

BARBARA SICHERMAN

42A WINSLOW STREET

CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02138

617/661-0895

July 27, 1981

Mr. Eliot Porter
Route 4
Box 33
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Mr. Porter:

Thank you very much for your quick and helpful response to my letter. I have written your sister Nancy Straus and look forward to hearing from her. I had no idea that the Porters and Strauses were related.

I hesitate to be a pest, but I fear that is one of the attributes of being a historian. I realize that you were much younger than Alice Hamilton and knew her long ago, but I would be interested in any recollections or impressions you have of her. Did you form any general impressions about her character or state of mind? what did you and she talk about--medicine? politics? other subjects? did you go to the Codmans for tea? dinner? did you bring your friends? was it something of a chore visiting a friend of your mother's or was there anything interesting about it? did you ever confide in Alice Hamilton? did she seem different in any way from other friends of your mother? Do you have any vivifying memories of her?

Please ignore this request if it relates too much to the long ago and far away. But as a biographer, I look for leads wherever I find them.

In any event, thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barbara Sicherman

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CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02138

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July 27, 1981

Mrs. Nancy Straus
Great Spruce Head Island
Sunset, Maine 04683

Dear Mrs. Straus:

I recently wrote a letter to your brother Eliot Porter concerning Alice Hamilton, and he referred me to you. I have writing a biography of Dr. Hamilton and am also editing a volume of her letters for Harvard University Press. For this work, I am interested in having any recollections you have of her (how you came to know her, what you thought about her, how often you saw her, and the like). I also hope that you may be able to help me identify some of the individuals whom she mentions in the letters.

You and your brother are mentioned in her letters of the 1920s. I know that he was in Harvard Medical School at the time, but wonder what you were doing. I am interested in anything that you can tell me about the relationships of both your mother, Ruth Wadsworth Porter, and mother-in-law, Mary Straus, to Alice Hamilton, that is how did she get to know them, how well did she know them, and so forth. I had no idea until I received your brother's letters that you had married Michael Straus. Alice Hamilton refers quite often to the Straus family, but I had no idea who they were. I would be especially grateful for any information you can give about Mary and Michael Straus and about their children, including your husband. (There are some references in various letters to Michael Straus, but it is not clear whether AH is referring to father or son.) Were both the Straus and Porter families from Winnetka, and were they old friends? And do you by any chance know who Adela Barrett was. I believe she was connected with the Hull House circle and was a special friend of Norah Hamilton.

I greatly appreciate any assistance you can give. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Barbara Sicherman
Barbara Sicherman

P.S. I believe that Alice Hamilton probably wrote to Mary Straus and wonder whether any letters survive.