

## The Miracle of the Book

The miracle of the book *The Descendants of Jacob Strong* began with the passing of Harriet Strong Speirs. Harriet had for years been doing research on the ancestry of Jacob Strong. She had accumulated a vast amount of information dealing with many connected family lines. With her passing many in the family wanted to have the information in those books. After the family reorganized the Jacob Strong Family Organization it was decided to publish a book that would make all of that information available to all family members. It was hoped that would end much of the family squabbling over who possessed the many histories, books of remembrance and pictures she had accumulated.

The presidency of the organization began the process of asking for volunteers from each family line to gather as much current information as possible for publication in the new book. Pictures, histories and genealogical information were gathered on Jacob Strong, each of his two wives, all of his children and all of his grandchildren. It was hoped that the information could be compiled and published in time for a national Strong Family reunion to be held during the summer of 1980. Books were pre sold for \$20 each and it was hoped to be able to publish 1,000 books.

The family representatives did their work extremely well and many pictures of Jacob's children as well as their histories were submitted. Short histories of his grandchildren were also written and submitted along with as many descendant names as could be found. We had approximately 13,000 descendants identified and we estimated we had found a little over half of them. All of this information was collected and organized and the typing of the material was begun. A numbering system was set up to identify each family member and using an electric type writer the labor of love commenced. Those involved with the process all had young families so the process was very time consuming and difficult to complete. Finally the majority of the typing was completed and people were hired to type the index to the book. The work was proof read and finally the 370 pages were ready for the printer and eventual publication.

After a number of quotes from different printing establishments a family member was selected to print the book. It was promised that the book would be printed, bound and delivered before the national Strong reunion took place. This is where the miracles began. The printer was paid half

the money with the other half promised at the completion of the printing. All of the written material, including histories and genealogical information and the pictures were delivered to the printer. After about two months I began calling the printer to check on the progress of the book. Each time I called I was assured that the book was progressing nicely. The weeks went by and still no parts of the book were seen. The excuses kept coming that the book was almost done and more money would be needed for the binding to take place. The organization presidency authorized the payment of more money to the printer, with the promise the book would be delivered before the reunion took place. Each time a date was given the printer failed to deliver. Finally the day of the national reunion arrived and the printer assured us the book would be delivered to the reunion site so we could distribute it to those that had purchased one. The appointed time came and went and no book arrived. I called the family member and was told his wife had called him and that she wanted a divorce and had taken the books with her in her car. I made an announcement at the reunion that there had been an unexpected delay in the publication of the book and that it would have to be mailed to those that had purchased it. All of us in the Presidency were very suspicious at this point so we began to investigate.

The printer was called and was told he was liable for the book. All the money he had been paid was all that he was going to be given and that legal proceedings would be taking place against his wife for stealing the book. He said he would talk to his wife to see if he could get the book back. We were desperate at this point, most of the pictures we had given him were originals and there were no duplicates to be had. My wife and I then began our own investigation. We parked our car outside the print shop and began to watch what was going on. We were desperate. We did not have the money to pay back to all of the family members that had purchased a book and yet we felt responsible for what seemed to be happening. After several times of watching the place the book was being printed we spotted the family member who was supposed to be printing the book and his wife leaving the printing establishment. They were very loving to each other with no sign of the impending divorce. I called the printer and he assured me his wife still had the book and she could not be found. I then confronted him and told him what we had seen. He did not know how to respond except to tell us he would begin to print the book now because none of it had been done. My wife and I then began the long process of watching the book be printed by the printer. We would go down, stand next to the press and watch the pages be printed. We then would take the

printed pages with us back to our home and collate the pages in the correct order. We had a ping pong table the pages were set on and we, as well as other family members would continue to walk around the table collating the pages we had. We would then go back to the print shop and watch the printing of more pages take place, take those pages and do it all over again. This process continued until the entire book was printed, collated and the originals returned to us.

We then contacted the bindery that had been arranged and took them, the unbound pages, in to be bound. When the bindery called to say the book was ready for pick up we were told we needed to pay for the binding. We told the bindery that the printer already had the money for the payment of the binding and he needed to pay. We talked to our family member and he assured us the bill would be paid. When I called the bindery back to come pick up the book I was told the printer (family member) had said not to release the book to us since he was paying for it. I explained to the person at the bindery all we had gone through to get the book and that I was sure the printer would try to steal the book from us – again. The bindery was very understanding and told us to come get all of the bound copies of the book. My wife and I then went down, picked up the printed and bound book and heaved a sigh of heaven sent relief. I later found out the bindery never was paid for the binding of the book.

After many prayers, much tribulation, a lot of fear and anger, the Lord delivered this wonderful book to the family organization. All copies were mailed out to those who had paid and all of the extra books were sold over the course of a few months. The book is not perfect in any way, but it is a great source of information and histories dealing with the Strong family. Without the help of the Lord this book, this vital source of information gathered by family members (all the way back to Harriet Strong Speirs) could not have been published. All of us who have copies of this great family book treasure it as a modern miracle and source of inspiration.

Lewis W. Strong  
December, 2017

**THE DESCENDANTS OF  
JACOB STRONG**