



# Temple Israel FOUNDATION

## Biographical Information Sheet

### Amter

#### Leadville Branch:

Samuel J. Amter

Born: Russia, 1867

Died: Denver, October 12, 1926

Married to: Anna Laser

In Leadville: 1899-1923

Annie E. Laser Amter

Born: Germany, 1870

Died: Denver, 1937

Married to: Samuel J. Amter

In Leadville: 1899-1926

Sarah Amter Berezin

Born: Denver, March 29, 1899

Died: Denver, June 11, 1982

Married to:

In Leadville:

Ethel Amter

Born: Leadville, 1900

Died: Unknown

In Leadville: 1900-1926

Joseph Arthur Amter

Born: December 18, 1903 (Leadville, Colorado)

Died: December 15, 1982 (Englewood, Colorado)

Married to: Anna Amter (maiden name unknown)

In Leadville: 1903-1924

May or Mae Amter

Born: February 13, 1907

Died: Unknown

Married to: Unknown

In Leadville: 1907-1926

Gershon A. Amter

Born: Leadville, July 11, 1908

Died: Denver, April 29, 1998

Married to: Dulcey Stein Amter

In Leadville: 1908-1924

Klara "Clara" Amter (Cohan)

Born: Russia, 1870

Died: Unknown

Married to: John Cohan, 1890

In Leadville: 1917

#### Florence, Colorado Branch:

Samuel R. Amter (1860-1926)

Sarah Arnstein Amter (1861-1952)

Cora (1889 -1968)

Isadore S. Amter (1886-1928)

Mae Amter Isaacs (1887-1980)

Anna Amter Shapiro (1890-1956)

Hattie Amter Spitzer (1895-1992)

#### Denver, Colorado Branch"

Marks (sometimes Max) Amter

Julia Amter

Hattie Amter

Klara "Clara" Amter

Isadore "Israel" Amter

Sara Amter

The Amter family was a large, vibrant, and varied group of merchants, homesteaders, and business owners who established themselves in several mining and supply cities in Colorado during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Due to many overlapping Amter family members located in Colorado, it is important to initially outline the storylines of each in order to properly distinguish them. This section will primarily document and differentiate Samuel R. Amter (1860-1926) from his cousin, Samuel J. Amter (1867-1926). These two men share very proximate birth and death dates in addition to having children and spouses with similar names. This article, principally designed to investigate the Leadville branch of the Samuel J. Amter family, will therefore



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focus less on other Amter family branches in Denver and Florence, Colorado, respectively.

Since at least 1869, individuals with the surname Amter were present in Colorado Territory. Marks (sometimes Max or Marx) Amter, the father of 1920s-era Communist Party leader Israel Amter, settled in Colorado during the early territorial period.<sup>1</sup> According to his obituary, published in the *Denver Jewish News* during January of 1921, Marks initially settled outside Denver as a homesteader and later became a merchant in the growing frontier city. Marks married Julia Sept in 1871 and the couple eventually had four children: Hattie, Cora, Sara, and Isadore.<sup>2</sup> All the children graduated from Denver High School and are pictured here, although no photograph of Cora has surfaced. Marks had multiple careers and worked as a merchant, in real estate, farming, in a harness shop, and as a secretary.

Another prominent branch of the Colorado Amter family that lived outside Leadville was the previously noted Samuel R. Amter. Like his cousin Samuel J., Samuel R. also lived in Denver prior to relocating elsewhere in Colorado but eventually returned to Denver. Samuel R., who was older, and Samuel J. were approximately seven years apart in age. As a result, Samuel R. arrived in Denver earlier than Samuel J. Both were certainly related to Marks Amter. While the exact nature of their relationship has not been established, Marks could have been either the father or uncle to both Samuel J. and Samuel R. due to his age.

In October 1885, Samuel R. married Sarah Arenstein.<sup>3</sup> That same year, Samuel R. was employed at the clothing store of Mortiz Amter, another branch of the family which, although not explored in this article, moved to Victor, Colorado.<sup>4</sup>

According to census data, Samuel R. immigrated to the United States from Russia during 1879.<sup>5</sup> Scant details of his early life indicate he likely shared a similar path on his path West as many of his

contemporaries. The same census document shows that Sarah immigrated from Russia in 1882. Samuel R. first appeared in the Denver city directory during 1881, in which he was listed as a clerk with a residence of 503 Arapaho Street — the same address as Marks (Max) Amter.<sup>6</sup> The following year, in 1882, he was a clerk in Marks' secondhand store at 484 1/2 Larimer Street.<sup>7</sup> Sarah did not appear in Denver city directories. However, an individual named Julius Arenstein appeared in the 1884 city directory, suggesting he was a close family member, probably her father. Sarah lived there as a dependent before marrying and moving in with Samuel R. the following year. The year of their marriage, Samuel R. and Sarah lived at 476 Larimer Street with both Marks and Moritz Amter, probably in quarters above a commercial block. Samuel R. and Sarah lived in Denver until 1897, during which time they established a clothing store and resided at 2451 Lawrence Street. Between 1887 and 1895, the couple had five children: Cora, Mae, Isadore, Anna, and Hattie. During August of 1897, the family moved to Florence, Colorado, a small city west of Pueblo along the Arkansas River. A local newspaper article announced their arrival, suggesting they had prior connections in the city.<sup>8</sup> The only Florence city directory available is from 1905. That year, Samuel and the family lived at 521 Third Street, and their store, The Globe, was located at 107-109 West Main Street.<sup>9</sup>

By 1920, Sarah and Samuel R. relocated to Denver and all of the children had moved out of their household.<sup>10</sup> Samuel R. passed away in 1926 and is buried in Denver's Emanuel Cemetery.

Samuel J.<sup>11</sup> (henceforth referred to as Samuel, Sam, or Samuel J.) and his wife Anna,<sup>12</sup> along with their newborn daughter Sarah,<sup>13</sup> moved to Leadville during 1900. The couple ran several successful stores that they operated along Harrison Avenue between 1902 and 1921. Additionally, they were active in religious affairs. Samuel became the president of Leadville's Orthodox Jewish congregation, Keneseth Israel, shortly after his



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arrival. Five children were eventually born to Annie and Samuel during their active years in Leadville.

Both Samuel J. and Anna were immigrants from Russia, although the precise location is not forthcoming. During the late nineteenth century, many Russian-Jews were fleeing pogroms in the Baltic states, Prussia, Galicia, and Greater Poland — areas variously dominated by Greater Russia during this period. It is likely that the family originated in the Baltic states, but this cannot be confirmed with certainty. Amter is likely an Anglicization of a longer, more complex name, but this has not been confirmed.

Samuel J. and Anna Laser were married in Denver on February 12, 1898.<sup>14</sup> No public marriage notice was found in Denver or statewide newspapers. The couple's first daughter, Sarah, was born in March of 1899, one year after the couple's marriage. Prior to moving to Leadville in late 1899, Samuel J., Anna, and Sarah lived in Denver, although it is unclear whether Sarah was born in Denver or Leadville. The year before the family moved to Leadville, Samuel appeared in the 1899 Denver city directory as manager of Amter Installment Company, a personal loan office, with a residence at 2621 Larimer Street. The fact that Samuel appeared in the Denver directory in 1899 suggests the family lived there for the majority of that year. Samuel's naturalization papers, which were issued in Leadville, establish that the family was in Leadville by October of 1900. Their inclusion in Leadville's 1900 city directory indicates they arrived between the spring and summer of 1900.<sup>15</sup> As early as 1898, Samuel J. is documented in a Florence newspaper as scouting his cousin Samuel R. Amter's newly adopted hometown for commercial and residential properties.

Samuel J. lived in Denver for at least several years prior to his marriage to Anna. According to later census documents, he immigrated to the United States in 1885 and first appeared in Denver as a

solicitor at the American Wringer Company, with a residence at 2451 Lawrence, in 1893. Like many contemporaries, he likely disembarked in New York and worked his way West, probably due to a family connection. However, details of the period between 1885 and 1893 remain unknown.

One year before her marriage to Samuel, Anna was listed as "Miss Annie Laser" in the 1897 Denver city directory as a resident at 1910 Larimer Street. "Miss" indicates that she was a single young woman living alone either in a women's boarding house or a home owned by extended or primary family members. Solomon Laser was a shoemaker listed as living several houses away from Anna at 1914 Larimer Street.<sup>16</sup> He probably was a relative with whom she had a prior Old World familial relationship. Census documents also list Anna's point of origin as Russia, like Samuel. It is possible they came from the same region, or even the same city. Indeed, it is probable that most, if not all of the Amters in Colorado dwelled in the same region within Greater Russia, Eastern Europe, or the Baltic states.

During 1900, their first year in Leadville, Samuel, Anna, and daughter Sarah lived at 313 ½ East 5th Street. That year, Samuel operated a home furnishing goods store at 222 ½ East 6th Street.<sup>17</sup> In March, a brief ad in the wanted section of the *Herald Democrat* read:

*Delivery horse, weight about 10  
hundred pounds. Call afternoons,  
222 ½ East Sixth Street.*<sup>18</sup>

This suggests that Sam regularly needed to transport various items related to his business around Leadville. The only year that the family lived on East 5th Street and did business at East 6th Street was 1900.<sup>19</sup> The building housing the family business at 222 ½ East 6th was a small, two-store, wood frame vernacular house or small commercial space probably suited for a startup, but rapidly became spatially obsolete. According to the 1900



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census, the family lived at 313 1/2 East 6th Street, confirming the accuracy of the directory. At the time, Samuel was thirty-years old, Anna was twenty-six, and their daughter Sarah was one year old. Anna was listed as immigrating to the United States in 1896, which is in accordance with her appearance in the Denver Directory of 1897.<sup>20</sup> Samuel was listed as a merchant, with no identified specialty; we know from the directory that he sold house furnishings but probably not furniture.<sup>21</sup>

In 1901, the family moved to more spacious and visible business quarters on Harrison Avenue. While it is clear that the business moved to 711 Harrison Avenue, it is uncertain whether the family also moved their residence; the directory only lists the storefront location under their entry.<sup>22</sup> Whether the family continued to live at 313 1/2 East 6th and only moved the business, or also moved to quarters at 711 Harrison is unknown. As is well documented, merchants often lived above or behind their stores during this period. At least seven other individuals are listed as residents of 711 Harrison that year, indicating that some residential space existed at the location. A Singer Sewing Machine manufacturing concern was located in the adjacent storefront at 711 1/2 Harrison Avenue.<sup>23</sup> While the store operated during 1901, advertising for that year has yet to be uncovered.

During 1903, the Amters resided at 711 Harrison Avenue.<sup>24</sup> It was during this time that Anna and Samuel's second daughter Ethel was born.<sup>25</sup>

Starting in 1902, Samuel began to advertise his furnishing store in local newspapers. The first advertisement read, "*Where your credit is good. All kinds of household necessities. Also ladies garments. Best wool blankets a specialty. Call and examine our goods, no trouble to show them.*" The advertisement reveals that "home furnishing goods" was not the same as a furniture store during this time. Instead, "furnishings" were likely anything used domestically, including clothing like aprons or smocks as well as carpets and decorations, in

addition to other implements for cleaning and service. An identical advertisement to the one shown here appeared in the *Herald Democrat* newspaper between September and November of 1902. During the Thanksgiving season of 1902, Sam appeared as one of an extensive list of donors to a charity drive at Annunciation Catholic Church where he donated a rug.<sup>26</sup> For the remainder of the year, a separate series of ads appeared for the store but there were no other personal or social mentions of the Amters.

Starting in the spring of 1903, Samuel began to appear in local newspapers for his association with Leadville's Orthodox Jewish congregation, Knesseth Israel. During March, the by-laws and constitution for the congregation were announced to have been published for the County Recorder by Samuel J., who was listed as president and acting secretary.<sup>27</sup> It is unclear if this filing was a renewal of a previous set of documents that had expired, or a completely different filing for an organization separate from, but a replacement of, the Knesseth congregation. Curiously, the advertisement referred to the organization as "Kenneth" Israel, which is most likely a misspelling of "Keneseth," an incorrect spelling of the Hebrew word for "council."

Leadville's Orthodox community had existed since the 1880s and was formally acknowledged as Congregation Knesseth Israel during the latter months of 1892, when they purchased the former Presbyterian church at 117 West 5th Street for use as their synagogue:



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#### *Bought The Barracks*

*Congregation Knesseth Israel, composed of what are known as the Orthodox Hebrews, of this city, have purchased the building on West Fifth street, used by the Salvation Army. This property belonged to the Presbyterian church, but it had been used by the salvationists, rent free.<sup>28</sup> The consideration was \$1,500.<sup>29</sup>*

During March of 1903, Sam was listed as an attendee at a large banquet of business and political leaders that took place at the Vendome Hotel, today known as the Tabor Grand. Many of Leadville's businessmen were in attendance, including a number of other members of Leadville's Jewish community: men from the Kahn; Miller; Janowitz; Cohn; and Baer families. One speaker by the name of J. W. Smith touted the benefits of commerce as a solution to world peace saying, in part:

*...All that gives grace and dignity to men, letters, philosophy, the arts and sciences, are each and all indebted to commerce for the best they have produced. It breaks down barriers of ignorance and prejudice, of creeds and politics, of tribes and colors and races.<sup>30</sup>*

The following month, Samuel was elected as president of the Knesseth Israel congregation, with Abraham Sandusky, vice president; J. Harwitz, treasurer; Goldberg, secretary; and Zieler and Barnet, trustees.<sup>31</sup> While Samuel was obviously active in religious and community affairs, advertisements and social notices did not mention the Amters during nearly the entire remainder of 1903. However, by the end of the year the furnishings store moved again. On December 6, he published a notice to the public that he moved to 618 Harrison Avenue and changed the business name to "Boston Bazaar." This building still stood

as of 2020, and the space occupied by the Boston Bar is currently the Manhattan Bar. The ad continues:

*...He has put in stock a complete new line of the latest styles in ladies ready made suits, waists, gents furnishings, rugs, and general novelties. It is strictly a cash one-price store and therefore goods can be sold cheaper than by any other house in the city. Mr. Amter during his long business career here has given general satisfaction and has the reputation for honest dealings and close prices. He will be pleased to have you call at his new store assuring you high grade goods at all times at the very lowest prices. In fact the biggest bargains ever shown in Leadville...<sup>32</sup>*

The following week Samuel elaborated his sales pitch:

*...Mr. Amter has secured plenty of extra help to handle the trade. No trouble to show goods, even if you don't buy. But you will generally buy, because the Boston Bazaar makes the cheapest prices on the best goods in the city...<sup>33</sup>*

Several days after this advertisement was published, a new member of the Amter family arrived. On December 21, a notice announced the December 19, 1903<sup>34</sup> birth of Sam and Annie's eldest son Joseph.<sup>35</sup>

By the start of 1904, the family consisted of Sam, Annie, Sarah, Ethel, and Joseph.<sup>36</sup> At this time, the family resided at 618 Harrison Avenue, according to Joseph's birth notice and the 1904 Leadville city directory. This area consisted of living quarters above the store at the corner of East 7th Street and



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Harrison. The family remained at this location for several years, evidently with sporadic success. In May of 1904 a short advertisement explained in matter-of-fact terms the benefits of a recent sale.<sup>37</sup> Throughout the remainder of 1904 and 1905, few mentions of the family appeared in local newspapers, and no further advertising campaigns were published.

At some point during 1905, the Amters moved from quarters above the store at 618 Harrison Avenue to a house located at 224 West 6th Street.<sup>38</sup> The store continued to operate during this time. However, by early 1906 it was clear that Sam was experiencing some financial issues. In a notice published by Harry Mamlock of the district court, the stock and fixtures from Samuel's store had been put up for auction.<sup>39</sup> Ten days later, an advertisement announced that the bankrupt stock had been bought by "A. E. Amter" and that another sale would be forthcoming.<sup>40</sup>

"A.E." was almost certainly Anna, and it is clear that the incident was either an advertising stunt or simply a strategy by which Samuel could erase his debt by selling the business to his wife. This downturn was likely an early indicator of a global economic crisis commonly known as the Panic of 1907, a twentieth-century financial downturn rivaled only by The Great Depression.<sup>41</sup> This strategy appears to have resolved the issue because the store continued to function at 618 Harrison for the duration of 1906. While the store kept operating as Boston Bazaar, Anna was recognized in the city directory as the owner and Sam served as the store's manager.<sup>42</sup>

During June of 1906, Samuel, a member of the Board of Trade, was quoted during a discussion of the functions and effectiveness of recent "schemes." Samuel suggested that the board meet more often in smaller committees to plan out various business promotional schemes.<sup>43</sup> In early July, the Boston Bazaar moved locations for a third time. The new location was 619-621 Harrison Avenue, which a

lengthy advertisement attributed to cramped quarters at the previous location.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout 1907, social notices continued to remain sparse, and no advertisements for the store were published. In February, another child was born to the family.<sup>45</sup> As was common at the time, the child's name was not published. However, using the 1910 census as a reference point, this child was the third daughter, May.<sup>46</sup> At the end of the month, the Boston Bazaar appeared in the *Herald Democrat* as a profiled business that epitomized confidence in Leadville's future.<sup>47</sup> In late March, a debate between two Jewish scholars on the subject of Zionism was hosted jointly by the Orthodox Kneseth congregation and the Reform Temple Israel congregation at the temple on West 4th Street. Adolph Schayer upheld the convictions of anti-Zionists, while H. Fischlowitz, visiting from St. Louis, helmed the argument for the pro-Zionist point of view. The public notice, as it appeared in Leadville newspapers, was signed by presidents S. J. Amter of Kneseth and Julius Leon<sup>48</sup> of Temple Israel.<sup>49</sup>

In April of 1907, another article that surreptitiously assumes the form of an advertisement, touted the thriving Boston Bazaar during a weekend sale. The article explained:

*...The well known store, which has long enjoyed the confidence of Leadville's fair shoppers has been given a new dress and completely remodeled, a new line of goods has been placed on the shelves, and last night the beautiful decorations and sweet music added to the attractiveness and splendor of the popular fashion center...<sup>50</sup>*

Samuel handed out candy to patrons who devoured it within several minutes of the opening, the article said. The description continued:



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*...The most noticeable new features of the Bazaar are the plain and simple trimmings which are done principally in white. This together with the neat and cleanly display of goods make an attraction to the ladies eye which does not fail to please and to tempt. Lillies and cut flowers were added here and there. The force of handsome accommodating clerks added in receiving the visitor to the store. Schiller's mandolin club, consisting of ten pieces furnished excellent music...*<sup>51</sup>

Apparently, the above quotation about the prosperity of the store was not mere hyperbole. Only three days later, a public notice appeared announcing the transfer of lots 22 and 23 of block 67 of the Stevens and Leiter Subdivision from John D. Evans to Anna.<sup>52</sup> This corresponds to 137 East 9th Street, the family residence during 1908.<sup>53</sup> The family would continue to live at this address for another 15 years. The remainder of 1907 was a quiet time for the Amters as they settled in their new home.

In early 1908, Sam appeared before the Leadville city council, alongside Aaron Walpensky,<sup>54</sup> to ask for an abatement on a bill for sidewalk improvements in front of the Knesseth Israel synagogue on West 5<sup>th</sup> Street, a request which was granted. After the meeting Samuel gave the city clerk a check to partially cover the expense for the repairs.<sup>55</sup> One month later Samuel R. Amter, Samuel J.'s previously noted cousin of Florence, Colorado, visited the family at 137 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>56</sup>

During the spring of 1909, Sam joined a new civic improvement organization, the Leadville Citizens Mining & Improvement Association. At one meeting, Samuel was appointed alongside several other local businessmen, including fellow Jew Dr.

Sol Kahn,<sup>57</sup> to encourage local businesses to contribute to the upcoming Fourth of July festivities.<sup>58</sup> Several months later, Sam appeared again in local newspapers urging citizens to clean up the city, suggesting that any scavengers hired by the city who failed to do their jobs were arrested and fined.<sup>59</sup> Late that summer, Sam departed Leadville for Colorado Springs to attend a yearly meeting of the state conclave of the Knights of Pythias.<sup>60</sup>

During a Leadville Improvement District meeting in late 1909, Samuel made several comments and proposals related to a vehement debate over the prices paid for sewer service by some property owners. At the conclusion, he was appointed to a committee investigating charges for sewer fees. The final year that the store located at 621 Harrison appeared in city directories was 1909. In the city directory of 1910, Samuel was located at 613 Harrison Avenue. Since 2020, 613 Harrison Avenue has been the location of the "Aspen Traders" storefront. While no formal "removal notice" was found, the first advertisements stating the store had been "removed" appeared in August of 1910.<sup>61</sup> During that summer, the building that formerly occupied 619-621 Harrison and served as Samuel's store was demolished; the Masonic Hall was built in its place. This was one of the last commercial developments on Harrison Avenue until a number of banks arose on the sites of the demolished Union, Boston, and De Mainville blocks in the 1970s.

The sewer report promised by Sam's citizen's committee, scheduled for late 1909, was not ready until early February of 1910.<sup>62</sup> Several days later, a report appeared in the *Herald Democrat* announcing that Samuel J. and the committee recommended the old sewer be completely replaced to account for the differences in how the old sewer served particular citizens. On February 12, Samuel stated that the recommendations of the committee would proceed and asked citizens to provide suggestions and information regarding ways to expand the current system.<sup>63</sup> A subsequent meeting was documented



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in local newspapers in which Sam delivered a counterpoint that rebutted a sewer company representative's argument that the installation of the sewer in 1885 was done as a "favor" to the public. Samuel J. said, "*The people of today were not under obligations to [pay] for favors done 25 years ago.*"<sup>64</sup> Further developments in the sewer debate did not appear in newspapers during the remainder of 1910. Several times that year, A.E. Amter appeared on the delinquent taxes list for the house at 137 West 9th Street, and by the end of 1910, a public auction of the property was published.<sup>65</sup> Presumably, the \$47.74 in back taxes was paid before the house was auctioned.

During February of 1911, Samuel participated in the Leadville Chapter festivities celebrating the anniversary for the Knights of Pythias.<sup>66</sup> Later in the year, Samuel donated to and participated in a dance hosted by the Moose Lodge.<sup>67</sup> For a second year in a row, the house at 137 West 9th Street was put up for auction following multiple notices for delinquent taxes. As was the case in 1910, the taxes were probably paid as the family continued to reside there for many more years. For the 1910 tax year, a payment of \$58.24 was owed.<sup>68</sup> During the summer of 1910, a census enumerator visited the Amter household on West 9th Street and recorded eight individuals, including a 25-year-old Swedish servant. Children listed were Sarah, 11; Ethel, nine; Joseph, six; May, three; and Gerson, three months old. Curiously, the enumerator gave Anna's national origin as Ger-German and Samuel's as Ger-Russian.<sup>69</sup> This suggests a possible origin in German-speaking Poland or another German-speaking enclave within the Russian Empire. As previously noted, identifying a specific nation of origin for sporadic boarders at this time, especially Jews, proved difficult.

On November 4, 1911, the newspaper reported on a minor incident that befell one of the Amter children. A three-year old child, crying and obviously lost, was found by the bookkeeper of a plumbing company located at 312 Harrison Avenue. It was

cold outside, but the child was well dressed. Because the bookkeeper was unable to find out the child's name, she took him to the undersheriff at the courthouse. Shortly afterward, Samuel J. arrived and was relieved to find the child safe. The final sentence of the report joked that the child had evidently read some advertisements and was attracted to the Avenue on a shopping expedition by multiple bargain signs.<sup>70</sup> If the child escaped from the house on the 100 block of West 9th Street, he walked a significant distance. Anna and Samuel did not have a three-year-old son at the time of the incident, confusing the identity of the child. Presumably, the problem concerned the exact age of the child. The Amter's son Joseph was actually seven at the time and daughter May was three in 1911, but the article repeatedly refers to the child as male. During this period it was not uncommon for a child's gender to be either neutral (evidenced by the use of the pronouns "it" or "its") or sometimes indistinguishably as "he" or "his." Prior to the age of five, most children wore similar gender-neutral clothing in the form of a smock or dress. As a result, a toddler's gender was often unclear in public. If the child in question was Joseph, he would have been seven and easily identified as a boy because he graduated from his child's smock to knickers or other boys' clothing. If three-year-old May was the lost child, her sex may have been debated due to a gender-neutral dress or smock. Ultimately, although the sex of the child was baffling, it most likely was Joseph, and the newspaper reporter simply misreported his age. While the family lived a subdued existence during 1912, their residence remained the same, and the store continued to operate at 613 Harrison Avenue.<sup>71</sup>

During early 1913, eldest daughters Ethel and Sarah made their first appearance in local newspapers as guests at a musical recital hosted by local music teachers<sup>72</sup> Miss Juanita Pelta<sup>73</sup> and Miss Myrtle Block.<sup>74</sup> The following month Samuel issued an affidavit stating that others had used the name "Boston Bazaar" without permission, that he was



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the sole proprietor of the store and had exclusive use of the name.<sup>75</sup> Several days later, Samuel and daughter Ethel participated in a joint Knights of Pythias and Woodsmen of the World celebration at which Ethel played a piano solo and Samuel belonged to the arrangement committee.<sup>76</sup> Sam again became involved in public affairs following a student “strike” at Leadville’s High School. He was appointed to a citizens committee deciding whether to re-instate a controversial superintendent. Additionally, the committee debated whether an apology was required from a striking group of students, who claimed unfair treatment during an assembly. Reportedly, Sam demonstrated an unusual level of civic engagement that was rather uncommon among his Leadville contemporaries at the time.<sup>77</sup> During November, Ethel appeared once again as a member of a musical group affiliated with Leadville High School.<sup>78</sup>

At some point in 1914, the Boston Bazaar store moved locations yet again, this time across the street from the previous location. The new store was located at 602 Harrison Avenue, a storefront on the now-demolished DeMainville block, formerly on the northeast corner of 6th and Harrison.<sup>79</sup>

In early 1914, an obituary notice for Samuel J.’s mother was published in the *Herald Democrat*. According to the article, Samuel’s mother lived in Denver for 15 years after the death of her husband, whose name the article reported as “Hie.” Sam’s father was documented as a participant in the Battle of Sevastopol during the Crimean War, and he and his wife had been residents of St. Petersburg before coming to The United States in the 1890s.<sup>80</sup> The remainder of 1914 remained both busy and subdued for the family. Ethel and Sarah appeared as part of a piano duet at a Knights of Pythias event in October.<sup>81</sup> In November, Sarah and Ethel also went to a party hosted by two of the Sandusky sisters,<sup>82</sup> which the Isaacs<sup>83</sup> and Mankuss<sup>84</sup> girls also attended.<sup>85</sup> These families were fellow Orthodox Jews who had similar origins in Russia and Austria and shared many social connections with the

Amters. During this time, it was common for young people to form clubs named with various acronyms that were presumably secret to its members. The Amter sisters belonged to a group of girls that posted intermittent meeting notices under the name “L.O.T.V Club”.<sup>86</sup> The significance of the letters and the subject of the meetings have been lost to time. At the end of December, again demonstrating what would be considered today as “community mindedness,” Samuel J. published a letter to the editor of the *Herald Democrat*:

*Your paper has always been willing to lend a helping hand to a deserving cause I trust you will give the following a place in tomorrow’s edition.*

*On the wings of time another Christmas is rapidly being ushered in. The Christmas spirit is in the air. On every side we see happy faces, everyone eager to bring a little gladness to another. Yet in Leadville as in every other place there will be found many poor people that will not only be forgotten when the presents are given out but who have not the necessities of life and are unprotected from the winters biting frost.*

*Leadville people have always been noted for their big heartedness and generosity, so now at this time of the year let them not be slow in showing they deserve the title they bear, and that while deserving poor elsewhere are being remembered those at home will not be forgotten.*

*I would suggest that the merchants of our city and the public at large make this a Merry Christmas for every poor family, let not one be forgotten.*



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*This can be easily done if everyone contributes willingly according to his means.*

*I would also suggest that the distribution of the funds be left to the judgment of the clergymen of all denominations who would select committees from the Women's Club or active members of the respective churches.*

*Let us all be for Leadville.*

*To start the ball rolling I will contribute \$10.00.*

*-S. J. Amter*

*The suggestion of Mr. Amter of a Christmas fund for local charity is very commendable and at his request the Herald Democrat has consented to act as custodian for whatever amounts may be donated, the same to be turned over in accordance with the wishes of the donors.<sup>87</sup>*

This letter suggests that not only Samuel's charitable nature but his multiple references to Christmas, as an active member of the Jewish congregation, showed his openness to integration with Christians and desire to foster cooperation between them. Later it was announced in a short notice that Anna was traveling to Denver and subsequently to California for an extended time.<sup>88</sup> What precipitated such a long absence is unknown. However, later notices indicate that she was experiencing some illness, not uncommon at Leadville's high altitude.

In late January 1915, the L.O.T.V Club with Sarah and Ethel as attendees, met again at the house of Freida and Leah Sandusky.<sup>89</sup> One week later, Ethel participated in a high school debate club discussion

on question, "Should the telephone and telegraph service be owned and operated by the government?" Ethel's side of the argument triumphed for the affirmative.<sup>90</sup>

After departing Leadville in December of 1915, it became clear that Anna was spending time in Denver for health reasons. During late March, Sam left on an emergency trip to Denver due to the "...serious illness of his wife...".<sup>91</sup> Although the illness was dubbed serious, Anna returned to Leadville one month later, "...fully recovered in health..." at the end of April.<sup>92</sup> Ethel and Sarah spent the summer in Denver, according to a notice published in a late August newspaper.<sup>93</sup>

For the first time in several years, the Boston Bazaar was advertised in local newspapers at the beginning of September.<sup>94</sup> Curiously, the first ad (illustrated here) noted that "A. J. Amter" was the proprietor. The following day however, an identical ad appeared with "A. J." changed to "S.J." (shown below). The significance of this change is unknown. This is the first time since the tax sale in 1906 that "S.J." instead of "A.J." as proprietor appeared on local advertisements. The reasoning behind this shift is unknown, but it is clear that A.J. referred to Anna, who had gained legal ownership of the store after the forementioned sheriff's sale in 1906.<sup>95</sup>

The first year Sarah appeared in the Leadville city directory was in 1915, when she was recorded as a clerk for the Boston Bazaar at 602 Harrison Avenue.<sup>96</sup> An extensive advertising campaign starting in early September ran into the following year. During late September, a local social notice gave some insight into a charitable action evidently spearheaded by Samuel J. and supported by Congregation Kneseth Israel. Sam Wiess, a young Jewish druggist who contracted tuberculosis, was forced to retire from his pharmacy in Leadville.<sup>97</sup> The congregation, under the leadership of Samuel J., who served as the congregation's president at the time, raised funds for a train ticket to the Jewish



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Consumptives Relief Society hospital in Edgewater, Colorado, and secured a room at the popular and fully booked hospital for the now destitute Samuel Wiess.<sup>98</sup>

In January of 1916, Sam's participation in local clubs grew when he was appointed an officer of the local Knights of Pythias chapter.<sup>99</sup> He also would be elected treasurer of the local Moose Lodge during March.<sup>100</sup> Several mentions made by the Knights of Pythias revealed that Samuel was active in their organization during 1916.<sup>101</sup> During April, Ethel attended a party for her sophomore class at Leadville High School<sup>102</sup> while Joseph served as treasurer for his eighth grade class.<sup>103</sup> During November, Joseph experienced a minor accident. Reportedly riding with a load of packages on his bicycle at the corner of Harrison Avenue and 17th Street, he collided with a Leadville Power Company "motor truck." Joseph was not injured and the packages were undamaged.<sup>104</sup> For the fifth consecutive year, "S.J. Amter" appeared in the news on the list of delinquent taxpayers regarding the Amter family home at 137 West 9th Street in November.<sup>105</sup>

Throughout 1917, Ethel and Sam frequently surfaced in the local news for engaging in a variety of club meetings and gatherings predominantly in the same social circles as previous years such as the Knights of Pythias, Moose Lodge,<sup>106</sup> and other charitable groups.<sup>107</sup> Sam was active in the high school debate club<sup>108</sup> while Ethel was popular in musicals<sup>109</sup> and social groups.<sup>110</sup> Additionally, Ethel was repeatedly mentioned as a rising pianist around Leadville.<sup>111</sup> In mid-May, during a Red Cross ticket selling fundraiser, Samuel offered a silk umbrella as a prize for the individual who sold the most tickets.<sup>112</sup> In late May, Ethel was recognized for giving a speech at the High School Junior Class Banquet on the topic of "Submarines." The United States entered the First World War in Europe during early April and encouraged many students to make speeches on service in the military.<sup>113</sup> On Memorial Day, 1917, Samuel was profiled in a

short column commemorating the death of his brother Isadore in an early confrontation on San Juan Hill, Cuba, in the Spanish-American War of 1898:

*REMINDED OF BROTHER'S  
DEATH ON BATTLEFIELD:  
Memorial Day brings back poignant  
memories to many Americans, but  
none who has lost a soldier brother,  
father or friend in action is more  
deeply affected by the yearly day of  
tribute than S. J. Amter, one of the  
leading business men of Leadville.  
Memorial Day today is the sixteenth  
which has come since his brother,  
Isadore J. Amter, fell in action, July  
1, 1898, in the attack on El Caney  
fort, Cuba, one of the preparatory  
attacks for the taking of San Juan  
hill and block house. Isadore at that  
date was a corporal in F company,  
Seventh infantry.*

*The corporal enlisted originally at  
Denver on January 1, 1893, to serve  
five years and was assigned to  
Company F, Seventh infantry. He  
was appointed artificer on March 24,  
1894, promoted to corporal on May  
14, 1895, and was honorably  
discharged from the service on  
March 31, 1896. He re-enlisted on  
April 13, 1896, at St. Louis to serve  
three years and was assigned as a  
private to Company C, Sixth  
Infantry. On August 4, 1896, he was  
transferred to Company F, Seventh  
Infantry, in which he was appointed  
corporal on August 23, 1896. He  
was killed in action at El Caney,  
Cuba, two years later on July 1,  
1898.<sup>114</sup>*



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During July of 1917, Samuel went to Denver as part of delegation of mediators in a mining labor dispute instigated by the Cloud City Miners Union. He was reported to have been in conferences with state government officials throughout the day on July 14th. By the evening, the strike had been postponed.<sup>115</sup> Throughout the summer of 1917, Samuel J. advertised the Boston Bazaar daily. On August 2nd, the work Samuel J. put into mediating for the miner's strike earlier in the summer paid off. In a page one article published by the *Herald Democrat* newspaper, it was announced that mine operators agreed to a settlement with union employees on a minimum \$4 wage. Samuel J. was present at the announcement of the deal at the Bank Annex on East 4th Street and made a statement supporting harmony and continued negotiations between unions and operators.<sup>116</sup>

It is obvious that Sam's influence on the strike was fairly significant. The day after the wage agreement, he received a letter from the executive committee of the Cloud City Miner's Union:

*Greeting: We, as the executive board of Cloud City Miners' Union No. 33 in conjunction with [our] unorganized miners in our meeting on July 23, 1917 have unanimously passed a resolution endorsing the actions taken by Mr. S. J. Amter in the passed strike situation, and we find that he was trustworthy, neutral in all respects, for the interests of humanity and patriotic to his state and country and also to the Leadville community. Thanking you for your interest on our behalf, we remain*

*Respectfully yours,*

*Cloud City Miner Union Ex.  
Committee.*

*Eli Follett, Secretary-Treasurer.<sup>117</sup>*

August and September of 1917 were an eventful time for the Amters. By the end of August, Samuel J. was elected as the Grand Lodge Trustee for the Leadville chapter of the Knights of Pythias.<sup>118</sup> During September, he read the obituary of Harry Mamlock at his funeral service in the local Masonic Hall. Nathan Miller conducted the graveside service at Leadville's Hebrew Cemetery.<sup>119</sup>

On September 26, 1917, Sam addressed the Knesseth Israel congregation during Yom Kippur on the patriotic importance of participating in a national Jewish fundraiser for the war victims of Europe:

*RELIEF FOR JEWISH WAR SUFFERERS- Leadville Jews, observing the holiday with services in the synagogue at 135 West Fifth street, gave Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, unusual significance yesterday by starting a campaign to raise funds for the \$10,000,000 war fund which the Jews throughout the country are now raising to aid Jewish sufferers from the war. S. J. Amter gave a patriotic and appealing speech to the congregation in support of the fund and gave a decided impetus to the local campaign.*

*As a result of bringing forward the subject, Miss Ethel Sandusky and Mrs. Harry Isaacs were appointed as a committee to handle the local funds and the activities of the campaign.*

*The local Jews observed Yom Kippur with the services at the synagogue and if they were business people, by closing their stores during the day.<sup>120</sup>*



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During late October, the Amter's eldest daughter Sarah reportedly took a weeklong trip to visit friends in Denver, Colorado Springs, and Cripple Creek, Colorado.<sup>121</sup> During December, Anna left for a brief stay in Denver to tend to the death of her mother; her father had passed several years earlier.<sup>122</sup>

During 1917, Clara Amter appeared as both an employee of the store at 602 Harrison and a resident of the house on West 9th Street.<sup>123</sup> Judging by her age (late forties in 1917), she was likely a sister of or first cousin to Samuel J. She was in Leadville for only a short time at this point. Clara, or Klara according to her legal spelling, married a John Cohan in Denver during 1890. The couple soon moved to 631 East 5th Street in Leadville, where John initially worked as a driver.<sup>124</sup> Their brief stay lasted no more than a year. In 1892, the couple returned to Denver where John found employment at the expanding May Shoe & Clothing Company<sup>125</sup> owned by former Leadville entrepreneur and Temple Israel congregant David May.<sup>126</sup> Since Clara's historical facts are scant, it is unclear when or why she and John Cohan divorced, but this is the most likely reason she was listed as Clara "Amter" in 1917.<sup>127</sup> It's plausible that Clara returned to Denver in 1918, but this cannot be confirmed.

In early 1918, Samuel J. attended a meeting of the Midland Railroad, which was nearing bankruptcy. He spoke in support of the railroad, saying the lack of competition resulting from the Midland's closure would be bad for the public.<sup>128</sup> Throughout the following spring, daughter Ethel appeared regularly in academic and musical notices for events throughout Leadville, including debates on assorted subjects and several piano solos and poetry recitations. Later in the spring, youngest daughter May appeared for the first time in local newspapers as a guest at a children's gathering.<sup>129</sup> During September, Knesseth Israel sent holiday greetings of "Shana Tova" to several Leadville soldiers training for the war in Europe. In response, several sons of Leadville wrote to Samuel J. Sergeant

Miller, son of Nathan Miller,<sup>130</sup> wrote the following letter from Fort Dix, New Jersey, which was published in the *Herald Democrat*:

*On my arrival at the camp this morning, (September 10) from Pottsville, PA, where I spent Rosh Hashana, I found your kind telegram. Please accept my heartfelt thanks and let me say that I will do my utmost to live up to the doctrines of my country with duty, honor, and obedience.*<sup>131</sup>

Jake Sandusky,<sup>132</sup> wrote from the Presidio hotel in San Francisco:

*Words cannot express my appreciation of the New Year greeting I have received from you. I only feel disappointed in that I cannot thank each and every one of you in person.*

*I hope that this time next year with the help of God, we will have victory. Until that time I shall do the best I can to make a good soldier, and try my best to help win the war for the country that has been so grand-practically the only country that has given our people liberty.*<sup>133</sup>

Additionally, Meyer Stager<sup>134</sup> wrote in much bolder terms from Camp Cody:

*With the greatest appreciation, I received your New Year message. And with the help of God, we shall have victory. I will do all in my power to fight the good fight and lick the Kaiser to a finish.*<sup>135</sup>



During latter 1918, Leadville was still in the midst of the global influenza pandemic. Early in December, the board of health organized a patrol of citizens to ensure all flu cases were reported and treated, and that houses with ailing victims were fumigated. Samuel J. joined one volunteer patrol along with several other men.<sup>136</sup> At the end of January, a renewed wave of the virus necessitated a second school closure. Samuel J. was quoted regarding aid to families experiencing hardship:

*...A suggestion for S.J. Amter to the effect that many families in destitute circumstances will not accept free aid because of their pride and that people acquainted with their condition should be asked to report to the board with agreement that 'no names will be mentioned', did not meet with favor from Alderman Rogers and others, who declared that this would open the gates to flood of requests for aid at places where it was not really deserved..<sup>137</sup>*

Clearly, Samuel J's charitable philosophies were not always met with total support.

The family was quiet during the remainder of 1918's winter as the influenza pandemic slowly faded away. In March, Samuel was listed among the pall bearers at the funeral of Minna Heimberger, wife of the late David Heimberger,<sup>138</sup> who died unexpectedly while visiting Leadville from Chicago.<sup>139</sup>

Several days later, eldest son Joseph — rarely mentioned in newspapers heretofore — and Helen Sack won a waltz contest at the 1919 annual sophomore dance at Leadville High School.<sup>140</sup>

Later in the spring, Samuel was appointed by Leadville's new mayor, Dr. Jeannotte, to again act as a mediator in a new mining labor dispute. As the

strike was beginning to take shape, on April 15, the mayor sent a letter to Samuel J. that read:

*As you are aware a serious labor problem confronts us at the present time in Leadville, I feel that our citizens should make some effort to bring the mine authorities and their employees to a satisfactory understanding.*

*Realizing that on a former occasion you were very successful in bringing about an amicable agreement between the mine owners and miners, I now urge you to use your good offices toward settling the present controversy.<sup>141</sup>*

Working quickly, Samuel J. sent a message two days later to the governor of Colorado that read:

*As the miners in the Leadville district have voted to quit work April 20 in protest against the proposed \$1.00 wage reduction and as Mayor J. A. Jeannotte has requested me to employ my efforts in effecting a settlement for the situation, I respectively urge you to use your good offices in bringing the influence of the state administration to bear in effecting an amicable adjustment and aid of local efforts to this end.*

*I took a part in settling the strike here two years ago and respectfully refer you to Hon. Verner Z Reed and Hon. Judge W. Musser for information concerning myself. At that time the miners were very loyal and patriotic and again this time they are acting for what they consider only their fair and just rights. Thru the efforts of Hon.*



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*Verner Z. Reed and Hon. Judge W. Musser and others, the miners and companies reached an agreement in 1917 in a business-like and orderly manner which was a credit to Colorado.*

*A good many returned soldiers are represented among the protesting miners. They accomplished their patriotic work at the front; the miners who remained here aided in making Leadville's war record a leader in the state with every Liberty bond and other war fund oversubscribed.*

*Sincerely Yours,  
S. J. Amter<sup>142</sup>*

Results materialized quickly, and just six days later the strike was called off when operators decided on a reduction of just 50 cents, instead of the planned one dollar. On the 20th, Samuel J. and several businessmen met with prominent mining operators to amicably mediate the terms of the union.<sup>143</sup> This is yet another example of Samuel's community mindedness.

Daily advertisements for the store resumed during May of 1919 and continued throughout the month. Over the course of the summer both Ethel and Sarah appeared regularly as guests at several "novelty balls" hosted by a group called the IHX Club, as well as the local Turnverein society. During November, eldest son Joseph, now a junior in high school, was part of a debate and oration team.<sup>144</sup> Throughout December, Samuel published a series of advertisements for the Christian holidays. Many of them, such as the one that appears below, made a reference to their continual sales events. Samuel signed them, "*Yours for Prosperity, Amter.*"<sup>145</sup>

The Boston Bazaar continued to advertise prolifically in early 1920. It's clear from these advertisements that the emphasis at the store had evolved over the course of 20 years from general "household furnishings" to women's clothing and dry goods. By April, Samuel opened an additional store at 815 Santa Fe Drive in Denver, according to a notice in the *Herald Democrat*.<sup>146</sup>

Sam and the entire family were listed as residents of Leadville in the *1920 United States Census*. However, by summer the family had begun to pull up roots from Leadville. The year 1920 is well documented as a difficult economic year for Leadville, and lack of business may have been a contributing factor to their sudden transition to Denver. It was also evident that Anna had occasional bouts of ill-health as a result of Leadville's altitude, some 5,000 feet higher than the Mile High City. According to the census enumerator, both Ethel, age nineteen, and Sarah, age twenty, were employees at the Boston Bazaar, while the other children attended public schools. Samuel was fifty years old, and Anna was forty-seven.<sup>147</sup>

Throughout the summer of 1920, it became clear that Sam was beginning to make Denver his more permanent residence, yet some of family remained in Leadville. One notice in June stated that he was visiting Leadville from Denver to look after business interests.<sup>148</sup> Over the summer, Samuel continued advertising in Leadville, and both Ethel and Sarah maintained a presence in the local social columns. By August, son Joseph temporarily moved to Denver.<sup>149</sup> Several days later, Ethel joined him to manage the Amter store there. In late August, Samuel J. retired from the Knights of Pythias and made the following statement:

*"... We are in the midst of troublous times and every man should be concerned with a speedy settlement of every controversy between capital and labor".<sup>150</sup>*



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During early September, a notice was published in the social columns announcing that Sarah returned Leadville to manage the Boston Bazaar. It is unclear where she returned from, but it was probably Denver, where much of the family was beginning to relocate.<sup>151</sup> In September, Joseph also returned again to Leadville after his summer stint there.<sup>152</sup> The family likely managed at least two households, one in Leadville and perhaps several in Denver; they were active in both cities for several years beginning in the early 1920s.

In late September, Samuel J. announced his intention to invest in a new mining company called Prospect Mountain Mines & Exploration. He then published a short letter calling for more citizens to invest in the venture, calling for a “Live Leadville”.<sup>153</sup> In October and November, Samuel traveled to Chicago and other cities on a merchandise buying trip.<sup>154</sup>

During January of 1921, Sam took part in a meeting of the business committee that was discussing the effect mail-order catalogues on the business of the local merchants. Samuel stated that he thought more meetings were a waste of time and suggested a separate committee be formed to investigate how prices and business had been affected by catalogue and mail order shopping.<sup>155</sup> Later that month the shed in the rear of the Amter home located at 137 West 9th Street caught fire resulting in some damage that was covered by insurance.<sup>156</sup>

Throughout the autumn and winter of 1920-21, son Joseph was active in the high school debate club, and during February traveled to Colorado Springs as the captain of Leadville’s team.<sup>157</sup> Later that spring, Joseph was the first-prize winner in a oratory contest, which took place in Boulder, with a speech entitled *The Basic Principles of Success*.<sup>158</sup> Known for his oratory skills, Joseph was chosen to give the salutary address of his high school class at their final theater production during early June.<sup>159</sup> The following week, Joseph graduated as valedictorian of his high school class.<sup>160</sup> During

late August, local papers announced that Joseph was visiting Denver University in preparation for the fall term, once he left Leadville to continue his education.<sup>161</sup>

In January, 1922, the Boston Bazaar shut down as a result of a default to a creditor. The stock was seized by G. W. Jackson of Denver’s Equitable building on January 14th. Samuel was visited by a reporter that evening who said he was depressed and despondent over the closure of the store; his assets were said to be less than \$3,000 with \$12,000 owed.<sup>162</sup> The stock of goods was put up by G. W. Jackson for public auction on January 25th.<sup>163</sup> Two days later, it was reported that a single bid of \$300 was rejected by the creditor. Samuel remained depressed. According to the report, a representative of Leopold Guldman’s Golden Eagle clothing store was coming to Leadville on January 28th to inspect the stock for a possible bid.<sup>164</sup> On February 3, the stock was purchased for an undisclosed amount by an individual named G. S. Sabath. Daughter Sarah was appointed manager until the stock was sold.<sup>165</sup>

Throughout the spring, the Boston Bazaar apparently operated on a tenuous basis. In May, Joseph left college to revive the store under a new business model. He solicited the sponsorship of an outside tailoring company called Binstock & Co. and reopened the Boston Bazaar as a men’s specialty tailoring shop, maintaining the former storefront address of 602 Harrison Avenue in the DeMainville Block. Joseph advertised prolifically for the tailor shop through the summer of 1922. By the autumn he returned to Denver for his education, potentially leaving the Leadville store in the care of Sarah or another family member.<sup>166</sup> During the winter and summer of 1923, advertisements for the Boston Bazaar continued, although it is unclear if Joseph was studying in Denver or if another relative operated the store. Undoubtedly, during the summer and school holidays Joseph was in Leadville managing the store. On July 1, a fire destroyed the family garage with their Ford touring car inside.<sup>167</sup> At least some of the family besides



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Joseph and Sarah continued to reside in Leadville during 1923. In November, young son Gerson Amter was driving the family Ford touring car in the alleyway behind the Presbyterian Church at the corner of 8th and Harrison when he struck a young man on a bicycle. Gerson, who was probably between thirteen and fourteen at the time of accident, was not determined at fault due to the speed of the cyclist. Although dragged some yards on the fender of the car, the young man was uninjured, but the bicycle was destroyed.<sup>168</sup>

In December, a short notice mentioned that Joseph had enrolled in the Law School at the University of Denver and was visiting his mother and sisters in Leadville.<sup>169</sup> The fact that father Samuel J. was not included in this visit suggests that by this time he lived in Denver or elsewhere. In April, Joseph again returned to Leadville to visit the family.<sup>170</sup> Throughout the spring and summer of 1924, Anna, Ethel, and Joseph were reported as frequently traveling between Leadville and Denver and advertisements for the Boston Bazaar continued until the early autumn. On September 12, 1924, a local paper reported that Joseph was leaving Leadville to attend Law School at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.<sup>171</sup> One week later, for at least the third time in 10 years, a fire in the rear of the house was extinguished. The fire was again caused by a carelessly disposed box of ashes.<sup>172</sup>

In February of 1925, Joseph was honored at the University of Michigan for an article he published in the university's student newspaper. According to a Leadville newspaper, the article was titled "Wanted; Students" and was summarized as follows:

*...Joseph A Amter laments the 'college type, as he is pictured to the world, the slick-haired youth dressed in the extreme fashion of the day, with a reckless, thoughtless, careless, quasi-immoral air. He is*

*not pictured as a student, but either as an athlete or a social butterfly'*

*He expresses his regret that more and more, the newspapers and other publication are pointing to this type as the representative student, as the one to be glorified and praised. What is the danger, he says, is that this type, now in the minority, is constantly tending to become more of a majority, just because of the model the modern press is giving publicity to. He declares that if Socrates 'himself were here to discourse with the students he would have few listeners.*

*He makes a plea for the type of student who is 'hardworking, eager, receptive, willing that there should be play but determined that it will be strictly subordinated to the business of making himself worth of himself, his parents, his nation.*

*This inscription ought to be written in bold type in our catalogues. Only those students are welcome at Michigan whose prime object is to make themselves mentally, morally, and physically better. All other are not wanted' ...<sup>173</sup>*

While it is unclear precisely when Anna, Sarah, Gershon, and the rest of the Amter clan left Leadville, the family began their permanent move throughout 1924 and had fully relocated to Denver by 1926.<sup>174</sup> The family's name and enterprise continued at 602 Harrison Avenue through 1927 as the Boston Bazaar, and from 1928 until 1933 as Amter Stores (ladies apparel, phone #324-J).<sup>175</sup> Despite living in Denver, it appears that the Amters continued to do business in Leadville for some years after the move. The family house at 137 West



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9th Street is no longer standing; a modern structure is now located near the homesite.

Samuel, who had been unwell, was later diagnosed with physical and emotional issues that required long-term hospitalization in Denver starting in 1923. He died there on October 12, 1926, at the age of 58 or 59, and was buried in Denver's Mount Nebo Memorial Park.<sup>176</sup>

The following notice appeared in the October 13, 1926, edition of the *Herald Democrat* newspaper:

S. J. AMTER

*Word was received by the family yesterday of the death of S. J. Amter at the Jewish sanitorium in Denver. Two daughters, Misses Ethyl and Sarah, left on No. 16 last night for Denver.*

*Mr. Amter, who established the Boston Bazaar here about 26 years ago, was for [many] years and active figure in the business life of the city. He interested himself also in municipal affairs and aided materially on several occasions in settling some industrial disputes.*

*A few years ago he suffered a complete mental and physical breakdown and was sent to the Jewish sanitorium.<sup>177</sup>*

Annie Laser Amter lived on as the head of the family household. The Amter children remained at home well into adulthood, with Sarah, age thirty-one, Ethel, age twenty-nine, May, age twenty-five, Joseph, age twenty-seven, and Gershon, age twenty-three,<sup>178</sup> all living with their mother in 1932.<sup>179</sup> Anna lived there until 1937, when she died and was buried next to Samuel at Mount Nebo Cemetery in

Denver.<sup>180</sup> Ethel and May are more difficult to trace. No records can be found for the pair once the entire Amter clan resided in the Denver area by 1930.<sup>181</sup>

It's unclear when or where Sarah married Samuel Berezin, but their union probably took place after 1932, which is the last year she is documented with the Amter surname. She is first recorded as Sarah Berezin in *The Intermountain Jewish News* during 1934.<sup>182</sup> Sarah served as a fashion buyer for her husband Sam Berezin's retail clothing operation.<sup>183</sup> She remained in Denver for the duration of her lifetime and died from what was described as a "cerebral vascular accident" on June 11, 1982.<sup>184</sup> Berezin died a few months later, on September 20.<sup>185</sup>

Joseph also remained in the Denver area. He was married to Helen Ruth Cohn by Rabbi William Friedman at Temple Emanuel in Denver on January 10, 1938.<sup>186</sup> Documentation shows that he attended the University of Michigan from 1924 to 1928,<sup>187</sup> and likely attended law school at the University of Denver. By 1940 he was a prominent attorney living in the affluent Washington Park area of Denver and could afford a cook and a nurse maid for the couple's only son Robert, born in 1939.<sup>188</sup> The pair were only married for about a decade<sup>189</sup> and divorced by 1950. At that time, Joseph was living in an apartment on the Denver University campus and practicing law on his own.<sup>190</sup> He would remarry Donna E. Amter (maiden name unknown) before his death in Englewood, Colorado, on December 15, 1982.<sup>191</sup> He is interred near his parents and next to Donna (d. 1988) at Denver's Emanuel Cemetery.<sup>192</sup>

Like his siblings, Gershon lived in and around Denver for the remainder of his life. He attended college for a reported three years, although the institution and his graduation remains unconfirmed. In the *1940 United States Census*, Gershon's last completed year of schooling was "college, 3<sup>rd</sup> year."<sup>193</sup> He married Dulcey Stein in Denver on



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December 19, 1937.<sup>194</sup> At the time he registered with Selective Service in October of 1940, he was employed as an upholsterer.<sup>195</sup> Gershon remained in the furniture industry for the duration of his lifetime<sup>196</sup> and, along with Morris Stein, founded the Denver Mattress Company.<sup>197</sup> The couple had one daughter, Ann Carol Amter, born in Denver during 1939.<sup>198</sup> Gershon died from unknown causes in Denver on April 29, 1998.<sup>199</sup>

The Amters epitomized the tenacity of Colorado Jewish pioneers, immigrants, and businessmen in the 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their staunch efforts and industrious nature allowed them not only to survive, but prosper in Leadville and Colorado's Front Range.



<sup>1</sup> *Obituaries*. (Denver, CO: Denver Jewish News). January 19, 1921. P6

<sup>2</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Denver, Arapahoe, Colorado; Roll: 88; Page: 247C; Enumeration District: 011.

<sup>3</sup> *Colorado Statewide Marriage Index, 1853-2006*. [Database with Images]. FamilySearch. Allen, Edward-Armstrong, David > image 2131 of 4547; State Archives, Denver.

<sup>4</sup> JH Ballenger and Richards. *Ballenger & Richard's Thirteenth Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City of Denver for 1885*. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Internet Archive. 2011). P96.

<sup>5</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Florence, Fremont, Colorado; Page: 9; Enumeration District: 0033;

<sup>6</sup> TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. *Corbet, and Ballenger's Ninth Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City Of Denver for 1881*. (Denver, CO: Corbet and Ballenger Publishers.1881). P76.

<sup>7</sup> TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. *Corbet, and Ballenger's Tenth Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City Of Denver for 1882*. (Denver, CO: Corbet and Ballenger Publishers.1882). P76.

<sup>8</sup> *Local and Personal*. (Florence, CO: Florence Daily Herald. August 28, 1897). P4.

<sup>9</sup> Ancestry.com. *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011. *Florence, Colorado, City Directory, 1905*. Pp. 33 & 59.

<sup>10</sup> Year: 1920; Census Place: Denver, Denver, Colorado; Roll: T625\_162; Page: 10B; Enumeration District: 260

<sup>11</sup> Find a Grave. [database and images]. *Memorial Page for Samuel J Amter (1867–1926)*, Find a Grave Memorial no. 126272632, citing Mount Nebo Memorial Park, Aurora, Arapahoe County, Colorado, USA ; Maintained by WalksWithAngels (contributor 47205696) .

<sup>12</sup> Find a Grave. [database and images]. *Memorial Page for Anna E Amter (1870–1937)*, Find a Grave Memorial no. 126272663, citing Mount Nebo Memorial Park, Aurora, Arapahoe County, Colorado, USA ; Maintained by WalksWithAngels (contributor 47205696) .

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<sup>27</sup> *Around the City*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. March 8, 1903). P6.



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- <sup>28</sup> The “rent free” comment was in error. The Salvation Army purchased the building from the Presbyterians, as specified earlier in this writing.
- <sup>29</sup> *Bought The Barracks*. Leadville, Colorado. The Herald Democrat. Thursday, November 3, 1892. Page 6.
- <sup>30</sup> *Hope, The Keynote of All Speeches*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat, March 19, 1903). P4.
- <sup>31</sup> *Kenesseth Israel Officers*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. April 16, 1903). P6.
- <sup>32</sup> *The Boston Bazaar*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. December 6, 1903). P5.
- <sup>33</sup> *The Boston Bazaar*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. December 20, 1903). P5.
- <sup>34</sup> *Born*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat, December 21, 1903). P5.
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- <sup>36</sup> Find a Grave. [Database and Images]. *Memorial Page for Joseph Arthur Amter (18 Dec 1903–15 Dec 1982)*. Find a Grave Memorial no. 171761374.
- <sup>37</sup> *Boston Bazaar’s Big Sale*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. May 8, 1904). P8.
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- <sup>40</sup> *Wait, Wait!*. (Leadville, CO: Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat, January 21, 1906). P9.
- <sup>41</sup> Jon R. Moen and Ellis W. Tallman. *The Panic of 1907*. St. Louis, MO: The Federal Reserve Bank; Federal Reserve History . 2015.
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- <sup>43</sup> *Planning Work for the Board*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. June 21, 1906). P6.
- <sup>44</sup> *To the Public!* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. July 2, 1906). P7.
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- <sup>47</sup> *Boston Bazaar Building Evidences of Prosperity*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. February 24, 1907). P10.
- <sup>48</sup> For more information about Julius Leon and his family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/leon.html>
- <sup>49</sup> *Church Services*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. March 31, 1907). P2.
- <sup>50</sup> *Boston Bazaar Opening Success of the Season*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. April 9, 1907). P6.
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- <sup>56</sup> *Personal Mention*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. May 3, 1908). P6.
- <sup>57</sup> For more information on Dr. Solomon Guthman Kahn and his family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/kahn.html>
- <sup>58</sup> *Select Officers for Coming Year*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. March 24, 1909). P3.
- <sup>59</sup> *Clean City is Demanded*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. June 24, 1909). P1.
- <sup>60</sup> *Society*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. August 29, 1909). P6.
- <sup>61</sup> *We Are Moved*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. August 1, 1910). P5.
- <sup>62</sup> *Committee Reports Tonight*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. February 9, 1910). P3.
- <sup>63</sup> *To Investigate Further*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. February 12, 1910). P5.
- <sup>64</sup> *Around the City*. (Leadville, CO: Carbonate Chronicle. February 14, 1910). P3.
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- <sup>67</sup> *Moose Order Gives Dance*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat, September 30, 1911). P5.
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# Temple Israel FOUNDATION

## Biographical Information Sheet

**Amter**

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- <sup>73</sup> For more information on Juanita Pelta Sieber and the Pelta family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/pelta.html>
- <sup>74</sup> For more information on Myrtle Block and her family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/block.html>
- <sup>75</sup> *Amter Files Affidavit.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. February 20, 1913). P5.
- <sup>76</sup> *Knights of Pythias Celebrate.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. February 25, 1913). P5.
- <sup>77</sup> *Refuse To End Strike If Forced To Apologize.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. June 2, 1913). Pp1&2.
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- <sup>80</sup> *Death of Mr. Amter's Mother.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. February 24, 1914). P5.
- <sup>81</sup> *Jubilee Program of the Knights of Pythias.* (Leadville, CO: Carbonate Chronicle. October 12, 1914). P3.
- <sup>82</sup> For more information on the Sandusky family please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/sandusky.html>
- <sup>83</sup> For more information on the Isaacs family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/isaacs.html>
- <sup>84</sup> For more information on the Mankus family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/mankuss.html>
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- <sup>86</sup> *Society.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. December 13, 1914). P2.
- <sup>87</sup> *Home Christmas Fund.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. December 18, 1914). P4.
- <sup>88</sup> *Society.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. December 27, 1914). P2.
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- <sup>99</sup> *Pythians Install Officers.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. January 11, 1916). P3.
- <sup>100</sup> *Moose Elect Officers.* (Leadville, CO: Carbonate Chronicle. March 13, 1916). P2.
- <sup>101</sup> *Report On K Of P. Meeting.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. September 13, 1916). P5.
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- <sup>104</sup> *Knocked from Bicycle.* (Leadville, CO: Carbonate Chronicle. November 6, 1916). P1.
- <sup>105</sup> *List of Delinquent Taxes for the Year 1915.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. December 18, 1916). P8.
- <sup>106</sup> *Moose Lodge Elections.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. March 12, 1917). P2.
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- <sup>111</sup> *Society.* (Leadville, CO: Carbonate Chronicle. March 5, 1917). P2.
- <sup>112</sup> *Red Cross Prizes.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. May 21, 1917). P2.
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- <sup>120</sup> *Relief for Jewish War Sufferers.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. September 27, 1917). P5.
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- <sup>128</sup> *Midland Saves Large Amount.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. January 3, 1918). P2.
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- <sup>137</sup> *Urgent Call for Nurses.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. January 30, 1919). Pp. 1 & 2
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- <sup>142</sup> *Message Sent to Governor Shoup.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. April 17, 1919). P6.
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- <sup>164</sup> *Bid For Amter Stock Rejected.* (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. January 27, 1922). P5.
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