



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Amter

The Amter family is typical of the many small merchant families that populated the developing west. The parents, Samuel J. and Annie E. were recent immigrants from central Europe who had found each other in the New World and then bet their future on the newly closed frontier. Census records from 1900 and 1910 are inconsistent in regards to ages (Samuel is 30, born April, 1870, and 43 in 1900 and 1910 respectively, while Annie is 26, born November, 1873, and 38) and immigration dates (Samuel in 1885 or 1890 with Annie in 1896 or 1895). Samuel was from Russia with some German heritage and Annie was either Russian or German. Regardless, by 1900 the couple were naturalized, comfortable with English, and settled in Leadville with their first child, Sarah, who had been born the preceding March in Colorado. Samuel began in the house furnishing goods business at 222 1/2 East 6th Street, two blocks off the main business avenue, and the family lived at 313 1/2 East 5th Street. The growing business and family, Ethel having arrived, moved to 711 Harrison Avenue, then the Vendome Hotel and later the Tabor Grand, in 1901. They remained there, operating under the name of S. J. Amter Mercantile Co., until 1904 and adding Joseph to the brood that year.

In 1904, the family renamed the business as the Boston Bazaar in a new address at 618 Harrison Avenue and moved their household to 224 West 6th Street. The better neighborhoods might imply an increasing prosperity. The business moved again, to 619 Harrison Avenue, in 1906 and Annie E. is associated in the city directory with the store for the first time. The next year was a very active one as the family produced daughter May, moved to an even better permanent address at 137 West 9th Street on Capitol Hill, and expanded the business to include 619 and 621 Harrison Avenue. Importantly, the city directory shows A. E. Amter as the proprietress and Samuel as manager. Then Gerson was born in 1908, the business contracted to just 621 Harrison Avenue in 1909, and moved to 613 Harrison Avenue in 1910 under the name of A. E. Amter. The next in the series of changes occurs in 1912 when the name Boston Bazaar reappears and Samuel is now the proprietor. A last move happens in 1914 when the business goes to 602 Harrison Avenue. Sixteen year old Sarah joined her father as a clerk during 1915 and stayed at least until 1918. Clara worked in the shop in 1917 and Ethel during 1918.

The era preceding the First World War witnessed a steady decline in Leadville's Jewish population as evidenced, in part, by Samuel's service as a pallbearer for his friend Herman Oliner in December, 1911 and again for Herman's wife, Hannah, in January, 1916. Telephone directory records show the Boston Bazaar (telephone number 57-J) survived into 1921 and the family decamped from the West 9th Street home (number 501-M) shortly thereafter.