected Willie to the missing person ads placed by Mr. Affelder in national papers and the *Chicago Tribune* article written about the boy’s disappearance eighteen months earlier. Louis Affelder met Willie in Chicago and surprised the rest of the Affelder family at Sunday dinner with the boy’s return.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>U.S. Census: 1880, 1900, 1910; The 1900 census says Louis and Ida had been married for 25 years, making their wedding sometime in 1875, a fact that is repeated in the 1910 census. According to the 1880 census, the couple’s oldest child, Morris was 8 years old, meaning he was born sometime around 1872 when Ida would have been 18.

<sup>22</sup>“Died,” *Peru Republican*, October 19, 1888.

<sup>23</sup>“Mrs. Affelder Former Peru Woman is Dead,” *Peru Republican*, March 2, 1934.

<sup>24</sup>“Small Talk,” *Peru Republican*, February 5, 1886; “Mrs. Affelder Former Peru Woman is Dead,” *Peru Republican*, March 2, 1934.

<sup>25</sup>“Willie Affelder’s Return,” *Peru Republican*, May 22, 1891.

Two years later the Affelder family again was in the local news with the December 1893 wedding of eighteen-year-old daughter Hannah to Rabbi Max Wertheimer of Dayton, Ohio, a frequent speaker at Peru's *Or Zion* congregation.<sup>26</sup> The happiness was short-lived, as Hannah died in the Indianapolis Sanitarium October 1897, leaving two young children, Lester and Rose.<sup>27</sup> Rose, born in July 1897 just months before her mother's death, she eventually moved from the Wertheimer's Dayton home to live with her grandparents in Peru.<sup>28</sup>

The Affelder family lived in Peru from the early 1870s until 1910 when they relocated to St. Louis, with Louis heading a furniture store until his death in 1916 at the age of 73.<sup>29</sup> His son Ed continued to run the store and support his widowed mother and niece. Ida Affelder died in 1934 at her home in St. Louis.

Louis and Ida Affelder, along with their children Henrietta and Hannah Affelder Wertheim are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### **Hirsch Baer**

Hirsch Baer was born in Wurtemberg, Germany in 1824, came to the United States in 1846 and immediately settled in Peru. He became one of the area's early Jewish merchants by traveling across Miami County on horseback, buying furs and selling goods.<sup>30</sup> During the 1850s Jacob Baer joined his brother Hirsch in Peru, bringing his wife Fannie and her sister Adelheit Blumenthal from their hometown in Wurtemberg. Hirsch and Adelheit were married in November 1853, months after Jacob and Fannie's marriage was recorded in the Miami County

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<sup>26</sup>“A Happy Wedding-A Notable Nuptial Celebration in Jewish Circles,” *Peru Republican*, December 22, 1893.

<sup>27</sup>“A Beautiful Life Goes Out,” *Peru Republican*, November 5, 1897.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Census, 1910; “Death of Mr. Affelder,” *Peru Republican*, October 27, 1916.

<sup>30</sup> “Hirsch Baer Gone-A Good Man Joins the Silent Majority,” *Peru Republican*, November 29, 1901.

records.<sup>31</sup> Hirsch and Adelheit quickly started a family and continued to prosper from Hirsch's successful clothing store. Over the next decade the Baers had five children: Barnhart "Barney" (b.1856), Sarah (b. 1857), Louis "Lou" (b. 1860), Samuel (b. 1862) and David who died in infancy.<sup>32</sup> During their teens and early twenties the children worked as clerks in the clothing business.<sup>33</sup> Hirsch, described as "a devout Israelite, who takes an unusual interest in the religious training of the young and the spiritual welfare of the congregation," was instrumental in developing Peru's *Or Zion* Hebrew congregation, founded July 3, 1870, and acted as President and Reader through much of the congregation's history.<sup>34</sup> He was also a founding member of the Miami Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons.<sup>35</sup> Between 1880 and 1900, the family moved from their home on Fifth Street to 11 Court Street.<sup>36</sup> In 1886, daughter Sarah married Felix Levy, owner of the French Bazaar Market at 56-58 Broadway, moving her new husband into the Baer's Court Street home.

After Hirsch's death from kidney failure in 1901, his widow and children continued to live at 11 Court Street, with Barney running a bicycle repair shop in the Odd Fellows Hall basement (corner of Main and Wabash), Louis working as a traveling salesman, and Sam working with his brother-in-law Felix Levy at the French Bazaar. Later, after the French Bazaar closed its doors, Sam worked as a salesman in Toledo and Chicago until his death in 1911.<sup>37</sup> Adelheit lived to be ninety years old, passing away in 1920 from complications resulting from a broken leg. Felix and Sarah Levy moved to New York City in the 1920s, leaving Barney and

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<sup>31</sup> *Miami Co., Ind. Marriage Records: 1843-1855*; "Death of Mrs. Baer," *Peru Republican*, December 16, 1920.

<sup>32</sup> "Death of Mrs. Baer," *Peru Republican*, December 16, 1920; U.S. Census records

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Census: 1880

<sup>34</sup> "Local Organizations," *Jewish Yearbook 1899-1900*,

[http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC\\_DATA/Files/1899\\_1900\\_5\\_LocalOrgs.pdf](http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1899_1900_5_LocalOrgs.pdf), (accessed July 9, 2012),; "The Jewish Holidays," *Peru Republican*, October 5, 1894.

<sup>35</sup> "Hirsch Baer Gone- A Good Man Joins the Silent Majority," *Peru Republican*, November 29, 1901.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Census: 1880, 1900

<sup>37</sup> "Sam Baer Dead," *Peru Republican*, June 30, 1911.

Lou in the house on Court Street until Barney's death in 1926. A member of the Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, and the Masons, Barney was well-known in the Peru community.<sup>38</sup> Lou, the last of Hirsch and Adelheit's children to live in Peru, until his death in 1943.

Hirsch, Adelheit, their children Barney, Lou, Samuel, Sarah, and her husband Felix Levy and son Irving are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### Jacob Baer



*Close up of Hebrew inscription on David J. Baer's stone in Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.*

Jacob Baer moved from his hometown in Wurtemberg, Germany in the early 1850s to join his brother Hirsch in Peru, Indiana. He brought his wife Fannie (nee Blumenthal) and her sister Adelheid, who a few years later married Hirsch.<sup>39</sup> By the 1860s, the Baers lived in Marion, Indiana with Jacob working as a merchant.<sup>40</sup> In 1862, Jacob enlisted in the Civil War, becoming a member of Company A in the 89<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry Regiment. While stationed in Pleasant Hill Louisiana, Jacob was killed, with his body being transported back to Wabash, Indiana for burial in the Rodef Sholem Jewish Cemetery.<sup>41</sup>

Fannie appears in the 1870 census, living on East Main Street in Peru with her five children: Sarah/Sallie (b. ~1855), David (b.~1857), Benjamin "Bernie" (b. ~1860), Emma (b.~1861),and Isaac (b.~1864).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> "Barney Baer," *Peru Republican*, February 19, 1926.

<sup>39</sup> "Hirsch Baer Gone-A Good Man Joins the Silent Majority," *Peru Republican*, November 29, 1901.

<sup>40</sup> "Isaac Baer Dead," *Peru Republican*, March 13, 1931.

<sup>41</sup> "Pvt. Jacob Baer," *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=67539494>, (accessed July 9, 2012).

In 1875, Sarah married Jerome Herff, a traveling salesman from Wabash. The couple and their children lived in Peru until 1910 when they family moved to Indianapolis.<sup>43</sup>

David, a traveling salesman for a Cincinnati manufacturing house and member of the Knights of Pythias, died at the age of 32 of brain congestion at his mother's home May of 1888.<sup>44</sup>

Just a few months later, Emma married Louis Hainsfurther of Petersburg, Illinois in a traditional Jewish ceremony and lavish reception at Peru's GAR Hall. The couple met at the wedding of the bride's brother (Ben), in April 1888 in Champaign, Illinois.<sup>45</sup>

Emma son, Isaac, was an employee in Peru's Boston Store, and member of the Elks. He continued to live with his mother until her death in 1919 when he relocated to 84 W. Third Street. A few years later he caught pneumonia and passed away in 1936 at the age of 66.<sup>46</sup>

Fannie Baer and her children David and Isaac are buried in Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### **Catherine and Severn Baer**

Catherine Baer, born in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany is listed in the 1870 census , living on Seventh Street in Peru with her five children, all of which were born in Indiana: Andrew (b.~1855), Edward (b.~1857), Catherine (b. ~1862), Philip (b.~1866), and Joseph (b. ~1869). There is no mention in this or following censuses of her husband Severn.<sup>47</sup> In 1882, daughter Catherine had married Frederick Troster, a jeweler originally from Iowa. Son Phil worked with a

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<sup>42</sup> U.S. Census: 1870.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Census: 1900; "Jerome Herff Was Prominent Here Years Ago," *Peru Republican*, March 29, 1935.

<sup>44</sup> "Death of David Baer," *Peru Republican*, May 18, 1888.

<sup>45</sup> "Hainsfurther-Baer," *Peru Republican*, December 3, 1888.

<sup>46</sup> "Isaac Baer Dead," *Peru Republican*, March 13, 1931.

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Census: 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910.

railroad company and was named a U.S. Marshal in Texas in 1912.<sup>48</sup> Joseph Baer briefly lived with his sister before marrying Selma Kurtz and moving to Marion, Indiana in 1928. When he died in 1933, his funeral was given at St. Charles Catholic Church and buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in the Jewish Section.<sup>49</sup>

It is unclear what the relationship between Severn Baer and prominent Jewish Peru citizens Hirsch and Jacob Baer is. The only available information about Severn Baer is Joseph Baer's 1933. Obituary listing Severn and Catherine as Joseph Baer's parents.

### **Beitman**

Raphael and Mollie Beitman were Bavarian immigrants who met in Cincinnati and married around 1864. They decided to make a home in Washington, Indiana, a Daviess County community near Vincennes. There Raphael worked as a clothing merchant alongside his younger brother Emmanuel.<sup>50</sup> Raphael and Molly raised four children: Flora (b. ~1867), Jacob (b. ~1869), Julia (b.~ 1872), and Bertha (b.~1875).<sup>51</sup> After Raphael's death in 1895, Jacob continued his father's clothing business in Washington while his sisters married into prominent Jewish families in Peru: Flora married Albert Kittner, a successful clothier working with his father in D. Kittner & Sons Store, in 1895, Julia married Sig Frank, a boot and shoe maker, the same year; and Bertha married Albert's younger brother Henry Kittner, Jr. in 1903.<sup>52</sup> In 1904, Mollie moved

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<sup>48</sup> "Philip Baer," *Peru Republican*, May 4, 1934.

<sup>49</sup> "Joseph Baer," *Peru Republican*, April 28, 1933.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Census 1870; "Mrs. Beitman-Mother of Mrs. Albert Kittner Died Thursday," *Peru Republican*, March 3, 1912.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Census, 1880; The 1900 census states Mollie had 5 children, but the other child does not appear in any census, meaning he or she did not survive childhood.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Census, 1900, 1910.

from Washington to Peru, living with her daughter Bertha at her 159 West Main Street home until Mollie's death in 1912.<sup>53</sup>



*Raphael and Mollie Beitman's stone in Mount Hope Cemetery.*

Raphael and Mollie Beitman, as well as their daughters and their husbands: Julia Beitman Frank and Sig Frank, Bertha Beitman Kittner and Henry Kittner, and Flora Beitman Kittner and Henry Kittner, Jr., are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### **Blumenthal**

During the 1850s Jacob Baer joined his brother, established merchant Hirsch Baer, in Peru, bringing his wife Fannie and her sister Adelheit Blumenthal from their hometown in Wurtemberg, Germany. Hirsch and Adelheit were married in November 1853, months after Jacob and Fannie's marriage was recorded in the Miami County records.<sup>54</sup>

All of Fannie and Adelheit's siblings, children of David and Mina Blumenthal of Wurtemberg, eventually moved to the United States. Their brother Morris lived in Peru with

<sup>53</sup> "Mrs. Beitman-Mother of Mrs. Albert Kittner Died Thursday," *Peru Republican*, March 3, 1912.

<sup>54</sup> *Miami Co., Ind. Marriage Records: 1843-1855*; "Death of Mrs. Baer," *Peru Republican*, December 16, 1920.

Hirsch and Adelheit for a short time during the 1860s before moving to Marion to start his own dry goods business, marry, and start a family.<sup>55</sup> Their sister Babette lived with Morris in 1870 and eventually moved in with the widowed Adelheid in the 1910s.<sup>56</sup> (She is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery with the Baer family.) Two unnamed sisters are mentioned in Adelheid's 1920 obituary as living in Chicago before their deaths.

Fannie Blumenthal Baer and her children, David and Isaac, Adelheit Blumenthal Baer and all five of her children, and Babbette Blumenthal are buried in Peru's Mt. Hope Cemetery.

## **Cohn**

William Cohn, originally from Austria, married Carrie Lehman, a native of Wurtemberg, Germany, and had two children: Hattie (b. 1873 in Missouri) and Berthold "Bert" (b. 1876 in Indiana).<sup>57</sup> In the mid-1870s, the family moved to Peru, where William died in 1878. Carrie remarried in 1890 to Felix Moses, a 48 year old bachelor.<sup>58</sup> Hattie married Peru businessman Nathan Loewenthal in 1894, and moved to Indianapolis in the mid-1910s. Bert received his Ph.D. in chemistry and worked in connection with the Indiana Pure Food Department in Indianapolis until his death in 1918.<sup>59</sup>

William Cohn, his wife Carrie (nee Lehman) Cohn Moses, and their son Bert are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

## **Rene Crozette**

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<sup>55</sup> U.S. Census: 1860, 1870.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Census: 1870, 1910; In the 1870 census she is mistakenly identified as Barbara Blumenthal.

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Census, 1900; "Death of Mrs. Moses," *Peru Republican*, September 22, 1916.

<sup>59</sup> "Death of Mrs. Moses," *Peru Republican*, September 22, 1916; "Death of Mr. Cohn," *Peru Republican*, November 8, 1918.

Rene Crozette was born in Rouen, France in 1848. His father was a local schoolteacher who changed the family's name from Levi to Crozette before Rene was born. Rene first worked as a teacher, instructing French pupils in German and Hebrew, before joining the army, and serving in the Franco-Prussian War from 1870-1871. During that time he received a saber blow to the head and was taken as a prisoner of war at a Metz hospital. While he was lucky to survive such a serious injury, he suffered from memory loss and forgetfulness after the incident. After returning to civilian life and teaching for a few years, Crozette immigrated to the United States in 1875, and settled in Peru. He first worked in the Peru Bagging Mills, later he offered French classes. He joined the local Order of Owls, while holding the janitor position for the Cole Block on South Broadway.

In 1915, Rene Crozette's Bright Disease began to severely affect his health. He was found dead in the Cole Block building where he worked as a janitor. He was buried in Peru's Jewish Cemetery, While the *Republican* article states that Crozette was buried in "the Jewish Cemetery," his gravestone could not be located in the Jewish section of Mount Hope Cemetery.<sup>60</sup>

### **Moses Falk**

Moses Falk was one of Central Indiana's pioneer merchants coming to Miami County in the early 1830s, and was a pillar in the early merchant community. Born in 1816 in Wurtemberg, Germany, Moses first learned carpentry and traveled to America in his youth. Once he arrived, he settled in Cincinnati and began his long and storied career as a merchant, buying goods in the major city, and acting as an itinerant peddler across Indiana and Ohio. He quickly gained a reputation as a fair businessman willing to trade with Native Americans and white settlers alike. He opened his first store, "The Dutch Grocery," and bought a small farm in Peoria, Indiana, a

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<sup>60</sup> "Veteran Dies in Great Agony," *Peru Republican*, September 1, 1915.

small community near Peru, in 1837.<sup>61</sup> Two of his brothers, Loeb and Isaac, also joined Moses in Indiana during the 1840s. In 1846, Isaac enlisted in the Mexican War as a captain and was on his way to Wabash to recruit more troops when he drowned in the canal towpath, either by accident or after being purposefully thrown into the water.<sup>62</sup> Moses Falk also met his first wife, Helen Redelsheimer of Fort Wayne, while in Peoria. This union produced seven children which included: Frances (b. 1849), Pauline (b. 1850), Carrie (b. 1853), Julius (b. 1855), who would become heir to his father's business empire, and Flora (b. 1857).<sup>63</sup> In 1850, the young and growing Falk family and Moses' brother Loeb moved to Peru. Moses created the firm Falk & Sterne with the Sterne Brothers, men Falk knew from his hometown in Germany who had already established themselves in Peru, and made considerable money.<sup>64</sup> Loeb died in 1856.<sup>65</sup>

After Helen's untimely death in 1858, Moses married Jennie Kuppenheimer, and left the firm Falk & Stern to start his own mercantile business in 1859. Moses and Jennie had three children: Mollie (b.~1861), Elba (b.~1864), and Harry (b.~1867).<sup>66</sup> Falk continued to run his large and successful mercantile business in downtown Peru until his retirement in 1875, when he transferred the store to his eldest son Julius. After the time of Moses Falk's death in 1880, his children lived across the Midwest and by 1900 Julius was the only Falk remaining in Peru.<sup>67</sup>

Moses Falk, his second wife Jennie Kuppenheimer, his daughter Pauline Falk Kaufman, and son Julius with his wife Jennie Wile Falk and two of Julius's six children are buried in the

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<sup>61</sup> "Julius Falk," *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1898), 235-237; Bodurtha, 538-539.

<sup>62</sup>"Julius Falk," *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties*, 235-237.

<sup>63</sup>U.S. Census, 1860; I found no mention of the Helen and Moses's other two children, but the two county histories mentioned above both say Moses had seven children from his first marriage.

<sup>64</sup> Bodurtha, 538-539.

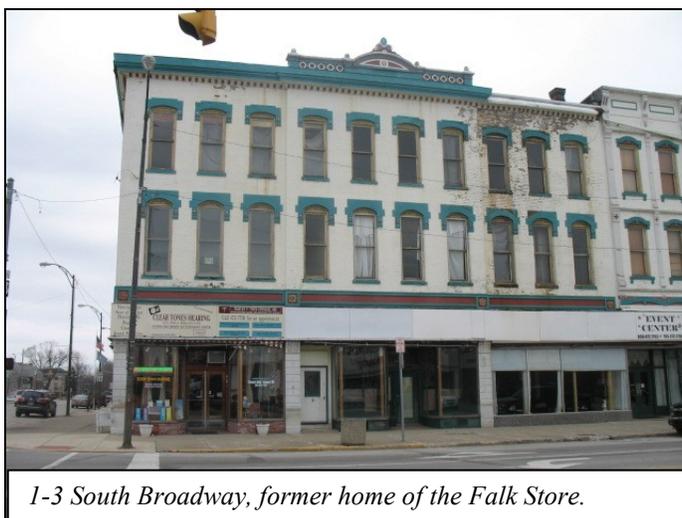
<sup>65</sup> Ruth M. Slevin, *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy Room), 81.

<sup>66</sup>U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>67</sup> "Julius Falk, *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1898), 235-237.

Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery. Moses Falk's nephew Moses Oppenheimer and his wife Anna Oppenheimer are also buried in Mount Hope's Jewish section.

### Julius Falk



1-3 South Broadway, former home of the Falk Store.

Julius Falk was born in 1855, son of Moses Falk and his first wife Helen Redelsheimer, and grew up in Peru. Where he attended the local high school and was groomed to take over his father's successful mercantile business. After two years at Earlham College, in Richmond, Indiana, Julius returned to Peru and inherited the

Falk store upon his father's retirement in 1878 at the age of 23.<sup>68</sup> Julius moved the business to the "Red Front" building at 68 South Broadway in 1880, and quickly became known as one of the savviest businessmen in Peru, who were ushering in the era of aggressive newspaper advertising, with substantial ads running each week in the *Peru Republican*.

In 1882, he married Jennie Wile of Owensboro, Kentucky, and continued to expand his business, moving into the Cole Block on the Broadway-Main intersection in downtown Peru in 1887.<sup>69</sup> When describing his business in 1894, the *Peru Republican* said "to-day it is regarded as a leading house in its line throughout the country" and said Julius "conducted his house in a manner that wins every patron as a friend; honest and liberal he offers his patrons such

<sup>68</sup> "Julius Falk," *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties*, 235-237.

<sup>69</sup> Bodurtha, 539-540.

advantages as make them call again.”<sup>70</sup> He was active socially; becoming a member of the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Red Men, Elks, Eastern Star, Chapter Council, Royal Arcanum Maccabees, Foresters, and Ancient Order of United Workmen. He also invested in other Peru business ventures, becoming part owner of Peru Novelty Works and the vice-president and director of Wright Medicine Co.<sup>71</sup> In 1900, Julius built a house complete with modern conveniences at 84 West Main Street, considered “one of the pretties portions of the city and to own property there is to own some of the most valuable property to be found in the city.”<sup>72</sup> Julius Falk passed away May 1914 after being afflicted with paralysis a few months before.<sup>73</sup>

Julius and Jennie had six children: Frances (b. 1889), Corinne (b. 1891), Aimee (b. 1893), Nanette (b. 1900), Moses (b. 1902), and Julius Jr. (b. 1903). Aimee died in 1909 at the age of 16. A few months after her father’s death in 1914, Frances married Arthur Simon, a young man originally from Wabash who managed Falk’s store after Julius’s death earlier that year, and in 1924, became the sole owner of the store.<sup>74</sup>

Julius and Jennie Wile Falk, their daughter Aimee and their son Julius Jr. are buried in the Jewish section of Peru’s Mount Home Cemetery.

## **Frank**

Sigmond Frank, the son of Prussian immigrants Gustoff, a dry goods merchant, and Sarah Frank, was born in Petersburg, Indiana in 1868.<sup>75</sup> In 1895 he married Anna, the daughter of Washington, Indiana clothing merchant Raphael and Mollie Beitman. (Anna’s sister Flora

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<sup>70</sup> “Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review,” *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

<sup>71</sup> Al. D. Beasley, *Twentieth Century Peru*, 11.

<sup>72</sup> Al. D. Beasley, *Twentieth Century Peru*, 29; The building is now the Eikenberry-Eddy Funeral Home.

<sup>73</sup> “Pioneer in Peru Was Julius Falk- Clothier, Widely Known, Answers Summons Which Comes to All,” *Peru Republican*, May 1, 1914.

<sup>74</sup> “Miss Falk Married,” *Peru Republican*, July 3, 1914; “Arthur Simon is Now Owner of Falk’s Store,” *Peru Republican*, February 1, 1924.

<sup>75</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

married Peru clothing merchant Albert Kittner the same year.)<sup>76</sup> The couple boarded in a house on East Third Street for the first few years of their marriage while Sig ran his boot and shoe business out of 60 S. Broadway.<sup>77</sup> In 1901, the couple moved to 125 W. Third and in 1905 they are recorded at 125 N. Hood while “Frank the Foot Fitter” continued business at his Broadway shop.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately, a fire ravaged the building that housed Frank’s store, leaving him with \$7,500 in damage and only \$5,000 insurance coverage.<sup>79</sup> Shortly after the fire, the couple moved to Kokomo and Sig started a new business as an ice cream manufacturer.<sup>80</sup> Sig Frank passed away in 1928, with Julia dying in 1941.

Sig Frank and his wife Julia Beitman Frank are buried in the Jewish section of Peru’s Mount Hope Cemetery.

## **Gunzburger**

Max Gunzburger, originally from Buffalo, New York, married Dora Kraus, daughter of Charles, proprietor of the Peru Bagging Mill, and Hannah Kraus of Peru, in 1907.<sup>81</sup> Max worked as a traveling salesman early during their marriage. Leaving Dora and their daughter, Jennet (b. 1910) to live with Dora’s parents in the Kraus homestead, 159 W. Main Street.<sup>82</sup>

Max Gunzberger and Dora Kraus Gunzberger are buried in the Jewish section of Peru’s Mount Hope Cemetery.

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<sup>76</sup> U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>77</sup> *Stephen’s Directory of Peru, Indiana for the year 1900*, 71.

<sup>78</sup> *Pocket Directory of the City of Peru and Suburbs* (Peru: Miller-Wallick Printing, 1901), 84; *Peru City Directory 1905-1906* (Marion, IN: Inter-State Directory Co, 1905), 60; *The 1908-1909 Standard Directory of Peru, Indiana and Rural Routes* (Buffalo, NY: V.M. Pierce, 1908).

<sup>79</sup> “\$20,000 Fire Loss-Mercantile District of Peru is Visited by a Disastrous Blaze,” *Peru Republican*, February 16, 1906.

<sup>80</sup> U.S. Census, 1920, 1930.

<sup>81</sup> “Gunsberger-Kraus,” *Peru Republican*, November 8, 1907.

<sup>82</sup> U.S. Census, 1910; Dora and Jennet are listed in C.J. Kraus’s household. Max does not appear in the Peru census.

Max Gunzburger may be related to Norbert Gunzberger who married Delia Rosenthal, Dora Kraus Gunzberger's cousin. (Delia's father Moses Rosenthal was the brother of Hannah Rosenthal Kraus, Dora's mother).

## Haas

Moses Haas immigrated from Prussia (Rhine Province, Germany) in 1860, and settled in Greene County near Worthington, Indiana after serving in the Civil War.<sup>83</sup> While in Worthington he started as a merchant. He married Caroline Rosenthal, who moved to Peru from Wurtemberg with her six siblings, in 1869.<sup>84</sup> By 1880 the couple had moved to Tipton, where Moses continued to work as a merchant, and had six children: daughter Dina (b. 1869), Frank (b. 1871), Mary (b. 1873), Lewis (b. 1876), Hattie (b. 1878) and Albert (b. 1880).<sup>85</sup>

Absalom Haas, a Wabash farmer originally from Ohio, does not appear to have any connections with Moses Haas. Ab Haas's son Homer opened his own medical office in Peru, becoming a leading physician and one of the original directors of the Peru Country Club. Although the Haas family shares their last name with a Jewish family with Peru connections, there is no evidence Absalom Haas's family was Jewish. (Dr. Homer Haas had a Christian burial after his 1927 death in Palo Alto, California.)<sup>86</sup>

Moses Haas and Caroline Rosenthal Haas are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

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<sup>83</sup> "Moses Haas," *Counties of Howard and Tipton, Indiana* (Chicago: F.A. Battey & Co., 1883).

<sup>84</sup> U.S. Census, 1870; *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 209.

<sup>85</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>86</sup> "Dr. Homer C. Haas, Dead at Palo Alto," *Peru Republican*, August 17, 1927.

## Heller

In 1895, Bertha Oppenheimer, the only child of Moses and Anna Oppenheimer, and the sole heir to Moses Oppenheimer's considerable wealth, married Samuel Heller, a New York businessman.<sup>87</sup> The couple resided on Madison Avenue in Manhattan during the winter months and spent summers in Far Rockaway, Long Island. They had two children; Ruth (b. ~1902) and Robert (b.~1906).<sup>88</sup> Bertha Oppenheimer Heller died unexpectedly in 1919.

A stone for Bertha O. Heller lays alongside her parents in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery

## Herff

Jerome Herff was born in New York, but moved to Wabash as a young man, working as a traveling salesman. In 1875 he married Sarah Baer, daughter of Jacob and Fannie Baer, and the couple had two children: Rheda (b. 1876) and Harry J. (b. 1885).<sup>89</sup> While in Peru, Jerome was very involved in civic matters, promoting Ulen-Ferritt's electric light project, acting as one of the Home Telephone Co.'s officers, and working in the sidewalk paving business. He was also a member of the Peru Masons.<sup>90</sup> In 1896 and 1900, Jerome was named the Democratic nominee for Indiana State Treasurer, and moved with his family to Indianapolis in 1910.<sup>91</sup> In Indianapolis, Herff lived with his daughter Rheda at 3025 N. Meridian Street until his death in 1935. His son Harry and Harry's business partner, Randall Jones started Herff Jones Company in

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<sup>87</sup> "A Delightful Party- Celebrates the Betrothal of Miss Oppenheimer to Mr. Heller of New York," *Peru Republican*, December 28, 1894;

<sup>88</sup> U.S. Census, 1900, 1910; "Death of Mrs. Heller," *Peru Republican*, December 19, 1919.

<sup>89</sup> U.S. Census: 1880, 1900.

<sup>90</sup> "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, 30 Mar. 1900; "Jerome Herff Was Prominent Here Years Ago," *Peru Republican*, March 29, 1935.

<sup>91</sup> "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, 4 June 1902; "Jerome Herff Was Prominent Here Years Ago," *Peru Republican*, March 29, 1935.

1920, creating emblem jewelry, including class rings. Today Herff Jones is a national company which focuses on graduation accessories, yearbooks, and class jewelry.<sup>92</sup>

## **Kaufman**

Benjamin Kaufman, born in Germany in 1843, immigrated to the United States in 1850 at the age of 7. By the mid-1860s, he had moved to Peru and in October 1868 he married Pauline Falk, daughter of one of Peru's first businessmen, Moses Falk, and sister to Julius Falk, a well-known Peru businessman in his own right.<sup>93</sup> The Kaufmans moved to Winchester, Indiana and had two children: Leo and Bertha. After years in Winchester, the family moved to Boston where Ben worked as a wholesale fish seller.<sup>94</sup> In 1892, Bertha Kaufman married Jonas Fox, a merchant clothier, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio.<sup>95</sup> Leo moved back to Peru in 1899 to work as a clerk in his uncle Julius Falk's store. Mrs. Pauline Kaufman suffered a paralytic stroke, and died suddenly in 1900.<sup>96</sup> Leo died in 1913.

Joshua T., "JT" Kaufman, the owner of the successful clothing store at 68 South Broadway does not appear to be related to Benjamin Kaufman. Joshua, a German-Canadian Jew, immigrated to the U.S. in 1891, moved to Peru, and was joined by his wife Louise in 1898. Although there does not seem to be a familial connection between Joshua and Ben Kaufman, J.T. Kaufman's clothing store moved into the "Red Front" building, 68 S. Broadway, which originally housed Julius Falk's store.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> "Jerome Herff Was Prominent Here Years Ago," *Peru Republican*, March 29, 1935; "About Herff Jones," *Herff Jones.com*, <http://www.herffjones.com/about>, (accessed July 9, 2012).

<sup>93</sup> "Obituary," *Peru Republican*, 9 Nov. 1900; U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>94</sup> U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> "Obituary," *Peru Republican*, November 9, 1900.

<sup>97</sup> U.S. Census, 1910; "Pioneer in Peru was Julius Falk," *Peru Republican*, May 1, 1914.

Benjamin Kaufman, wife Pauline Falk Kaufman, and their son Leo Kaufman are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### **Kittner**

David Kittner immigrated to the United State in 1844 at the age of 6.<sup>98</sup> After he arrived in Peru, he and his brother Henry started a dry good shop in Peru's downtown during the 1860s.<sup>99</sup> David married Rosa Herff, a fellow German Jew, in 1863, and had two children: Albert (b.1864) and Henry (b. 1865).<sup>100</sup> The family lived at 118 West Sixth Street, sharing the house with David's younger brother and business partner Henry (b.~1840 in Germany), David's younger brother Frederick, who worked as a clerk in the Kittner store, David's younger sister Theresa (b.~ 1858 in Germany), Rosa's widowed mother Yetta Herff, and several servants at different times between 1870 and 1910.<sup>101</sup> In 1874, the Kittners moved the store to its prominent 52 South Broadway location in the heart of Peru's business district, and continued to develop a reputation for providing quality clothing, shoes, and home furnishings, and improved the storefront throughout the 1900s.<sup>102</sup>

Elder son Albert married Flora Beitman, daughter of Washington, Indiana merchant Raphael and Mollie Beitman, in 1895, and moved to 171 West Main Street which was only blocks away from the D. Kittner & Sons Store.<sup>103</sup> By 1908, the couple moved to 134 West Sixth

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<sup>98</sup> U.S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900; The 1870 census lists Kittner as a native of Baden and Mrs. Kittner as a native of Bavaria, but they are both recorded as Bavarians in the 1880 census.

<sup>99</sup> "Retires from Business," *Peru Republican*, June 4, 1915.

<sup>100</sup> U.S. Census, 1870, 1900.

<sup>101</sup> U.S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910; Peru City Directory, 1905-06, 89.

<sup>102</sup> "Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review," *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894; "Retires from Business," *Peru Republican*, June 4, 1915; Peru City Directory, 1905-06, 89; "To Have New Front," *Peru Republican*, July 27, 1906; "Will Improve Store," *Peru Republican*, August 17, 1906.

<sup>103</sup> U.S. Census, 1900; Peru City Directory, 1900, 99.

Street, a few doors down from David and Rosa.<sup>104</sup> The next year, 1909, Flora died unexpectedly, and the widowed Albert moved back in with his parents.<sup>105</sup>

Younger son Henry continued to live with his parents in their West Sixth Street home until his 1902 marriage to Flora Beitman Kittner's younger sister Bertha. (The middle Beitman sister Julia married Peru shoe merchant Sig Frank.) The young couple first made their home at 109 West Sixth Street, across the street from Henry's parents, but in 1906 Henry and Bertha moved to 125 North Hood Street where their son Ralph was born in 1907.<sup>106</sup>

The firm D. Kittner & Sons continued to operate the 52 South Broadway store until David's 1915 retirement when the firm officially passed to his two sons.<sup>107</sup> David and Rosa moved to Chicago, and were eventually followed by their sons after they closed the business a few years after their father's retirement.<sup>108</sup> David, considered one of Peru's pioneer businessmen, died at his Chicago home in 1919; Mrs. Rosa Kittner passed away in 1927.<sup>109</sup>

Henry and David Kitter, David's wife Rosa, son Albert and his wife Flora Beitman Kittner, and son Henry and his wife, Bertha Beitman Kittner are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

## **Kraus**

Charles J. Kraus was born in Bohemia in 1845, and immigrated to the United States in 1860. He settled in Kokomo and married Hannah Rosenthal in 1864. While in Kokomo Charles, also called C.J., ran a clothing store. Hannah and Charles had seven children: Milton (b. 1866),

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<sup>104</sup> Peru City Directory, 1908-1909, 110.

<sup>105</sup> U.S. Census, 1910; Flora Beitman Kittner's obituary ran in the January 1, 1901 *Peru Republican*, which was on loan and not available on microfilm during the time of this research.

<sup>106</sup> U.S. Census, 1910; Peru City Directory, 1908-1909, 110.

<sup>107</sup> "Retires from Business," *Peru Republican*, June 4, 1915.

<sup>108</sup> Peru City Directory, 1919-1920; U.S. Census, 1930.

<sup>109</sup> "David Kittner Dead," *Peru Republican*, September 19, 1919; "Mrs. Kittner of Chicago Buried Here," *Peru Republican*, October 18, 1927.

Max (b. 1867), Dora (b. 1868), Jessie (b. 1871), Ida (b. 1872), Helen (b. 1873), and Sydney (b. 1887). By 1880, he and his growing family had moved to Peru, and he had started working at Peru's flax mill.<sup>110</sup> Changing the name to the Peru Bagging Mill, Charles and his sons sold their flax bagging to southern farmers to be used when bailing cotton.<sup>111</sup> In the summer of 1894, Hannah traveled to Atlantic City with her daughter Ida in the hopes that the seaside resort town would help restore Ida's health which had suffered since the girl was bitten by a dog the year before. Unfortunately, Ida died in Atlantic City in October 1894.<sup>112</sup> In 1901, Charles decided to strike out on his own, opening Peru's bagging mills, which had been closed for a little over a year, with the help of his sons Milton and Max.<sup>113</sup>

Milton Kraus had already started his law career by the time he reopened the Peru bagging mill with his father and brother. That same year, 1901, he was prominent in a proposal for the C.R. & M. railroad to create a route from Muncie to Chicago, and was practicing law in Peru.<sup>114</sup> (He was still living with his parents at 159 W. Main Street at this time.) In 1910 Milton was elected County Chairman and in 1916 Indiana Republicans elected him to Congress.<sup>115</sup>

Max married Clara Strauss of Lyons, New York in 1904. The couple lived in Peru at 112 E. Sixth Street where they raised their daughter Hannah, who was born 1910.

Dora Kraus married Max Gunzburger, a traveling salesman originally from Buffalo, New York, in 1907. Dora had a daughter Jennet in 1910, and continued to live with her parents in Peru while Max was on the road.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> U.S. Census, 1870, 1880.

<sup>111</sup> Bodurtha, 278.

<sup>112</sup> "Death of Ida Kraus," *Peru Republican*, October 5, 1894.

<sup>113</sup> "Bagging Mil Opens," *Peru Republican*, July 3, 1901.

<sup>114</sup> "C.R. & M. Railroad," *Peru Republican*, March 13, 1901; *Peru City Directory*, 1900, 1901, 1905, 1908.

<sup>115</sup> "Milton Kraus Elected County Chairman," *Peru Republican*, February 1, 1910; "Milton Kraus Announces Candidacy," *Peru Republican*, November 19, 1915; "Election Day," *Peru Republican*, November 7, 1916.

<sup>116</sup> "Gunsburger-Kraus," *Peru Republican*, November 8, 1907; U.S. Census, 1910.

Daughter Jessie married Isaac Beitman, a senior member of the Wabash law firm Beitman, Wolf, & Co., in 1905 and moved to Wabash.<sup>117</sup> By 1919, the couple was back in Peru, living at 159 West Main with Charles and Hannah.<sup>118</sup>

Little is known about Charles and Hannah's daughter, Helen, who married Morris Mossler in 1911.<sup>119</sup>

Sidney enlisted in the navy during World War I, and became a career Navy man, being promoted to Captain by the end of the war. He married Harriet Langdon in Cincinnati, in November 1932, and moved to New Jersey.<sup>120</sup>

Charles J. and Hannah Rosenthal Kraus as well as their children Milton, Ida, Dora Gunzburger and her husband Max are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### **Landauer**

Nathan Landauer, a native of Wurtemberg, Germany who immigrated to the U.S. in 1855, married Sidonia, a Wurtemberg woman who moved to the U.S. in 1865, in November 1869.<sup>121</sup> The couple made their home in Peru at 75 North Wabash Street, with Nathan working as a traveling salesman. During the next 15 years, the couple had six children: Ida, Jesse (b. 1874), Leo (b. 1876), Jerome (b. 1879), Harry (b. 1882), and Stella (b. 1884).<sup>122</sup> In 1873, Ida died at a very young age and was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. In 1900, Jesse and his younger brother Leo worked as electricians, while Harry was employed as a clerk at the Berris Hotel.<sup>123</sup> Jerome enlisted as a soldier in the Spanish-American War, but returned to Peru after his service. The

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<sup>117</sup> "A Betrothal Party," *Peru Republican*, February 3, 1905.

<sup>118</sup> Peru City Directory, 1919.

<sup>119</sup> "Marriage License," *Peru Republican*, April 26, 1911.

<sup>120</sup> Kraus-Langdon," *Peru Republican*, November 21, 1932.

<sup>121</sup> U.S. Census, 1880; "The Landauer Wedding Anniversary," *Peru Republican*, November 30, 1894.

<sup>122</sup> Peru City Directory, 1900

<sup>123</sup> Peru City Directory, 1900, 1901.

family continued to live in Peru until 1904 when Nathan, then retired, relocated to Chicago with his wife and three youngest children. Harry found work as a dry goods salesman, and Stella was hired as a publishing house's cashier.<sup>124</sup> (Jesse moved to Marion and was hired as the Soldier's Home's electrician.) Shortly after the move, Jerome died in Chicago after an appendectomy revealed the young man had a fatal abscess on his kidney.<sup>125</sup>

By 1911, Harry Landauer had found his way to Allentown, Pennsylvania, where he ran into trouble with the law. On September 28, 1905, Harry was charged with involuntary manslaughter after a scuffle over blocking the sidewalk resulted in Harry pushing a man into a wooden, cigar store Indian. The man sustained a fractured skull and died, which led to Harry's arrest. Many Peru citizens contributed to a legal fund for Harry, known locally as "a young man of temperate habits and an excellent character."<sup>126</sup> At his trial in November of that year, Harry's lawyer argued that the push was in self-defense, and that the victim's years of alcohol abuse left him susceptible to such an injury. The jury deliberated for only a half-hour and delivered a not guilty verdict, which was immediately met with cheers from the audience.<sup>127</sup> Soon after his trial concluded, the Peru local newspaper reported that Harry married a young woman, but did not include specifics on who the woman was or where the ceremony took place.<sup>128</sup>

Stella Landauer, the only girl to make it to adulthood, married Charles Kohn of Chicago in 1912.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> U.S. Census, 1910.

<sup>125</sup> Peru City Directory, 1905-06; "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, January 27, 1905.

<sup>126</sup> "Fund for Landauer," *Peru Republican*, October 19, 1906.

<sup>127</sup> "Involuntary Manslaughter-Harry Landauer is Held at Allentown, Pa.," *Peru Republican*, September 28, 1906; "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, October 5, 1906; "Blames Harry Landauer-Coroner's Jury Makes it Report at Allentown, Pa.," *Peru Republican*, October 12, 1906; "Fund for Landauer," *Peru Republican*, October 29, 1906; "Harry Landauer Writes," *Peru Republican*, October 26, 1906; "Quickly Acquitted-Harry Landauer Found Not Guilty As Charged," *Peru Republican*, November 2, 1906; "Landauer Acquitted-Former Peruvian Not Punished for Accident," *Peru Republican*, November 9, 1906.

<sup>128</sup> "Harry to Marry," *Peru Republican*, November 9, 1906.

<sup>129</sup> "Society," *Peru Republican*, October 27, 1911.

Jerome and Ida Landauer, as well as two of Nathan and Sidonia's children, are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### **Lehman**

The Lehmans, siblings Abraham (b. ~1845) and Carrie (b.~1850) , were originally from Wurtemberg, Germany and lived in Peru during their adult lives. Carrie Lehman married William Cohn in the 1870s, and had two children: Hattie (b. 1873 in Missouri) and Bert (b. 1876 in Indiana).<sup>130</sup> The young family moved to Peru during the mid-1870s. After William's death in 1878, Carrie's brother 32-year old Abraham, a successful Peru businessman who was one of the flax mill's proprietors, moved in with the widow and her children,<sup>131</sup> until Carrie Lehman Cohn married Felix Moses in 1890; she then lived in Peru until her death in 1916.<sup>132</sup>

Abraham soon started a family of his own, marrying Ida Rosenthal of Cincinnati in 1884, and fathering four children: Bernard (b. 1885), Minnie (b. 1887), Fannie (b. 1888), and Erma (b. 1893). By the late 1890s, Abraham began investing profits from his bagging mill in other ventures, purchasing 4,600 acres of farm land in Illinois with a group of Peru businessmen in 1895, and putting money into a Kokomo rubber bicycle tire factory in 1896. He sold the Peru bagging mill in 1900, and in January 1901, Abe temporarily moved to Louisville, Kentucky to manage a bagging factory there. By July of that year, he sold his stock in the bagging factory and took his family on a European vacation funded by the \$20,000 he earned in mining stock.<sup>133</sup> During the 1900s the Lehmans moved to Indianapolis, with Abe buying into a box factory.<sup>134</sup> Daughter Minnie married Sidney Katz in 1909, and Irma married John I. Schnitzer in 1916.

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<sup>130</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>131</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>132</sup> U.S. Census, 1900; "Death of Mrs. Moses," *Peru Republican*, September 22, 1916.

<sup>133</sup> "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, July 5, 1901.

<sup>134</sup> U.S. Census, 1910.

William Riley Lehman, reporter and eventual publisher of *Peru Republican*, does not appear to be related to Abraham and Carrie Lehman. W.R. Lehman was born in Indiana around 1863 and both of his parents were also born in the state.<sup>135</sup> There is no indication William Lehman's family was Jewish.

Carrie Lehman Cohn Moses is the only Lehman family member buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### **Max Levi/Levy**

Max Levi immigrated to the United States from his home in Prussia in 1875 at the age of 25. He first shows up in Peru records in 1880, working as a clerk, and living in a boarding house on Broadway in downtown Peru.<sup>136</sup> In 1892 he married Maggie Lehev, born in Indiana to Irish parents, and by 1900 was living in Washington, Indiana (Miami Co.) and working as a baggage handler.<sup>137</sup> The couple had two daughters: Mildred (b. 1893) and Nora (b. 1896).<sup>138</sup>

While there is no known connection between Max Levi and Felix Levy or either of the Levi families in Peru, there is a possibility he was Jewish since the 1880 census has him living with other Jewish families in a boarding house (Rosenthal, Redelsheimer, Joseph Levi). However, Max had a Catholic service at his funeral in 1915, meaning he might have converted for his wife.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>136</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>137</sup> "Marriage License," *Peru Republican*, June 24, 1892; U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>138</sup> U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>139</sup> "Death of Max Levy," *Peru Republican*, April 21, 1915.

## Samuel Levi

Newlyweds Samuel and Sarah Levi immigrated to the United States from Russia in 1869. They moved to Peru where they lived at 170 West Eighth Street. There Sam operated a local junk yard and hide business.<sup>140</sup> The *Peru Republican* described Sam's business as "the leader in its particular line in our city. Mr. Levi is an extensive dealer in leather, shoe findings, hides, pelts, tallow, wool and furs and understands every detail pertaining to this business," and called Mr. Levi "a gentleman highly esteemed by all who know him as an honorable, upright private citizen and merchant."<sup>141</sup> The couple had nine children: Joseph, Annie, Lida, Abraham (b. 1874), Belle (b. 1879); Benjamin (b. 1882), Lena (b. 1884), Lewis (b. 1886), and Minnie (b. 1889).

In 1894, Annie Levi married Jacob Strifling, a South Bend businessman.<sup>142</sup> The couple stayed in Peru, with Strifling starting the Chicago Fair store on South Broadway until Jacob took on a business venture in Muncie in 1900.<sup>143</sup> In 1909, Belle Levi married Moe Amdur of Indianapolis and moved to that city.<sup>144</sup> Louis Levi married Mary L. Sheldon in 1904.<sup>145</sup>

Lida married Ike Harwich, also from South Bend, in 1896. After their wedding, Mr. and Mrs. Harwich made their home in South Bend.<sup>146</sup>

Joseph Levi moved to Marion, married his wife Gussie and managed a 10-cent store.<sup>147</sup> In 1903, Joseph filed for bankruptcy, claiming \$7,593.23 liabilities and only \$210.11 in assets.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> U.S. Census, 1900; Peru City Directory, 1901, 135.

<sup>141</sup> "Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review," *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

<sup>142</sup> "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, November 9, 1894.

<sup>143</sup> "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, October 12, 1900.

<sup>144</sup> "Levi-Amdur," *Peru Republican*, April 30, 1909.

<sup>145</sup> "Wedding Licenses," *Peru Republican*, March 25, 1904.

<sup>146</sup> "A Pretty Wedding," *Peru Republican*, August 28, 1896.

<sup>147</sup> U.S. Census, 1910.

<sup>148</sup> "Joseph Levi Bankrupt," *Peru Republican*, August 21, 1903.

Shortly after that he moved to LaPorte, Indiana where he started his own junk yard and had a daughter Lorraine in 1907.<sup>149</sup>

In 1912, Samuel moved his junk business from 112 South Broadway to 35 West Second Street.<sup>150</sup> After Samuel's death in 1916, Abraham inherited his father's tallow and hides business.<sup>151</sup> Ben stayed in Peru a few years to work with his brother, but ultimately moved to Chicago to live with his mother, widowed sister Minnie, and other sister Lena around 1920.<sup>152</sup>

By Joseph's death in 1935, Mrs. Sarah Levi, Belle Levi Andur, Minnie Levi Dressler, and Louis Levi were living in Los Angeles, California, and Ben had moved back to Peru to work with Abe.<sup>153</sup>

There is no connection between Samuel Levi and William Levi, a prominent Peruvian businessmen buried in Mount Hope Cemetery's Jewish section.

No members of the Samuel Levi family are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### **William Levi**

William Levi was born in the Wurtemberg town of Nagelsburg, Germany in 1842, and immigrated to the United States in 1857 at the age of 15. He first stopped in Wabash, but a year later settled in Peru, working as a clerk in Nathan Levi's store.<sup>154</sup> By 1870 William had opened his own dry goods store, married Frances Falk, daughter of Peru's pioneer businessman, Moses

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<sup>149</sup> U.S. Census, 1910.

<sup>150</sup> "Business Moved," *Peru Republican*, August 30, 1912.

<sup>151</sup> *Peru City Directory*, 1919-1920, 170.

<sup>152</sup> U.S. Census, 1920; *Peru City Directory* 1919-1920, 170.

<sup>153</sup> "Joe Levi," *Peru Republican*, February 15, 1935.

<sup>154</sup> ."William Levi Pioneer Citizen of Peru is Dead," *Peru Republican*, July 25, 1925; U.S. Census, 1860; Nathan (b. 1826) and William (b. 1842) were probably brothers or cousins.

Falk, and had two sons.<sup>155</sup> In all the couple had six children: Edward (b. 1868), Albert (b. 1869), Nellie (b. 1872), Emma (b. 1874), Lillie (b. 1876), and Lulu (b. 1877). Frances Falk Levi died in 1889 at the age of 40, but William continued to live in Peru, developing his Peruvian business interests by supporting the Peru Bagging Mill and eventually opening a banker and broker office in his brother-in-law Julius Falk's store.<sup>156</sup> He was active in civic matters too, organizing Peru's first civic organization, the Miami Club, and convincing the Square D Steel Mill and Carbon Factory to move to the city.<sup>157</sup> William lived in Peru for 72 years, sharing the family home at 115 West Third Street with his youngest daughter Lulu until passing away in 1935 at the age of 87.<sup>158</sup>

The Levi's wealth was evident when considering the Levi children's lavish weddings. When Nellie Levi married Hartford City businessman, Mayer Weiler in 1895, it was written in the news that "never had such an elegant array of presents been seen in Peru as were bestowed upon this happy bride," with the newlyweds receiving a fully-furnished house (which included a piano purchased by Edward Levi) in Hartford City.<sup>159</sup> Daughter Emma married Saul Munter of Indianapolis in 1897, the news once again wrote that it was "the greatest social event of the season" which included music by the Peru orchestra.<sup>160</sup> A few years later, in 1903, Edward Levi married Carrie Eisendroth in Chicago's Standard Club before the couple moved to Rochester, New York where Ed was in business.<sup>161</sup> In 1906 Lillian Levi married Morris Higer, and moved to Detroit.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> U.S. Census, 1870.

<sup>156</sup> U.S. Census, 1900; Peru City Directory, 1900, 15; "William Levi Pioneer Citizen of Peru is Dead," *Peru Republican*, July 25, 1925.

<sup>157</sup> "William Levi Pioneer Citizen of Peru is Dead," *Peru Republican*, July 25, 1925.

<sup>158</sup> U.S. Census, 1920; "William Levi Plans New House on West Third Street," *Peru Republican*, February 7, 1896.

<sup>159</sup> "Weiler-Levi Nuptials," *Peru Republican*, February 15, 1885.

<sup>160</sup> "Munter-Levi Nuptials," *Peru Republican*, April 30, 1897.

<sup>161</sup> "Married Next Tuesday," *Peru Republican*, June 26, 1903.

<sup>162</sup> "Wedding License," *Peru Republican*, February 9, 1906.

Albert Levi, William and Fannie's second son, seemed to follow in his father's footsteps. Known as "Babbie" in his youth, Albert graduated from Peru Central School, and became a Mason before moving to Indianapolis around 1895 and marrying his wife Stella. While there he worked as a traveling salesman and later was connected to the Investors' Syndicate. Albert founded the Indiana Retail Clothiers Association and the Men's Apparel Club; acting as secretary for both groups over the years. The couple had one son, Albert W. Levi, Jr.<sup>163</sup> By Albert's death in 1935, there were no Levi family members left living in Peru. (Lulu moved to Detroit to live with her sister Lillian Higer.)

William and Francis Falk Levi, their daughter Lulu, and their son Albert, his wife Stella, and Albert and Stella's son Albert Levi are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

### Felix Levy

Felix Levy, born in Alsace Lorraine, France in 1854, immigrated to the United States in



1874. According to a feature article on his daughter Frances, Felix was born in Paris, and while in Indiana on a business trip, fell in love with Sarah Baer, the daughter of Hirsch, the Or Zion president and local merchant, and Adelheit Baer.<sup>164</sup> The couple married in 1886, with Levy moving into the Hirsch

<sup>163</sup> "Albert W. Levi Reared in Peru Known Over State," *Peru Republican*, January 12, 1934.

<sup>164</sup> U.S. Census, 1900; "Florence Irving," *Peru Republican*, January 11, 1924.

residence at 11 Court St., and had two children: son Irving (b. 1889) and daughter Florence (b. 1892). Levy managed the French Bazaar, a major downtown Peru dry goods and mercantile store own by the Lafayette firm of Loeb & Hieny. Located at 58 South Broadway, the French Bazaar “immediately jumped into prominence and attained a large trade as the just result of equitable methods and low prices. The local news spoke highly of Felix: “Mr. F. Levy is everywhere highly regarded. Affable and pleasant, he gives special attention to all departments of this business.”<sup>165</sup>

When Loeb & Hieny decided to close the Peru store in January 1909, Levy started working with the Fox Brothers Manufacturing Cotton Mill, and is listed as a “underware manufacturer” in the 1910 census.<sup>166</sup> Sarah, the only daughter of a well-known Peru Jewish family, organized the Peru Art Club, and stayed active in the town’s social scene.<sup>167</sup> Irving enlisted the Navy during World War I, being promoted to Captain in 1918 and sailing for Hawaii the next year.<sup>168</sup> Around the same time Florence decided to pursue acting, joining Stuart Walker’s company and spending two seasons in Indianapolis before moving to New York City to further her career. Although she did not have professional training, she was cast in the 1924 Broadway hit “The Last Warning” under her stage name Florence Irving.<sup>169</sup> After serving in the Navy, Irving settled in New York as well. Felix, who was gradually going blind, and Sarah moved to New York City to be closer to their children in 1928, living in the Emerson Hotel during their time there.<sup>170</sup> Florence married and moved to London in the early 1930s. Felix Levy

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<sup>165</sup> “Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review,” *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

<sup>166</sup> “French Bazaar Leaving,” *Peru Republican*, November 6, 1908; “Felix Levy Dead in New York,” *Peru Republican*, December 31, 1935; U.S. Census, 1910.

<sup>167</sup> “Levy Rites Conducted,” *Peru Republican*, April 15, 1938.

<sup>168</sup> “Iriving Levy Promoted to Captain at Washington,” *Peru Republican*, July 19, 1918; “Captain Levy Sails for Hawaii,” *Peru Republican*, March 19, 1919.

<sup>169</sup> Florence Irving,” *Peru Republican*, January 11, 1924.

<sup>170</sup> “Felix Levy Dead in New York,” *Peru Republican*, December 13, 1935.

died in December 1935; his remains were transported back to Peru for burial. Sarah died three years later in April 1938.

Felix and Sarah Baer Levy, and their son Irving are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

## **Loewenthal**

Nathan Loewenthal immigrated to the United States from Esslinger, Germany in 1880 at the age of twelve and made his way to Peru.<sup>171</sup> In February 1890, at the age of twenty-two, Loewenthal partnered with Clarence Hall to open a clothing firm at 20-22 South Broadway Street.<sup>172</sup> The *Peru Republican* described Hall & Loewenthal as “the most popular dealers in clothing, etc., in Peru,” and that the two owners “are highly esteemed in social circles, while in commercial circles they are regarded as men of energy and thoroughly reliable in all their dealings.”<sup>173</sup> In 1894 he married Harriet “Hattie” Cohn, daughter of William and Carrie Lehman Cohn, also of Peru, and the couple moved into 177 West Third Street.<sup>174</sup> Daughter Alma was born in 1899.<sup>175</sup> Nathan Loewenthal continued to run the Hall & Loewenthal store until his death in 1910. At that point, the business continued under the ownership of Hall and his son Lyman. Hattie and Alma Loewenthal moved to Indianapolis soon after Nathan's death, and Hattie remarried, becoming Hattie Meier.<sup>176</sup>

Nathan Loewenthal is buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

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<sup>171</sup> U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>172</sup> “Small Talk,” *Peru Republican*, February 3, 1890; Peru City Directory, 1900, 16.

<sup>173</sup> “Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review,” *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

<sup>174</sup> “Wedding Bells-Marriage of Nathan Loewenthal to Miss Hattie Cohn,” *Peru Republican*, June 29, 1894; Peru City Directory 1900, 107.

<sup>175</sup> U.S. Census, 1900; After William Cohn's death, Harriet's mother Carrie Cohn married local businessman Felix Moses.

<sup>176</sup> Omer Holman, *Here We Live Over the Last Fifty Years: Peru and Miami County, 1885-1935* (Peru, Indiana: Peru Republican, 1936), 15; “Death of Mrs. Moses,” *Peru Republican*, September 22, 1916.

## Mergentheim

Lewis Mergentheim, born in the Bavarian town of Fuerth, Germany in 1846, immigrated to the United States in 1866 to join his cousin Eugenia and her husband Charles Sterne in Peru. Sterne, along with his brother Herman, founded the Peru Woolen Mill in 1865.<sup>177</sup> The mill, which manufactured jeans, flannel, cassimere, blankets, and other cloths, employed around 150 people, and eventually expanded to operate in conjunction with the Sterne's natural gas works which ran the mills and supplied "illuminating gas" for Peru's street lights. Lewis started as a clerk at the mill and lived with Charles Sterne's growing family upon his arrival.<sup>178</sup> Gradually, Lewis worked his way up, first to a traveling salesman position and then, after the death of Moses Oppenheimer, becoming a partner in the newly-named firm of Mergentheim, Sterne & Strouse, in 1886.<sup>179</sup> Lewis also served on the board of directors for the Peru Natural Gas & Fuel Company (est. 1886), and the Peru Electric Manufacturing Company (org. 1893).<sup>180</sup>

*20-22 North Broadway, former home of the Hall & Loewenthal Store.*

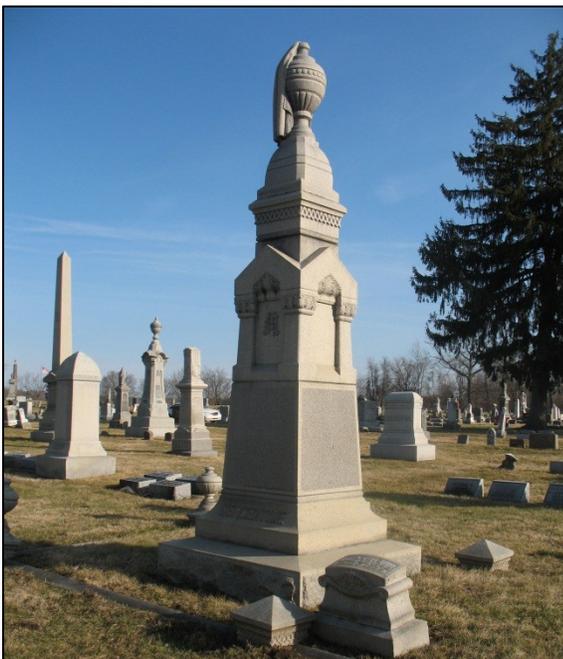


<sup>177</sup> "Lewis Mergentheim," *Peru Republican*, June 12, 1896

<sup>178</sup> U.S. Census, 1870.

<sup>179</sup> "Lewis Mergentheim," *Peru Republican*, 12 Jun. 1896; Bodurtha, 275-276.

<sup>180</sup> Bodurtha, 279, 282-283.



*Mergentheim Family Monument in Mount Hope Cemetery*

The rest of the Mergentheim siblings, Sophia, Clara, Mathilda, Louise, Marie, and brother Henry also immigrated from their Bavarian hometown during the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>181</sup> Henry settled in New York City. Sophia lived with Charles Sterne's family in Peru for a short time before marrying Adolph Bearss of Peru.<sup>182</sup> Louise married Herman Bearss of Peru, while Mathilda married Jacob Pappenheimer and moved to Fort Smith,

Arkansas.<sup>183</sup> The youngest sibling Marie lived with Lewis in his house on the corner of Third and Hood Streets.

In April 1896, a workman cleaning the gutters of Lewis Mergentheim's home began to fall off his ladder and Lewis jumped to help the falling man avoid the stone walkway situated below. Lewis ended up cushioning the man's fall, allowing the workman to walk away uninjured, but Mergentheim suffered a broken ankle.<sup>184</sup> While a full recovery was expected since Lewis was in otherwise in good health and only 50 years old, he experienced swelling a few weeks after the accident, and ended up suffering from a lung embolism and passing away unexpectedly. The funeral was attended by many of Peru's business leaders from the past and present, and the Honorable Charles W. Fairbanks, Indiana senator and eventual Vice President of the United States, sent his condolences and flowers.<sup>185</sup> He was buried in the Jewish section of

<sup>181</sup> *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 169.

<sup>182</sup> U.S. Census, 1880, "Personal," *Peru Republican*, May 21, 1891.

<sup>183</sup> "Death of Miss Mergentheim," *Peru Republican*, March 21, 1919.

<sup>184</sup> "Mr. Mergentheim's Accident," *Peru Republican*, April 17, 1896.

<sup>185</sup> "Lewis Mergentheim" *Peru Republican*, June 12, 1896.

Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery. After Lewis's death, Marie Mergentheim moved to New York City, where she died of influenza in 1919.<sup>186</sup>

### **Felix Moses**

Felix Moses appears in Peru records around the time of his 1890 marriage to Carrie Lehman Cohn, with the couple making their home at 179 W. Third Street and Felix working as a traveling salesman.<sup>187</sup>

There is some ambiguity surrounding Felix Moses's life. The 1900 Census lists Moses as a German immigrant, coming to the United States in 1875; however, the 1910 census says he is originally from Pennsylvania. There is a peddler named Felix Moses that appears in the 1863 Indiana IRS Tax Assessment list which could very well be the Moses that later lived in Peru if he was indeed born in Pennsylvania.

Felix Moses and his wife Carrie (nee Lehman) Cohn Moses are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Jacob C. Moses, a grocer living in Peru during the 1870s, does not appear to be related to Felix Moses and there is no indication Jacob, his wife Elizabeth, or any of the couple's four children were Jewish.

### **Oppenheimer**

Moses Oppenheimer was born in the Wurtemberg, Germany town of Berlinger in 1825, and was raised by extended family after being orphaned at a young age.<sup>188</sup> He immigrated to

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<sup>186</sup> "Death of Miss Mergentheim," *Peru Republican*, March 21, 1919.

<sup>187</sup> Peru City Directory, 1900, 1901, 1905, 1908.

America with his sister Henrietta<sup>189</sup> in 1849, joining his brother who had already settled in Carrollton, Illinois and he worked alongside his brother as a gunsmith. He later moved to St. Louis where he worked in a white lead manufactory.<sup>190</sup> Wanting to get into merchandising, Moses wrote his uncle Moses Falk, a prominent Peru businessman for advice and soon moved to Peru to clerk in Falk's store. He quickly moved up the corporate ladder, becoming his uncle's business partner in 1853, only four years after his arrival in the United States. In 1856 Oppenheimer married Anna Thalheimer, a young woman he met while in New York on a purchasing trip.<sup>191</sup> Anna, one of ten siblings, was also from Wurtemberg, and had traveled to America in 1851 at the age of fourteen to learn millinery. The couple worked in Falk's store until 1865 when health ailments led Oppenheimer to sell the store and visit Europe in hopes that the vacation would benefit Moses's health. Once they returned to Peru, the Sterne brothers, close friends of Moses Falk and owners of the Peru Woolen Mill, approached Oppenheimer about joining the firm and supplying capital to rebuild the mill after it was gutted during a disastrous 1868 fire. Moses agreed, purchasing the best equipment and making the mill a very profitable enterprise. The couple lived at 116 W. Third Street and had two daughters: Bertha (b. 1876) and Nettie (b. 1878), who died at the age of 18 months. In July 1885, the Oppenheimers planned to summer in Atlantic City with friend Moses Rosenthal after visiting Moses's physician in Philadelphia. During the examination, the physician told Moses that death was eminent and not

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<sup>188</sup> *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties* claims he grew up with his grandparents while Oppenheimer's *Peru Republican* obituary "Death of Mr. Oppenheimer," says it was his uncle who raised him.

<sup>189</sup> Henrietta is only mentioned in the *Biographical and Genealogical History*.

<sup>190</sup> "Death of Mr. Oppenheimer: He Was a Prominent Manufacturer of Peru," *Peru Republican*, August 14, 1885.

<sup>191</sup> *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties*, 763-767.

to start the journey home; four weeks later, in August 1885, Moses Oppenheimer died of a heart embolism.<sup>192</sup>

In 1895, Bertha married Samuel Heller, a New York businessman.<sup>193</sup> The couple resided on Madison Avenue in Manhattan during the winter months and spent summers in Far Rockaway, Long Island. They had two children; Ruth (b. ~1902) and Robert (b.~1906).<sup>194</sup> Anna sold the Oppenheimer family home to Mrs. Jackson Tillett for \$7,000 in 1900, saying she planned on staying in Peru but didn't need such a big house now that she was widowed.<sup>195</sup> After renting a house on South Miami Street that she shared with boarders, she eventually joined the Hellers in New York, staying there until Bertha Heller unexpectedly died in 1919.<sup>196</sup>

Mrs. Anna Oppenheimer moved back to Peru after Bertha's death, sharing her home with boarders until her death in 1926 at the age of 95. Peru's oldest woman, Anna died after complications resulting from a broken hip received while walking on Third Street.<sup>197</sup>

Moses and Anna Oppenheimer are buried and there is a stone for their daughter Bertha Oppenheimer Heller in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

## Prince

David Prince, a native of Massachusetts, and his wife Sarah, born in Ohio to Bavarian immigrants, first lived in Boston where David worked as a bookseller.<sup>198</sup> During the 1880s the family moved to Peru where David became mail carrier for the west side of Peru and purchased a

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<sup>192</sup> "Death of Mr. Oppenheimer," *Peru Republican*, August 14, 1885.

<sup>193</sup> "A Delightful Party- Celebrates the Betrothal of Miss Oppenheimer to Mr. Heller of New York," *Peru Republican*, December 28, 1894;

<sup>194</sup> U.S. Census, 1900, 1910; "Death of Mrs. Heller," *Peru Republican*, December 19, 1919.

<sup>195</sup> "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, March 30, 1900.

<sup>196</sup> U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>197</sup> "Mrs. Anna Oppenheimer-Pioneer Citizen, a Nonagenarian, Passes Away at County Hospital," *Peru Republican*, December 17, 1926.

<sup>198</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

house on Third Street.<sup>199</sup> While in Peru, the family grew, with Nathan (b. 1883), Solomon (b. 1887), Louis (b. 1892), Rebecca, and David joining eldest daughter Josephine (b. 1880 in MA).<sup>200</sup>

David died in 1894 of pneumonia, leaving Sarah a widow at the age of 41.<sup>201</sup> Many of the couples' children decided to stay in Peru with Josephine, Nathan, Solomon, and Louis living together in 1910. Even after Solomon married his wife Edna in 1920 and had two children, (Phyllis, b. 1922, and Forrest, b.1929) and Louis got married in the 1920s and moved into their own homes; the rest of the siblings staying together in the Third Street House.<sup>202</sup> Over the years Solomon managed a billiards parlor, Nathan became a machinist helper with the railroad.

Sarah Prince and children Josephine, Nathan, Solomon and his wife Edna, and Rebecca are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.<sup>203</sup>

## **Ramsey**

Roy Ramsey, born around 1895, lived in Miami County's Harrison Township and married Hazel in 1912 at the age of 17. Roy, Hazel, and their four children, twins Irene and Geraldine (b. 1913), Ruth (b.1916), and Clarence (b. 1919), eventually moved to Peru during the 1920s where Roy worked as a locomotive fireman for the steam railroad, and they rented a house on West Main Street.<sup>204</sup> Roy died in 1967; Hazel passed away in 1987.

Roy Ramsey and his wife Hazel are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery. There are no other indicators that the Ramseys were Jewish or distantly related to

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<sup>199</sup> "Death of David Prince," *Peru Republican*, March 9, 1894.

<sup>200</sup> U.S. Census, 1990.

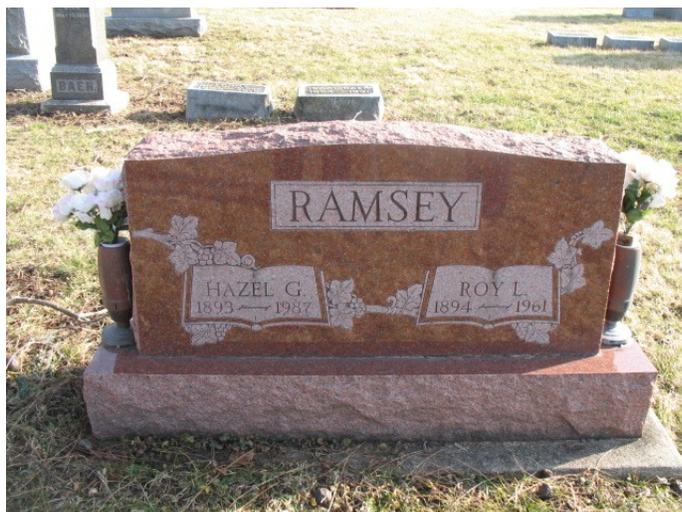
<sup>201</sup> "Death of David Prince," *Peru Republican*, March 9, 1894.

<sup>202</sup> U.S. Census, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

<sup>203</sup> In his obituary it says David Prince was buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, another name for Mount Hope, but no grave marker could be found with the other Prince markers in the Jewish section.

<sup>204</sup> U.S. Census, 1920, 1930.

anyone else buried in this cemetery section.



*Roy and Hazel Ramsey grave marker in Mount Hope Cemetery.*

## Rosenthal



*134 West Third Street, former home of Moses Rosenthal*

Moses Rosenthal immigrated to the United States from Wurtemberg, Germany at the age of fifteen in 1860, and went to Peru to work in the Sterne Brothers' Woolen Mill, living with Herman Sterne and his family.<sup>205</sup> By 1880, Rosenthal had become owner of Peru's Flax Mill as part of the firm Lehman, Rosenthal & Kraus,

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<sup>205</sup> U.S. Census, 1860.

had married his wife Francis, who was originally from Kentucky, and had six children: Max (b. ~1868), Delia (b. ~1870), Walter (b. ~1872), Eugene (b. ~1874), Albert (b. ~1877), and Edwin (b.~1879).<sup>206</sup>

Most of the Rosenthal siblings immigrated to the U.S. and settled in the Peru area. Sister Rosa stayed in Wurtemberg, but Joseph, Isaac, Hannah, Bertha, Caroline, Clara, and half-siblings Samuel, Nathan, and Julian all settled in the Peru area.<sup>207</sup>

Caroline married Moses Haas around 1863, and had seven children. Hannah married Charles Kraus in 1864, and had three children: Milton (b. 1866), Max (b. 1868) and Dora (b. 1869). Joseph lived with the Kraus's during the 1870 when he worked in Charles's clothing store.<sup>208</sup> (Bertha Rosenthal also married a Kraus.)

Caroline married Moses Haas, a Greene County merchant, in the early 1860s and had six children.<sup>209</sup>

Joseph Rosenthal, Hannah Rosenthal Kraus, her husband Charles, and children Milton, Dora Kraus Gunzberger, and Ida Kraus, and Caroline Rosenthal Haas and her husband Moses Haas are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

## **Sterne**

Brothers Herman (b.~1826) and Charles(b.~1830) Sterne, natives of Wurtemberg, Germany, immigrated to the United States in the mid-1850s. The pair founded the Peru Woolen Mill in 1865. After the majority of the mill was destroyed in an 1868 fire, the Sterne's expanded

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<sup>206</sup> Bodurtha, 278; U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>207</sup> *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 209; In Joseph Rosenthal's will, dated 1896, he names his brother Moses's widow and children, Charles Kraus and his sister Hannah Kraus, and his sister Rosa who is still in Wurtemberg as heirs. He specifically says nothing is given to his brother Isaac, sisters Bertha Rosenthal Kraus, Caroline Rosenthal Haas, and Clara Rosenthal Kochendale, and his half-brothers Samuel, Nathan, and Julian.

<sup>208</sup> U.S. Census, 1870.

<sup>209</sup> U.S. Census, 1870, 1880.

the mill, and offered Moses Oppenheimer, a successful Peru merchant, position as a partner in exchange for funding to rebuild the damaged building and equipment. The mill, which manufactured jeans, flannel, cassimere, blankets, and other cloths, was located on West Canal Street employed around 150 people, and eventually operated in conjunction with the Sterne's natural gas works which opened in 1874, and ran the mills and supplied "illuminating gas" for Peru's street lights.<sup>210</sup> Herman immigrated with his wife Sophia, and they had seven children: Esther (b.~1856), Emanuel (b. 1859), Harry, Irma, Alice, and Eugene.<sup>211</sup> Charles married Eugenia Fries of Cincinnati, a native of Bavaria and cousin of Lewis Mergentheim; they had nine children: William, Emma, Mary, Edwin, Albert, Lillie, Charles, Nellie, and Stella.<sup>212</sup> Herman died in 1879, Charles in 1880, and Charles's wife Eugenia in 1881.

Herman and Sophia Sterne and their children Esther, Emmanuel, and Cora, and Charles and Eugenia Sterne, as well as their children Lillie and Charles are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery. Emanuel (d. 1869) and Cora (d. 1872) Sterne are the first two recorded burials in the cemetery's Jewish section.

## Strouse

Brothers Harry (b. 1852) and David (b. 1859) Strouse were born in Wurtemberg, Germany and settled in Peru, first working as book keepers in the Peru Woolen Mill. In February 1877, Harry Strouse became one of the Woolen Mill's partners, with the firm being renamed Mergentheim, Sterne & Strouse in 1886.<sup>213</sup> When the initial natural gas boom of the early

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<sup>210</sup> Bodurtha, 169, 275-276.

<sup>211</sup> *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 238; Herman leaves money for the care of his parents' graves in Berlichinger, Wurtemberg's Jewish cemetery.

<sup>212</sup> *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 237; In his will dated 10 March 1880, Charles Sterne bequests money to the Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati, the Jewish Orphan Asylum in Cleveland, and leaves money for a Jewish Agricultural College if one is established, as well as his family.

<sup>213</sup> Bodurtha, 275-276.

twentieth century ended, David Strouse organized the People's Oil Company with the hopes of finding oil in Peru. Harry and David together organized the Valley Oil Company, which leased land and ended up drilling one oil well.<sup>214</sup>

The entire Strouse family, Harry and his wife, David, their two sisters, and their mother, moved east in the early 1900s.<sup>215</sup> David ended up living with his sisters Carrin and Pauline Myers, in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

No Strouse family members are buried in Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

## Wertheim

Adolph Wertheim, born December 1858 in Austria-Hungary, immigrated to the United States in 1871 at the age of thirteen.<sup>216</sup> Here he met Otilia Cohn, another Magyar immigrant who had been in the United States with her family since 1865. The pair was married in 1883, and made their home in Peru. Here Adolph started his own tailor shop in 1889 at 53 South Broadway and the couple raised their two sons: Ralph (b. 1885) and Franklin (b. 1891).<sup>217</sup> The *Peru Republican* called Wertheim the town's prominent tailor, "a man of vast practical experience in his profession, possessed of a continental training in every detail of the art."<sup>218</sup> Franklin died in 1911 and Otilia's widowed mother, Fannie Cohn lived with the couple until her death in 1919.<sup>219</sup> Ralph married Bessie Wise of Toledo in 1917, an event covered by the noted Jewish

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 282-283.

<sup>215</sup> "Our Jewish Population," *Peru Republican*, March 13, 1905.

<sup>216</sup> U.S. Census: 1900; Census records between 1900 and 1930 list Mr. and Mrs. Wertheim's birthplace as Austria (1900), Magyar (1910), Budapest (1920) and Hungary (1930).

<sup>217</sup> U.S. Census: 1910.

<sup>218</sup> "Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review," *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

<sup>219</sup> "Death of Mrs. Cohn," *Peru Republican*, June 20, 1919., Mrs. Cohn is buried in Chicago.

paper *The Israelite*, and the couple moved to Chicago where Ralph worked as a trunk salesman. Their son Frank was born in 1920.<sup>220</sup>

Adolph and Otilia Wertheim, their son Franklin, and Ralph and his wife Bessie and son Frank, are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

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<sup>220</sup> "Wertheim-Wise," *Peru Republican*, January 12, 1917; U.S. Census, 1920.

**Appendix: Jewish Owned Businesses in Peru, Indiana**

Unknown	Mercantile Store	Louis Affelder	1896-1910
Corner Wabash & Main (Odd Fellow Hall Basement)	Baer Bicycle & Bicycle Repair	Barney Baer	1900-1910s
35 E. Main	Baer Bicycle & Sundries	Barney Baer	1920
E. Fifth Street (Old Emerick Opera House)	Baer Bicycle & Sundries	Barney Baer	1920-1926
Unknown	Clothing store	Hirsch Baer	Before 1890
68 S. Broadway	Falk's "Red Front" Store	Julius Falk	1880-1887
1-3 S. Broadway	Julius Falk	Julius Falk, Arthur Simon	1887-1914
1-3 S. Broadway	Julius Falk	Arthur Simon	1914-1920s
Between First & Second Streets	Falk & Sterne	Moses Falk,	1850-1859
No. 5 Broadway (near Canal Street)	Falk Store	Moses Falk, Moses Oppenheimer	1859-1878
60 S. Broadway	Frank the Foot Fitter	Sigmond Frank	1895-1906
58 S. Broadway	French Bazaar	Felix Levy	1886-1909
20-22 N. Broadway (Brownell Building)	Hall & Loewenthal	Nathan Loewenthal	1900
52 S. Broadway	D. Kittner & Sons	David Kittner, Henry & Albert Kittner	1874-1916
18 ½ N. Broadway	Milton Kraus Law Office	Milton Kraus	1908
	Peru Bagging Company	Charles J. Kraus, Milton & Max Kraus	1900-1909
	Peru Flax Mill	Abraham Lehman, Moses Rosenthal, Charles Kraus	1880-1900
W. Canal Street	Peru Woolen Mill	Charles & Henry Sterne	1865-1868
W. Canal Street	Peru Woolen Mill	Charles & Henry Sterne, Moses Oppenheimer, Lewis Mergentheim	1872-1885
W. Canal Street	Peru Woolen Mill	Lewis Mergentheim, Charles Sterne & Harry W. Strouse	1886-1896
112 S. Broadway	Hides, Leather & Junks	Samuel Levi	1870-1912
Broadway Between First & Second Streets	Sterne Dry Goods	Henry Sterne	1860
53 S. Broadway	Wertheim Tailors	Adolph Wertheim	1900
23 E. Main	Wertheim Tailors	Adolph Wertheim	1908
35 W. Second	Hides, Tallow, Etc.	Sam Levi, Abe Levi	1912-1930s

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