



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Waldheimer

Marcus J. Waldheimer first appears in Leadville's chronicle in November of 1879 with the formation of the local chapter of B'nai Brith. Apparently already an important member of the Jewish community, he was called upon to deliver a speech during the banquet celebrating the event.

Waldheimer and his wife, Hulda, nee Bamberger, had traveled west from New York with their three daughters: Estell (7); Corinne (5); Ida (1); and son J. Arthur (3) who had all been born in the City. Himself the son of Bavarian immigrants (The town that Marcus's father [Jacob] and grandfather [Joseph] came from was Bechhoven), Marcus had been born in New York on June 29, 1846. Hulda, likewise from a German Jewish family, was a native of Connecticut born on October 12, 1850.

A lawyer, Waldheimer was active during the early years of Leadville and his name appears in conjunction with several civic and business events. The first of these to be noted in the press was the inaugural banquet celebrating the founding of the local chapter of B'nai Brith during the evening of November 9, 1879. Mr. Waldheimer was felt to be so distinguished that he was called upon to deliver one of the post dinner orations. On April 7, 1880, he was involved with the incorporation of a social and athletic organization known as Turn Vereins which intended to construct a facility at 4th and Pine Streets. His speech during the setting of the cornerstone two months later was recorded in the local press. Waldheimer reappears in July as the counsel for the failing Bank of Colorado, again quoted briefly in the press as their representative. On a social note, the Waldheimers attended the David May-Rosa Shoenberg nuptials the following September 20 and were responsible for the gift of a butter dish. Then, on January 15, 1881, Marcus presided at a banquet at the New York Club. During the same year, Waldheimer was an incorporator of the Leadville Electric Light Company on March 25 and later, in October, becomes Secretary and counselor for the Merchants Electric Light Company.

While we have no record as to the family's location during 1879, they were settled at 214 Harrison Avenue in 1880 where the law office was maintained. The family apparently found it necessary to suffer a boarder: Herman W. Pollitz was also a displaced New York attorney one year younger than Marcus and likely a friend from before the move west. The next year, 1881, the family moved to 124 West 9th Street on Capitol Hill although the office went to the southwest corner of Harrison Avenue and 4th Street. Tragedy visited the Waldheimers on September 14, 1882 when Hulda was delivered of a stillborn infant (buried in the Hebrew Cemetery, Block B, Lot 2, Grave 5). The family seems to have owned the house on 9th Street and kept it until at least 1887 even though they decamped for Denver in 1883 (or late 1882). The Leadville Directory reveals that a Philip Waldheimer occupied the property during 1886 and 1887. He was a clerk who worked for David May during 1887 and by 1889 was associated with the New York clothing company-Loeb and Waldheimer.

The above notwithstanding, Marcus Waldheimer's place in Leadville's history was most firmly established after his departure. He was recalled from Denver for the March, 1883, trial of five Jewish men for the Palace of Fashion arson. One of the most dramatic legal events of the era in Leadville, Waldheimer's role in the successful defense was widely praised. His Perry Masonesque production of a confession from a known and incarcerated arsonist was a pivotal moment in a trial that was tinged with mild anti-Semitism. Subsequent to the happy outcome, Waldheimer was accorded the seat of honor at the banquet that celebrated the acquittals. The press coverage of the trial referred to Judge Waldheimer, a position that he may have achieved with his transfer to Denver.

Marcus Waldheimer moved first to Los Angeles in 1888 and then to San Francisco in 1890. He died on January 26, 1916 and his wife, Hulda, passed away on July 18, 1925.