Furthering the Cause of Monotheism

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Considering the intimacy of the publisher of the Rocky Mountain News, William N. Byers, with the pioneer Jews, it is strange that the newspaper rarely referred to the Jews in the region as such. While Jewish activities in the East were given considerable space, until 1865 the News did not mention those of the little Jewish group on Cherry Creek. Jewish life is supposed to have begun during the first year of settlement. The High Holiday of Rosh Hashanah fell on September 29, 1859.

At these services, all accounts agree, Julius Mitchell took charge, but the accounts vary as to the participants, agreeing only on Fred Z. Salomon, Abraham Jacobs, Leopold Mayer, and Mitchell. The services were said to have been held in a store building on Sixteenth and Larimer Streets.

The day following Christmas, the Denver City and Town company directors, who were wooing the settlers to establish on the east side of Cherry Creek, adopted a resolution: “On motion of R. E. Whitesitt, that the trustees of the Hebrew Synagogue be donated ten lots, providing they build a house of worship in Denver City within eight months from this date. Said house to cost not less than $700.” The motion was carried, but no synagogue was built in eight months, nor in eight years.

In Judaism, not only the days of religious observance but also the rituals of personal observance must be observed at specific times. Of all rituals, death insists on more immediacy than most, because burial must take place before sundown, or on the following day. It can only be postponed by the Sabbath, but the human remains must be buried by the following day.

The little band of Jewish pioneers was called together during