

## Landauers Started as Partnership in Macon, Georgia



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This photograph, taken some time around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, shows the storefront of Landauer & Strouse Dry Goods on North Main Street in Albion. Standing on the left is Simon Landauer and the young man standing on the right is his son, Jacob Landauer. A number of crates sit along the curb marked Landauer & Strouse Albion, NY, many of them coming by way of the New York Central Railroad; a young boy watches from the second-floor window as the photograph is taken.

Simon Landauer was born in Bavaria (present day Germany) in 1833, the son of a Jewish cattle farmer. He and his brother Moritz were trained in cotton weaving while living in Europe, leaving for America prior to forced conscription in the army. Although documentation of Moritz's arrival has not been located, Simon arrived at New York City on August 21, 1852 aboard the Chancey Jerome. Along with his brother, the two young men traveled to Macon, Georgia where they opened their dry goods business, M. Landauer & Brother.

Records from 1857 show that the two men were involved in starting the United Hebrew Society of Macon, both listed on the act to incorporate filed that year. Several years later, Moritz appeared on a list to appear at the Bibb County Court House to select delegates for the purpose

of seceding from the Union. The brothers also appeared in records indicating their support, albeit indirect, of the Southern cause as the Ladies' Aid Society in Macon was purchasing flannel from Landauers to sew shirts for Confederate soldiers.

After the outbreak of the Civil War, Moritz paid \$600 to send a substitute soldier in his place. By 1862, he was drafted into the Confederate Army and chose to flee north rather than render service. A November 1862 advertisement appeared in the Georgia Weekly Telegraph noting that the store of M. Landauer & Brother was available for rent, indicating that the two had left the region shortly before. Nativist ideology was gaining strength in the years leading up to the Civil War, but those ideas ultimately subsided as immigrants rendered service in the Union and Confederate armies. Jewish immigrants, many who earned their living through clothing and textile businesses, were met with the same pre-war anti-immigrant sentiment; many in the North and South felt as though Jewish immigrants were exploiting the war.

By 1863 the brothers had arrived at Albion and reestablished their partnership on North Main Street. It was in 1882, the same year that a devastating fire wiped through the northwestern corner of Albion's business district, that the partnership dissolved with each man entering into business with his son (vol. 3, iss. 17). As a result, Moritz opened what was known locally as "Upper Landauers" in the Hart Block (now Shay's Shamrock) while Simon opened "Lower Landauers" at the site pictured here. Eventually H. Morris Strouse, the son-in-law of Simon, entered the business which effectively transformed the operation into Landauer & Strouse.

Prior to this photograph, a competing dry goods business known as Bell & Phelps operated out of the northern half of this storefront (the right half of this building) until Landauers rented both sides starting in 1895. Jacob Landauer purchased this block from Diadette Brockway Day and Ferdinand Austin Day in 1910, effectively solidifying the business on Albion's Main Street. Although Moritz closed Upper Landauers, likely sometime in the 1920s or 1930s, Lower Landauers remained in operation at this site through the 1980s.