



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information

Werthan

Solomon Werthan

Born: Germany, November 7, 1848

Died: Denver, February 21, 1916.

Mrs. Bertha (Eliel) Werthan

Born: Germany, April 7, 18

Died: Denver, March 7, 1894

Esther Werthan

Born: Leadville, August 26, 1886

Died:

Alfred Werthan:

Born: Leadville, Colorado, 1888

Died:

Clarence Werthan:

Occupation:

Birthplace: Colorado

Born: 1900

Died:

Sidney Werthan:

Occupation:

Birthplace: Colorado

Born: 1902

Died:

Solomon Werthan came to Leadville in 1881 where he took a position as a driver for the liquor and cigar business of Alex Eilel¹ at 514 Harrison Avenue where he also resided.² Sometimes referred to as “Colonel”, though it is unclear if this was a nickname or actual military rank,³ Sol was a fixture in the Leadville community for the six years of his residency, and would meet his future wife, Bertha Eliel, while working for the Eliel family. In 1882, the Eliel’s business expanded, changed their name to *A.B. & J.H Eliel*, and opened another storefront at 123 E. 6th Street.⁴ Sol was promoted to clerk and continued to reside at the store.⁵

At some point in 1884, Sol opened his own cigar and liquor dealership at 216 W. 5th Street.⁶ This likely coincided with his wedding to Bertha Eliel on July 16.⁷ Sol was a political advocate and staunch Democrat. He served as a judge in the selection of Leadville delegates to the 1884 Democratic Convention on March 21.⁸ Sol was also a charter member of the Leadville chapter of the “Cleveland Club”. This was a Democratic activist group that began in New York and gained national attention during the 1884 presidential campaign to garner support for Grover Cleveland and Thomas Hendricks. Local chapters sprung up across the country with their main focus the denunciation of the Republican party.⁹ The group was identified by several other names such as the “Democratic Club” and the “Cleveland-Hendricks Club”.

Sol moved his storefront to 503 Harrison Avenue in 1885.¹⁰ Sol was urged by members of the local Democratic Party to run for municipal office during the spring elections, as well as for Colorado State Senator, but declined. Although Sol was very active within the Democratic Party, he did not enjoy discussing political issues in public and was supportive of those elected to office regardless of their affiliations.¹¹ Sol participated in a cribbage tournament at Shea & Hilleary’s on March 28, 1885.¹² Finalists in that tournament were eligible to participate in the next round, held on April 11. The grand prize was a gold medal presented by the incumbent champion, John Alfred.¹³ During the post presidential election celebration of Grover Cleveland’s victory over James Blaine which was announced in Leadville on April 18, 1885, Sol was boisterous and offered free helpings of Hennessy from a large barrel. This was all despite Blaine winning the popular vote in the state of Colorado and Cleveland receiving less than 50% of the Leadville vote.¹⁴ On July 25, 1885, news of the death of President Ulysses Simpson Grant reached Leadville and the citizens reacted sullenly; just five years prior, Grant and a contingent of Republican governors attended the ceremonial completion of



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Leadville's first railroad connection on July 23, 1880.¹⁵

Grant died of esophageal cancer on July 23, 1885, and the city of Leadville lowered flags to the traditional half-mast, but in further recognition of Grant's passing many business owners, including Sol Werthan, draped their signs with bunting in black.¹⁶

It is unclear what led to the demise of Sol's store, however in 1886 he became a postal clerk and moved his home to 322 West 3rd.¹⁷ This may have been somewhat facilitated by the arrival of the couple's first child, Esther, on August 26. Sol was in a lawsuit, along with Joe Doyle, John Hirsch,¹⁸ Meyer Haas,¹⁹ and T.B. Ryan, on January 28th. The plaintiff's alleged that while serving as the Odd Fellows' treasurer, Sol misappropriated \$700.78 of the organization's funds and this also may have contributed to the loss of his business.²⁰ The couple likely had their second child, Alfred, in Leadville

during 1888, but records of the birth of this child are unclear at best.

Sol first appears in the Denver city directory in 1889, continuing to work as a postal clerk there while the family made a new home at 1828 Welton Street.²¹ This endeavor would be brief and by 1890 he was back in his old familiar position, now as a clerk for Mannie Hyman at his Denver cigar shop,²² and continued to travel to Leadville for business with relative frequency well into the 20th century.²³ Bertha was killed when she was run over in a Denver motorcar accident on March 7, 1894.²⁴ Sol died in his home unexpectedly on February 21, 1916, though he had been struggling with an undisclosed disease for some time.²⁵ Bertha, initially interred at Denver's Capital Hill Hebrew Cemetery, was then exhumed and moved to her husband's side at the Emmanuel Cemetery also in Denver.²⁶



¹ For more information on the Eliel family, please visit <http://www.jewishleadville.org/eliel.html> .

² TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Second Annual City Directory: Containing A Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City Of Leadville for 1881". *Corbet and Ballenger Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1881. P291.

³ "Positive Facts". Leadville, CO; USA. *Carbonate Chronicle*. January 24, 1885. P8.

⁴ TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Thrid Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City Of Leadville for 1882". *Corbet and Ballenger Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1882. P291.

⁵ TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Fourth Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms Etc. in The City Of Leadville for 1883". *Corbet and Ballenger Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1883. P276.

⁶ TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Fifth Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List Of The Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City Of Leadville For 1884". *Corbet and Ballenger Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1884. P249.

⁷ Manly and Wolford. "Index to Marriages and Marriage Licenses Recorded at The Lake County Courthouse". Leadville, CO; USA. 1990. *Historical Research Co-operative*. P155, 624.

⁸ "Democratic Primaries". Leadville, CO; USA. *Leadville Daily Herald*. March 21, 1884. P4.

⁹ "San Rafael Democratic Cleveland And Hendricks Club". San Francisco, CA; USA. *Marin Journal*. August 14, 1884. P3.

¹⁰ TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Sixth Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List Of The Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City Of Leadville For 1885". *Corbet and Ballenger Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1885. P244.

¹¹ "The Political Horoscope". Leadville, CO; USA. *Carbonate Chronicle*. February 28, 1885. P1.

¹² "A Cribbage Tournament". Leadville, CO; USA. *Carbonate Chronicle*. March 28, 1885. P5.

¹³ "The Cribbage Tourney". Leadville, CO; USA. *Carbonate Chronicle*. April 11, 1885. P4.

¹⁴ "At Tammany Hall". Leadville, CO; USA. *Carbonate Chronicle*. April 18, 1885. P1.

¹⁵ "Gen. Grant's Arrival". Leadville, CO; USA. *Leadville Weekly Democrat*. July 24, 1880. P1.

¹⁶ "The Hero Here". Leadville, CO; USA. *Carbonate Chronicle*. July 25, 1885. P1.

¹⁷ TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Seventh Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List Of The Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City Of Leadville For 1886". *Corbet and Ballenger Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1886. P256.

¹⁸ For more information on the Hirsch family, please visit <http://www.jewishleadville.org/hirsch.html>

¹⁹ For more information on the Haas family, please visit <http://www.jewishleadville.org/haas.html>

²⁰ "Suing The Sureties". Leadville, CO; USA. *Carbonate Chronicle*. January 23, 1886. P1.

²¹ JH Ballenger and Richards. "Ballenger & Richard's Eleventh 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 1890". 2011. *Brigham Young University Internet Archive*. Provo, UT; USA. P1255.

²² Ballenger and Richards. 1890. Provo, UT; USA. 2011.P1338.

²³ "Personal Mention". Leadville, CO. USA. *Herald Democrat*. December 12, 1895. P8.

²⁴ "Killed By Motorcar". Leadville, CO. USA. *Herald Democrat*. March 8, 1894. P1.

²⁵ "Colorado State News". Fairplay, CO. USA. *Fairplay Flume*. March 3, 1916. P3.

²⁶ JewishGen, comp. *JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR)* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008.



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