Attachment 4: The Descendants

Several descendants of Red Star Line passengers, such as the musician Irving Berlin, will travel to Antwerp specifically for that weekend. The are available for interviews:

* Ellen Bledsoe Rodriguez is the daughter of immigrant Bessie Cohen and lives in California. Bessie Cohen made the crossing in 1921 as a small, Jewish girl from Russia. Upon arrival, along with her sister – with their parents – she was detained for nine months in the infirmary ward of Ellis Island. Ultimately, Bessie made it into the USA and remained grateful for that her entire life. The stories from her mother about the crossing and arrival make up an integral part of Ellen's youth. According to her liberal and tolerant conviction, she called the entire adventure the inheritance of her mother. For her, America should be proud of its tradition as being the ultimate port of refuge. Her mother always emphasised hospitality.
* Caroline Emmett is the granddaughter of Irving Berlin, who as a young boy from a poor Jewish-Russian family arrived in the USA with a Red Star Line ship, grew up in a slum neighbourhood in New York, though ultimately developed into a famous composer. Caroline Emmett lives in Paris because her mother Linda, Irving Berlin's daughter, married a Frenchman. She is greatly interested in her Jewish roots via her mother.
Caroline tried to build her own life and distinguish herself from her imposing and omni-present grandfather. It was not easy to build up one's own successful life in such a privileged environment, and with the heroic ‘*from rags-to-riches’-*story of her grandfather.
* Ed Van Rossen is a 3rd-generational descendant of two Belgian immigrant families from Detroit. Detroit is now a city in decline, but at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was a bustling industrial city where many immigrants gravitated towards. There was a Belgian community, with a booming social life. Ed frequently went to the Cadieux Café, where the interior of the 'feather bowling' alley still hearkens back to its Belgian roots, but where the clientele consisted of Americans of all sorts.
Ed Van Rossen has a unique perspective on the life in Detroit, the Belgian social life and the immigration to the USA, both then and now. He looks at this through an outspoken nostalgic, conservative 'All American' lens.
* Tom Wolf is the grandson of Carl Wolf, a German immigrant who came to the USA around the turn of the century. He settled in Cabbage Hill in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where many Germans lived. There was a large German community, of which many members came with the ships of the Red Star Line. Those who arrived on the same ship met each other regularly. Tom himself also lived in Lancaster as a young boy, and there he witnessed the final moments of the German immigrant community in the middle of the twentieth century, before the neighbourhood definitively changed in appearance.