



## More on the history of our wonderful deer:



The Oberlin Heritage Center's deer has a long history befitting a magnificent name. Manufactured in Whiteman, Massachusetts around 1880 by the H. Mansback Company, the deer first stood in the yard of prominent Oberlin businessman Marx Straus. Straus came to Oberlin from Bavaria, and opened a dry goods store in 1852. He married Julia Bartholomew in 1856, a marriage which produced one son, Joseph Clayton Straus, in 1859. After running the Oberlin Inn from 1878 to 1895, Straus moved to Elyria, and the stag moved from his mansion on South Main Street to 43 East Vine Street, home of Chauncey Wack. A longtime Oberlin resident infamous for opposing almost every typical Oberlin belief, Wack was a hotel operator, who, after the Oberlin Wellington slave rescue was not only a star witness for the prosecution of the rescuers, he also boarded the slave catchers during their stay in town. The staunch Democrat died in 1900, after which his house,

and the deer, passed to the new owners of the house, the Dietz family.

The Dietz family is most well known for Father Peter Dietz, the famous "labor-priest," who moved from New York City to take a parish in Oberlin. The well known left-wing Roman Catholic priest became the pastor of the Sacred Heart Parish and devoted most of his priesthood to Catholic social action. Peter's younger sister, Theresa, continued living on East Vine until her death at 95 in 1992, but the deer had already passed to her nephew, Joe Revers. The Revers family resided at the corner of Hamilton and South Main, 14049 State Route 58. After his death, Revers left the deer to a nephew, Frank Mitro of Perrysburg, who generously donated it to the Oberlin Heritage Center.

Through our experiences with the community during the deer's restoration, installation, and name selection, we continue to discover the depth of this wonderful artifact's ties to Oberlin. What Geoffrey Blodgett, who saw its significance in 1988 and sought to keep the



deer here in Oberlin, called "a beauty," has been impacting the town's history since its arrival. Family photos, personal memories and anecdotes that have been shared with us prove the deer is and forever shall be a valued Oberlin resident. An extensive restoration, done as a community service by McKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory, has once again brought out the physical beauty of the statue. The deer was installed in front of the Monroe House at the Oberlin Heritage Center on November 22, 2004.



After installing the deer we decided to hold a contest to give it a proper name. More than 200 names were submitted by some 150 people from across northeastern Ohio and from as far away as Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, Minnesota, and Virginia. On February 2, 2005, our Board of Trustees selected the name "Straus," which was suggested by Marcia Heckert of Wellington, Ohio. The name honors the deer's first owners, the Straus family. Here to stay, "Straus" stands at a place where Oberlin memories are created and preserved.