



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information

Harwitz

Born: Russian Poland

Immigrated: 1886

Spouse: Cecillia (*Celia, Cecilia, Cealia*) Harwitz

Occupation: Tailor

Children: Bertha, Samuel, Able, Alford, and Goldie

Joseph Harwitz was born in Russian Poland in approximately 1856. He married Cecillia Harwitz, born in Germany, prior to the family's immigration to Leadville, Colorado, in 1886. Upon arriving in Leadville, Joseph began working as a self-employed tailor at 111 ½ Harrison Avenue. Initially, Cecillia worked as a housekeeper but she soon made the move to help her husband manage a flourishing tailoring shop. The *Herald Democrat* described the shop's, "humble beginnings," and from that simple start grew "to its present proportions and quality entitling it to distinction as one of the leading retail houses of our city."¹ Joseph and Cecillia operated their tailoring and clothier shop at 111 ½ Harrison Avenue until 1889 when they relocated to 107 W. 2nd St., which they occupied until 1895 when the business relocated to 207 Harrison Avenue.² They remained at 207 Harrison Avenue until approximately 1904 when they moved to 213 Harrison Avenue.

The Harwitz family did not stray far from their burgeoning tailoring and clothing store by both working and living at 213 Harrison Avenue until they were forced to move in 1907. This is when a fire destroyed the Harwitz's combined shop and residence.³ Following the fire, Joseph Harwitz elected to separate business and family life with a permanent residence in what was described as the Zobel property located at 220 Harrison Avenue. The newly built commercial space was erected in

the same location as the old Harwitz shop but now boasted a "25-foot front...hard wood floor, metal ceiling, and the latest appliances in shelving and fixtures."⁴ Such a modern shop would, undoubtedly secure the Harwitz's place among the city's more luxurious clothiers and spoke to the family's economic fortune in Leadville.

Though the family experienced great economic success in Leadville, the Harwitz's would also endure their share of immense sorrow. Within the first year of residence in Leadville, the couple lost both a son and daughter within the span of two weeks. Their daughter, Goldie, and son, Able died at the age of three in 1886; both children were buried in the Hebrew Cemetery.⁵ Two years later, the family would go on to lose their youngest child, seven-day-old Alford, who was also interred with his siblings in the Hebrew Cemetery.⁶

Despite their initial grief, the Harwitz family lived and thrived in Leadville for several decades. The couple had two additional children, Bertha and Samuel, both of whom survived to adulthood.⁷ Joseph and Cecillia continued to work at 213 Harrison Avenue and are last listed in Leadville's 1918 City Directory.⁸ The family's last known residence was documented in the 1920 census at 220 Harrison Avenue, which the Harwitz's also operated as a boarding house.⁹

¹ *Herald Democrat*, January 1, 1904, pg. 6. (<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/cgi-bin/colorado?a=d&d=THD19040101-01.2.28&dliv=none&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-Harwitz-----0-Lake> : date accessed 8 June, 2016).

² *Leadville City Directory* (Leadville, Colorado, 1895), 142.

³ *Herald Democrat*, May 7, 1908, pg. 2. (<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/cgi-bin/colorado?a=d&d=THD19080507-01.2.17&srpos=7&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-Harwitz-----0-Lake#> : date accessed 9 June, 2016).

⁴ *Ibid.*



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⁵ Find A Grave, Inc., *Find A Grave*, digital image (<http://findagrave.com> : date accessed 6 June, 2016), photograph, “gravestone for Goldie Harwitz (1883), [Memorial No. 18472023](#), Records of the Hebrew Cemetery of Leadville, Leadville, Colorado;” photograph © Michael Harrington. Find A Grave, Inc., *Find A Grave*, digital image (<http://findagrave.com> : date accessed 6 June, 2016), photograph, “gravestone for Able Harwitz (1883), [Memorial No. 18471816](#), Records of the Hebrew Cemetery of Leadville, Leadville, Colorado;” photograph © Michael Harrington.

⁶ Find A Grave, Inc., *Find A Grave*, digital image (<http://findagrave.com> : date accessed 6 June, 2016), photograph, “gravestone for Alford Harwitz (1883), [Memorial No. 18472013](#), Records of the Hebrew Cemetery of Leadville, Leadville, Colorado;” photograph © Michael Harrington

⁷ 1910 U.S. census, Lake County, Colorado, Leadville, pg. 1b, dwelling 220, Joseph Harwitz, Cecillia Harwitz, Bertha Harwitz, and Samuel Harwitz.

⁸ *Leadville City Directory* (Leadville, Colorado, 1918), 143.

⁹ 1910 U.S. census, Lake County, Colorado, Leadville, pg. 1b, dwelling 220, Joseph Harwitz. Boarders are listed as Pete Stoltz and Pete Claresh.