

# WHO ARE

# THE ASTORS?

By Vincent Mitchell

IN THE dingy steerage cabin of a sailing packet, rebounded in Cleopatra Bay in January, 1784, a bright, healthy, and intelligent German immigrant had turned long, tedious hours of enforced idleness to good account by asking questions and storing the answers away in his mind for future profitable use. His worldly possessions consisted of the clothes he wore, an extra suit of clothes, seven flutes, and \$25. His name was John Jacob Astor. He had bought the seven flutes from the musical instrument firm of which his brother, George Peter Astor, was a partner in London. After leaving Germany John Jacob had worked for his brother's firm to acquire the means of making the voyage to America, where another brother, Heinrich, had preceded him and was well established in New York in the butcher trade. John Jacob had no desire to become a butcher.



**JOHN JACOB ASTOR**  
1763-1848  
Married Sarah Todd

From this homely, simple beginning was built the huge Astor fortune. John Jacob Astor, when he died in 1848, possessed an estate estimated at \$20,000,000, largely composed of New York real estate. He was the richest man in the United States and had been during the years of his control and operation of the American Fur company, the most powerful ruler for many years of a vast domain larger than the area of the United States of the time. He was the greatest independent fur dealer in the world. He owned a fleet of merchant ships which took his pelts to China and returned loaded with tea and silks, to be sold at a big profit in New York.

Had he been inspired by patriotic and humanitarian rather than acquisitive motives, John Jacob Astor might have been revered in America as one of the nation's greatest heroes. Instead he was scornfully hated by thousands of his fellow countrymen as a miserly money-grub who exploited the mistakes of others to increase his already swollen income. After retiring from the fur

trade Astor devoted his business acumen to the purchase of real estate. He had the vision to foresee the development which has made New York America's first metropolis. Also he possessed the necessary capital to seize every opportunity for sagacious land investment. He bought up mortgages and leases and never hesitated to foreclose on a property owner who got into financial difficulties. In his later years Astor was known as "the landlord of New York."

**MRS. EMILY ASTOR WARD**  
One Child

**MRS. MARY ASTOR CAREY**  
Four Children

**HENRY ASTOR**  
Married Charlotte Gibbes

**JOHN JACOB ASTOR**  
1822-1890  
Married Charlotte Gibbes

**WILLIAM ASTOR**  
1829-1892  
Married Caroline Schermerhorn

**MRS. EMILY ASTOR VAN ALLEN**  
Three Children

**MRS. CAROLINE S. ASTOR**

**MRS. LAURA ASTOR DELANO**

**MRS. HELEN ASTOR ROOSEVELT**  
Two Children

**MRS. CAROLINE ASTOR WILSON**  
Two Children

**MRS. CHARLOTTE ASTOR DRAYTON**  
Four Children

**MRS. AVA WILLING ASTOR**  
(Now Mrs. William K. Dick)

**MRS. HELEN HUNTINGTON ASTOR**

**MRS. MADELINE FORCE ASTOR**  
(Now Mrs. William K. Dick)

**JOHN JACOB ASTOR III.**  
1912-

**WILLIAM VINCENT ASTOR**  
1864-1912  
Married Helen D. Huntington

**MRS. HELEN HUNTINGTON ASTOR**

**PRINCESS AVA MURIEL ASTOR KELTZKY**

**JOHN JACOB ASTOR III.**  
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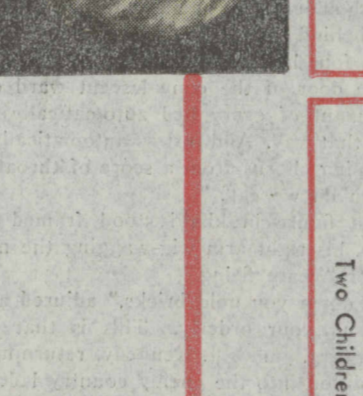
in America. When he left London he had the notion of establishing a musical instrument business. Hence the seven flutes. But on the long voyage to the new world he heard fellow passengers talking about the fascinating work and the huge profits of the fur trade. Some of these fellow passengers were officials of the Hudson's Bay company. Another and younger man was an independent dealer. It was from this man that John Jacob received much detailed information concerning the business of selling trade goods to Indians for furs and, in turn, selling the furs in London at prices much higher than the cost of the trade goods.



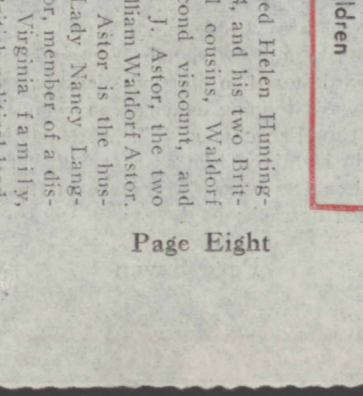
**WILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR**  
1848-1919  
First Viscount  
Married Mary Dahlgren Paul



**COL. JOHN J. ASTOR**  
1864-1912  
Married (1) Ava Willing, (2) Madeline Force



**MRS. AVA WILLING ASTOR**  
(Now Lady Ribblesdale)



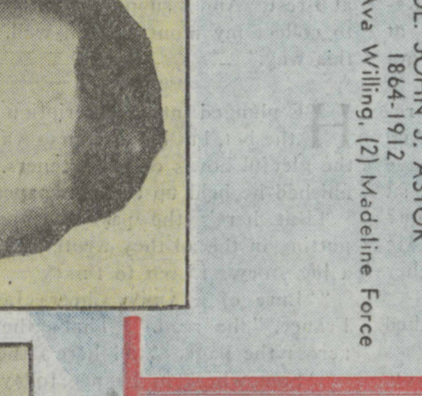
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(Now Mrs. William K. Dick)



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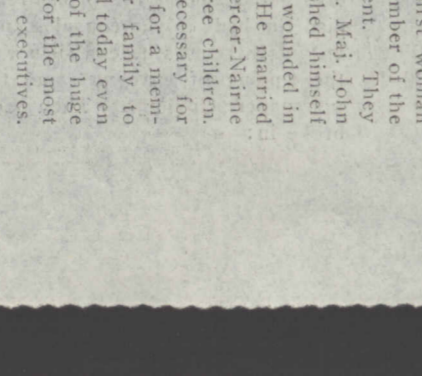
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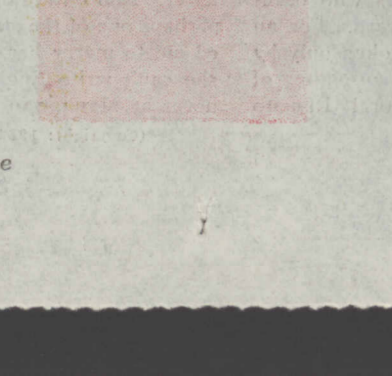
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**PRINCESS AVA MURIEL ASTOR KELTSKY**



**JOHN JACOB ASTOR III.**  
1912-



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1912-

**WALDORF ASTOR**  
1879-  
Second Viscount  
Married Lady Violet Mercer-Nairne

**LADY NANCY LANGHORNE ASTOR**

**MAJ. JOHN J. ASTOR**  
1886-  
Married Lady Violet Mercer-Nairne

**LADY VIOLET ASTOR**  
Three Children

**WILLIAM VINCENT ASTOR**  
1891-  
Married Helen D. Huntington

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