



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Leppel

Morris Leppel (born in 1838, 1839, or 1840, depending upon the census, in Prussia and an immigrant in 1865) was established in the wholesale whiskey business at 96 East Chestnut Street by 1879. In 1880 he moved the business to 148 East Chestnut Street, took on Ignaz M. Shulherr as a partner, and added cigars to the repertoire. The next year the business listed 146 East Chestnut Street as its address and both numbers from 1882 through 1888 with the inclusion of 150 and 152 from 1884 until 1888. Clearly, business must have been good. Mrs. Betsie (also Betty and Bette, born in 1850 in Prussia, immigrated in 1871) Leppel was also very busy. The 1880 census shows three children: Millie (Amelia), 5 years old and born in Texas; Carrie, 4 years old and born in Missouri (or, possibly, Kansas); and Flora (Florence), 2 years old, a native of Colorado. The family made their home at 212 East Chestnut from 1881 through 1895 and six more children were born to the Leppels at that house: Joseph in 1882; Morris Jr. in 1883; Blanche in 1887; Isadore in 1889; Albert in 1890; and Herbert in December, 1891 (he died on August 26, 1892 and is buried in the Hebrew Cemetery, in Block C, Lot 19, Grave 2). To help with the many chores presenting themselves in the mid 1880s, the Leppels engaged a live-in domestic by the name of Rosie Loy(?), lately of Ireland.

In 1881 Mr. Shulherr left the partnership. In 1883 the business identified itself as a saloon. In 1884 a small change was noted in the business as it was thereafter referred to as B. Leppel, liquors, wholesale & retail and M. Leppel was listed as the manager. As a tribute to his piety, on September 13, 1885, Morris was elected trustee of the Congregation Israel and by 1890 was president of the Congregation. It was in that capacity that, on August 15, he had the doleful duty of relieving Ben Davies of his role as cantor, a consequence of his elopement with Mrs. Clementina Raabe, the unhappy wife of Julius. Morris must have been doubly chagrined that year as, with an interesting irony, an article in the Herald Democrat dated May 2, 1890, described Carrie's participation in the May-pole dance that was a part of a fund raising carnival for the benefit of Leadville's chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union!

Liquor sales must have been slowing as the decade aged and the business relocated to 139 & 141 East 2nd Street in 1889, its home until it closed in 1900. The household itself moved to 214 East Chestnut Street from 1895 until 1898. By then the children were coming of age and

nineteen year old Carrie began working as a teacher at the 9th Street School in 1897. The next year saw three of Carrie's siblings join the work force. Amelia was employed as a clerk at the County Clerk's office, Joseph was a bookkeeper for Dr. Max Ballin, and Morris Jr. was clerking in the family's enterprise. All were still living at the family home which moved in 1899 to 140 East 8th Street, coincidentally with Joseph's switch in employment to Fred T. Rust, clothier (everyone else sat tight in their jobs). Abruptly, in 1901, the Leppels quit the liquor trade and moved to 207 Harrison Avenue where they opened a ladies' furnishings store. Morris Jr. continued to work for his parents, but that year's city directory does not reveal Joseph's employment and Carrie and Amelia are absent entirely. Carrie's disappearance was probably related to her July 10th marriage to Dr. Ballin. Perhaps a happy result of Joseph's apprenticeship.

1902 was the last year that the Leppel name was seen in Leadville. The only ones to be found in the city directory that year were Joseph, clerking for Henry H. Iland (clothier at 321 Harrison Avenue) and Morris Jr., clerking again for Fred T. Rust at 313 Harrison Avenue. Both sons were still living at the family home on East 8th Street.

Betty Leppel died in Detroit on August 23, 1917, preceded in death by Morris and, seemingly, Joseph. The family was remembered in the death notice that appeared in the Carbonate Chronicle on September 3, 1917:

Morris Leppel opened one of the first, if not the first, wholesale liquor houses in Leadville. The old building in which he conducted his business still stands in East Second Street near the dump of the Cloud City mine. Leppel made a small fortune out of his business here before leaving Leadville a number of years ago.

Three sons and four daughters survive Mrs. Leppel. The sons are Morris, Bertrand (Isadore?) and Albert of El Paso, Texas. The daughters are Flora Leppel, Mrs. Max Ballin and Mrs. Don Cameron of Portland, Oregon and Mrs. William Cameron of London, England.

The last two daughters married brothers, one of whom was the superintendent at one time of the Small Hopes mine.