PIONEERS, PEDDLERS, AND TSADIKIM

The Story of the Jews in Colorado

IDA LIBERT UCHILL

Quality Line Printing Co. Boulder, Colorado
Copyright 1957 by Ida Libert Uchill
All right reserved

In loving memory of my father
PAUL LIBERT
1892-1951
And to my mother
FANNIE PEPPER LIBERT
who begged me to dedicate this book
not to her
but to the "unknown righteous" men and women—the Tsadikim—
who quietly helped build a Jewish community

Sage Books are published by
Alan Swallow, 2679 So. York St., Denver 10, Colorado
two saloons, one blacksmith, one carpenter and cabinet maker, one tin shop, one tailor, and two meat markets. Denver City, separated from Auraria by Cherry Creek, which was described as one hundred feet wide and three to twelve inches deep, had one hundred and fifty houses, five stores, two hotels, one printing office and two saloons.\textsuperscript{11} Auraria boasted the pioneer newspaper, the \textit{Rocky Mountain News}.

Most of the buildings were of hewed logs, some of earth, and were covered with "Mexican roof," as the earth roofs were called, or with the tarpaulin covers that had been removed from the prairie schooners. The most recent roofs had pine shingles. The few trees found by the pioneers east of the Rockies were the cottonwoods along the Platte River, and the \textit{News} pleaded to "Save the Trees." Baths were taken in Cherry Creek or the Platte. All of the dust of the plains in the villages, which was ankle deep mud when it rained, was a part of Kansas Territory.

The second oldest member of the little Jewish group to be greeted by this sight arrived in May. Julius Mitchell at the age of forty-seven was old enough to be the father of many of the Jewish Fifty-niners. Like the Salomons he was born in Posen. A well-educated man, who had learned English in Europe, he came to the United States in 1835\textsuperscript{12} where he immediately became a citizen in New York. There he engaged in the mercantile business and acted as a sales agent for a large fur company. He married in 1844, and although doing well, went west to Leavenworth, Kansas, where he remained until the Pikes Peak excitement, when he left his family behind, and set out west alone. In Denver he opened a large grocery and outfitter business. Before the year was over he was joined by his eleven-year-old son, David. As the patriarch of the little Jewish group on the banks of Cherry Creek, he officiated at the first Jewish High Holiday services during the fall of the very first year, 1859.\textsuperscript{13}

Later writers described him as a man of decided liberal belief, who conceded to others the same right of expression whether their views were more orthodox or less. Mitchell was the first of a large group who came from, or through, Leavenworth, where a Jewish community existed, and which was one of the principal outfitting points of the Pikes Peak region.

During the same month Leopold Mayer also left Leavenworth, where he had been engaged in the grocery business. It took him sixty or seventy days to make the trip. Walking along beside an

\textit{ox-team, he covered the entire 600 miles by foot. Several writers claim that he was accompanied by Abraham Goldsmith and Simon L. Wels on this trip.}\textsuperscript{14} Although the first city directory lists A. Goldsmith as a member of the Mayer firm, coming from Leavenworth, and residing, as did Mayer, in Denver City, neither Mayer's son, Adolph, nor the descendants of the Goldsmith family believe that they came west together.

Mayer was born in Alsace-Lorraine, and came to the United States at the age of nine. In Lafayette, Indiana, he sold matches and there began his lifetime of adventures. He followed the building of the railroads, particularly the building of the Union Pacific, and was present at Promontory Point when the East and West were joined in the first transcontinental road. Of all of the Fifty-niners only the sons of this Jewish pioneer remain in Denver in the mid-twentieth century. The story of Mayer's life is to be found in Denver, San Luis, and Saguache.

Although only Abraham Goldsmith [also Goldschmidt] is listed in the first city directory, there were two brothers, Abraham and Henry, married to two sisters, who made the trip west. The two young couples came from Munich. For four or five months they were on the sailboat bringing them to the United States. The voyage was a hazardous one, with their ship blown to the shores of Nova Scotia. In the United States they tried farm lands in Illinois and Missouri. In Denver City they filed homestead claims, and in October, 1859, Abraham held a grant of Denver lots.\textsuperscript{15} On the death of Henry's wife, the first Jewish organization in the Rocky Mountain region was formed.\textsuperscript{16}

In June, one of the leading Jews of the city arrived. Abraham Jacobs, who was born in Freinsdorf, Germany, in 1834, came to the United States at the age of nine. After clerking in Louisville, Cincinnati, and Lexington, he came to Omaha in the summer of 1857 and ventured into business for himself. Next, in Denver, as was typical of Jewish activity during the period, he formed a partnership with a non-Jew, Albert Budde.

Their store, across the street from the Doyle Company and \textit{News} office, was described as a "finely finished frame building 22 feet by 70. 'Two stories high. The front in superb style.'\textsuperscript{17}

On October 1st, A. D. 1859, A. L. 5859, more than 40 Masons assembled in the hall of Auraria Lodge to witness
the established business, until 1861, when he moved his store to
Central City.

Very little is recorded about the other Jewish Fifty-niners.
The name of Simon Wels almost always appears with that of
Abraham Goldsmith in the Denver Lodge which succeeded
Auraria U. D. In 1872 he was a charter member of the B'nai
B'rith lodge. The following year the lodge called a special
meeting to grant him a traveling card when he was leaving for
a visit to Europe. In 1874 he requested, and was granted, a
withdrawal card from the lodge.

Joel Gottlieb [also Gottleib] who arrived in 1859 and remained
in the West for the rest of his life was, unlike his contemporaries,
a East European Jew. His birthplace was Plonska, Russian Poland.
At fifty-three he was the oldest of the Jewish pioneers, but never
seems to have assumed the leadership that his age warranted.
Joel had a younger brother, Joseph. Since both were referred to as
"J. Gottlieb," and at least one historian credited Joseph as being
one of the pioneers of the Jewish community, it is likely that both
brothers were in the Pikes Peak region in 1859.

In the first city directory of 1859, Joel Gottlieb is listed under
"merchants," as being formerly of St. Louis. The same name
also appears in Chicago in 1837. He owned a great deal of prop-
erty in Denver at the time of his death, according to his will, which
also lists property purchased in Virginia City, Montana, in 1864.
He is listed in a Utah directory in 1867. Both he and Joseph seem
to have spent a great deal of time in Utah, and it was the Euphrates
Lodge of the B'nai B'rith of that state that conferred one of the
order's degrees in Utah upon Joseph in 1876, to the chagrin of the
Denver lodge, which did not quite know whether he deserved the
degrees and membership.

Joel petitioned the Denver lodge in 1873 and was accepted. A
few months later he resigned and requested the return of the fees
he had paid for the second and third degrees of the order. The
following year he died. From his will can be noted that even be-
fore Colorado became a state, the Jews were already grouped
together on the basis of origin. His will was witnessed by Jews of
similar East European birth, and the executor, a Russian Jew,
marrried Joel's widow. Joel left everything to Flora, his wife, with
the exception of three bequests to nephews. To Joseph he left noth-
ing. The younger brother's reputation was not of the best. Al-
though he was championed by some, he was not completely ac-
ceptable to the conservative Jewish community. Joseph's first wife,
El-
en, died in 1879 at the age of 30, leaving him with four children.
Two years later "Justice Whittemore tied the knot for Joseph
Gottlieb and Ella Grabosky in a strictly private ceremony." The
following year his oldest son died, and in 1890 his second son died.
At the time of his death in 1898 he left three children, born to his
second wife. A month after his death another son died.

Joseph seems to have been principally engaged as a pawnbroker.
After the Temple Emanuel was erected, he held the note on the
building as late as 1876. His first application to membership was
rejected in 1875, but accepted in 1878.

Grumpert Goldburg, listed in the city directory of 1859 as being
in the auction and commission business in Auraria, did not re-
main long in Colorado. In August, he was at the diggings in
Gregory Gulch, engaged in mining. From Colorado he went on
to a mining camp in Montana, then named "Last Chance Gulch."
He married Helena Morris in Denver in 1863, and returned with
his bride to the camp which was renamed Helena.

Among the few family men was Simon Nathan, who brought his
wife and baby with him. Nathan was born in Kempen, Poland,
in 1826 and came to the United States in 1852, later than most of
his pioneer co-religionists. He settled in New Orleans, where he
remained for four years. From there he went to Leavenworth,
where he married Anna Zucker in 1857. During the following
year, their first child, Edward, was born. As soon as the baby was
old enough, the three joined a covered-wagon procession bound
for Pikes Peak. The Nathans settled in California Gulch (Lead-
ville) which was enjoying its first "excitement." One of the early
births recorded in the region, and the first or second among the
Jews, was that of Louis Nathan, born in Hamilton, October 7,
1860.

Late in the fall another Jew arrived from Leavenworth, Louis
Rothchild, who opened a clothing store and completed the group
of known Jews.

It is probable that there were other Jews in the region, but
they did not remain long enough to be noted, or they chose
to separate themselves from their fellow Jews. One such Jew was
the French- and German-speaking Joseph Block, who came from
France. He married a beautiful Catholic girl and brought up his
children according to her religion. The family lived in Crested Butte for most of Block's life. In early Denver, where Block was a butcher, he took no part in the activities of the small Jewish group, yet he gave employment to at least one Jew. He never denied being a Jew and was on friendly terms with the Jews. The b'\textit{r}ith \textit{milah} (traditional ceremony of circumcision) of a son appears in Dr. John Elsner's record book, with the notation "5 years old for Joseph Block, Nov. 27, 1869, Isaac ben Joseph, chorooform." He also buried a child in the Jewish cemetery.

\textbf{Footnotes}


3. The fine line of distinction between the Central European Jews and East European Jews, was not the boundaries of divided Poland, but the simple test of language. "German" Jews did not speak Yiddish, East European Jews did. This book follows the common (and incorrect but convenient) usage.


16. \textit{RA}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 48, col. 5. The name of Henry was supplied by his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Sam Goldsmith.

17. \textit{RMN}, Nov. 8, 1859.

18. Denver Lodge No. 5, "Fiftieth Anniversary."


23. BB minutes, Apr. 2, 1873.

24. Joel Gottlieb may have been related by marriage to Grumpert Goldburg. His wife, Flora, was the daughter of Mrs. Esther Morris, and sister of David Morris of Helena, where Goldburg lived. Both Gottlieb and Goldburg are mentioned in Leon Watters' book, \textit{The Pioneer Jews of Utah}. Watters does not indicate that the city of Helena was named after Mrs. Goldburg.

25. Louis Anfenger received his first job from Block as a bill collector.

26. Mrs. Augusta Hauck Block. Joseph Block's daughter-in-law, agrees that a son was buried in the Temple Emanuel cemetery, because it was the best one in the area. She is certain that no b'\textit{r}ith was ever performed for his sons.
Furtheing the Cause of Monotheism

1

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
1860 to perform the last rites for the wife of Henry Goldsmith, who died in giving birth to the first Jewish girl baby born in Denver, Clara Goldsmith. No records of the funeral, nor of where Mrs. Goldsmith was buried, exist, but according to a later account a society was formed then and there for the burial of the Jewish dead. Although there is said to have been a cemetery used by the Odd Fellows and Masons on Fifteenth Street on high ground just across the Platte River, the Jewish group seems to have used for their first burial the ground on the eastern plains, later known as the Capitol Hill Cemetery. Leopold Mayer and Abraham Jacobs defrayed the expense of a fence around the cemetery.

That the same cemetery was again used within a few years may be gathered from an obituary in 1862, when the body of a young man, Morris Abrams of St. Louis, who died in Central City, was buried from the A. Goldsmith residence in Denver. Apparently the Goldsmiths were actively interested in the plot while they remained in Denver.

The group formed for burial is said to have been known as the Hebrew Burial and Prayer Society, and also as the Hebrew Cemetery Association. All accounts agree that the following men took part in the first Jewish organization: Abraham Goldsmith, brother-in-law of the deceased, Abraham Jacobs, Julius Mitchell, and Isadore and Jonas Deitsch. Other lists, which vary as to one or more members, include Leopold Mayer, Joseph Gottlieb, Phillip Poznanski, Abe and David Steadhouse, Fred Z. and Hyman Z. Salomon, and A. Sonneberg, a partner of the Deitsches, and at whose place in Central City the young man, Abrams, had died.

Although the group had not been organized specifically for religious services, it met at least three times a year: Passover, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur. Services were held in a building on the corner of Fifteenth and Larimer Streets, in the Tappan Block at the corner of Fifteenth and Market Streets, and in the pioneer Denver Theatre.

Mitchell conducted services, at least until the arrival in May, 1861, of David Kline. Kline was born in Bohemia, and came to the United States at the age of nineteen. He landed in New Orleans and remained there a year, then moved to St. Louis. There he joined the Bohemian congregation, where services were held in a loft. From there he went on to Leavenworth, where he assisted in the formation of a Jewish charity society. After a thirty-day trip by prairie schooner, he arrived in Denver and went into the dry-goods business. Until Denver had a rabbi, Kline and Mitchell served as the community’s religious leaders, officiating at weddings and arranging the holiday services. While the records show only the marriage certificates signed by various judges, Mitchell and Kline performed most of the ceremonies. Early marriages included that of Rosa Lobenstein to Henry Kline, but not all the marriages were mentioned in the newspapers. The weddings of Grumpert Goldburg to Helena Morris in Denver in 1863, and of Samuel Arkush and Flora Goldbaum that same year do not appear there or in the city records. Many of the pioneers returned to the East to marry and then brought their brides back with them.

Another Jewish religious leader arrived in Denver in 1865. Charles M. Schayer, born in Kempen, Prussia, in 1827, arrived in New York in 1861 and entered into the cigar trade. Four years later he came to Denver and opened a wholesale cigar business. Schayer, who had an excellent Hebrew and German education, was able to lead the religious life of the settlers. In Denver, and later in Leadville, he served as a rabbi until ordained rabbis could take over.

Until 1865, Jewish life is barely discernible in the territory. The newspapers neither commented on the Jewish holidays nor on the burial and prayer society. On the other hand, when a Moses Adler, who was in Denver in the early 60’s, was sent to prison, the newspaper did not identify him as a Jew as was customary when a Jew committed a crime. The question presents itself: Was it because the small group of Jews preferred that the larger community not be aware of their presence while their number was so few, or was it that their reverence for democracy insisted that they identify themselves only as American citizens? It does not seem possible that Byers, who recounted the activities of the Salomon brothers and Abraham Jacobs so minutely, did not know that they were Jewish. They sat together in Masonic lodges and built the first cultural organizations in the city. It is almost certain that Jacobs taught Byers his first Masonic lesson, when they were still in Nebraska.

After the long period of silence, the Rocky Mountain News, by contrast, seemed suddenly filled with news of Jewish activity.

With the High Holidays in the fall of 1865, the News commented wonderingly, "Today is some sort of a holiday for the Jewish persuasion, unknown to us gentiles. Business houses kept by that class in town are closed from ‘rosy morn’ till dewey eve.” Better in-
Gaining the “Needful”

It was inevitable that in the epidemics of “gold fever,” the young adventurous Jews would contract the same ailment. However, after a brief search for the precious metals, the obvious needs of the miners hastened the recovery of most of the young Jews from the malady. These were the merchants who “grubstaked” many a miner and bought interest in frequently successful mines. Their search for gold was vicarious. Fitted by previous merchandising experience, it was only natural that most of them should take on the job of supplying the miners.

Like Abraham Jacobs, who moved his O. K. Store to Spring Gulch in the “richest square mile on earth,” with its booming mining camps of Central City, Blackhawk, Nevadaville, Mountain City, and others even less temporary on the face of the map of Colorado, many of the Jewish pioneers brought their stores to the miners. Sometimes the procedure was reversed, as in the case of the Deitsch and Sonneberg firm, which moved its store from Central City to Denver, where, in 1862, their firm received a train of eight wagons of merchandise.

The movement from the “states,” and from Denver and back to the mining camps was exceptionally heavy during the early years of settlement, with new names appearing on every stage list: L. Morris leaves for Buckskin Joe (a mining camp above South Park); A. Sands and wife, and Miss Sands arrive, with Sands returning from a “five month sojourn in the eastern markets, and bringing out his lady and sister to make the city their abiding home.” On their way to Central City were Israel Wolfe, A. J. Poznanski, and J. Ringolsky.

In providing the miners, the merchants were faced with an important problem, the existing rates of gold dust, which was the principal medium of exchange. A public meeting was held in 1861 to establish gold dust rates. For the varying quality of gold, the leading merchants set rates with Platte River gold commanding $20 per ounce, down to common, badly retorted gold at $12 per ounce. Fred Z. Salomon was on the committee in Denver and Abraham Jacobs on a similar committee in Central City. Reading the resolution in the latter town, Jacobs averred for the merchants, “on our sacred honor, we business men and mill owners set the following rates. . . .”

The rates so set did not last long because the miners regarded the setting as an arbitrary decision. But this exchange of business men, along with the Chamber of Commerce in Denver, crystallized into business groups bent on improving financial conditions in the territory.

The merchants supplied the miners with clothing, staples, tools, and some luxuries. Jacobs advertised among his tools “very scarce eight-tined sluice forks.” On exhibition he had a tempting incentive—a nugget of gold and quartz worth $166.30. Such items satisfied the miners for a time. Their food consisted mostly of dried and processed items. Fresh vegetables were a luxury, not to be imported, but grown near the pioneer’s home in the lower land of the prairie. In the high altitude of the mining camps, with the short growing season and rocky terrain, only a few vegetables could be grown. But who wanted to plant radishes and onions on top of the soil when under it lay tons of gold? The miners could wait until their pockets became better lined with the “needful.”

The Homestead Act brought the settlers, with hopes of large scale farming. In Colorado, then as always, the major problem of existence was water. Only the mountains, blanketed in snow, represented a fairly dependable source. On the eastern plains and in the parks between mountain ranges, irrigation by ditch was the only method of bringing water to the growing crops. Leopold Mayer and Isaac Gotelf joined with a few others in 1881 to create a large system of irrigation for the San Luis Valley—“the first large system planned on modern lines.” The construction of the main ditch was called the “Del Norte Canal.”

Near the present site of Pueblo, the Goldsmith brothers and Simon Nathan tried farming. In Denver, Henry and Joseph Kline made an attempt at sheep raising. Joseph Kline was not one to stay with any one endeavor too long. According to his son,
all the stores and banks in the city closed and flags were flown at half-mast while Leadville mourned for the young editor. B. F. Zalingier, Mrs. Elsner's brother, known as "Nap" (for Napoleon) who learned the printer's trade as a child, later held the job of city editor on at least two Denver dailies. A sister, Jennie, was society editor on the Republican. There were several women on the newspapers, including Mildred Morris, who later worked on newspapers in the East.

In banking, only after success had been achieved elsewhere were directorates offered. In addition to Fred Z. Salomon, at least three German Jews were directors of banks: Meyer Friedman, David S. Lehman, and Louis Anfenger. Although the early Jews branched out into other lines, such as real estate and insurance, it was the store which kept many Jews alive—from the clerks to the shopowners. If a store was successful, it was enlarged and a branch store was opened in another boom camp. If an excitement died out, the entire town, with its Jewish merchants, moved to a more likely camp. Above all the pioneers were mobile. Only scores of ghost towns with empty, weatherbeaten buildings testify to the activity that took place in them.

Some of the stores grew to immense proportions, but great wealth came to only a few of the merchants. One of these was I. H. Guldman, who opened stores in Leadville and Cripple Creek. These were never so successful as his Denver "Golden Eagle." Some of his success is attributed to his saving of an aged Chinaman from a pursuing mob during the Chinese riots. The grateful Oriental population (which was considerable at the time) traded at his store thereafter. He is also said to have stopped trouble for the banks in the Panic of 1907 by redeeming in gold coin all "cashiers' script" promissory paper.

The Golden Eagle was far from being a fashionable store. But its fire sales, using a wealth of newspaper space in the Denver Post, and the possibility of buying bargain merchandise at low prices, made it one of the best-known stores in the city and Guldman a millionaire. Guldman's charities were many and varied. He helped endow the Rude Community Center and later the Guldman Community Center. He gave generously to, and helped build, Denver's first Orthodox Jewish general hospital and old folks' home, the Beth Israel. He was always generous to the constant stream of women who came to his store with such announcements as, "Guldmankeh, I need sheets for a poor family."

The stories of the successful German Jews are well recorded. Obviously there were many more who came to seek their fortunes as miners in the West and slipped away without a line written about them anywhere. Colorado has always had a transient population. As the local clergy frequently pointed out, "Preaching in Denver is like preaching to a procession."

Only when a story ended in tragedy meriting newspaper notice did the public hear of it. The Jewish benevolent societies never publicized the names of their relief list.

One such case was headlined in the News under "Yesterday's Suicide," with the comment that this suicide was different from the great number of suicides of the previous months. "Carl Heining, a Jew who ran a small jewelry manufactory ... and resided with his family on the 'Bottoms' far out from any regularly laid out street ... in a shanty or shed ... was found dead." In addition to his crippled wife, Heining left "a boy of 14, right manly, a boy of 7, and by far the most intelligent of the lot a bright-looking little girl of 10. She is bright beyond her years as Jewish children so frequently are, and is the reed upon which the family leaned."

Heining had had a good business in New York, but business reverses brought him to Kentucky, and from there, because of the metals in the West, he came to Denver. He finally saved enough to try mining and sank his money into a worthless prospector's hole. The mind of the man who had been steady, "thrift-and-industry-minded became affected. In his last effort he had melted $15 worth of gold and poured it into a glass vessel. The glass broke and the gold fell into the sand and was lost." The hapless man "took a paper, emptied it into a drinking glass," and before swallowing it, told his bewildered children, "It's good for rats."

The Panic of 1873 was felt by the Jews to some extent, but no failures of any importance were recorded. Not so the Panic of 1893, when the silver mines were closed after silver had been demonetized. All but a few of the merchants on Denver's Sixteenth Street were completely wiped out.

Among those Jews who became miners in the West was the Fifty-niner Simon Nathan, who had come directly from Leavenworth to California Gulch. The mine he owned in the area was so rich that, according to a granddaughter, "he took out the
governor, Peabody resigned within twenty-four hours and his lieutenant governor, Jesse F. McDonald, became governor of Colorado.

Hornebin was one of Colorado's seven foremost lawyers selected to defend the election officials. Although they too were charged with contempt, Hornebin's leadership in the Democratic party was secure. As a Democrat, he became intimate not only with the leaders of the party, but also with the inhabitants of the "Gas House District" along the bottoms, between Cherry Creek and the Platte River, which was Denver's First Ward, and the focal point of settlement. At the turn of the century, the bulk of the inhabitants of the neighborhood were immigrants, among them a large number of bearded Jews and Irishmen with thick brogues. When the Ku Klux Klan came to power many of the Irish Catholics of the "Gas House District" led the fight against the hooded order.

Hornebin took part in Mayor Robert Speer's first campaign and was his attorney during the period when the corporations were fighting the visionary independent candidate. He became chairman of the state Democratic convention and nominated his friend Edwin C. Johnson for governor in 1922 and Alva Adams for United States Senator in 1938. Because of his ability, his strict guardianship of civil rights, his humanitarian ideals as well as his position in the party, he was offered a district or supreme court judgeship by Governor Johnson, which he turned down.

The Democrats became more popular after the nation-wide spotlight was focused on the strikes in the mining country. Max Morris, one of the few Jewish labor leaders of Colorado, who was a vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, was elected to the state legislature for two terms. He died in 1909, while settling a controversy as secretary of the Retail Clerks' International Protective Association, which had its headquarters in Denver.

While there were Jews in both political parties on both sides of Cherry Creek, the popular notion of the rich and Temple Jews as Republicans, and the poor and immigrant Jews as Democrats, persisted for a long time. The generation of native-born Jews among the more socially acceptable portion of Denver Jewry made their own decisions in politics. From them came such leading Democrats as County Judge Ira Rothgerber and Walter Appel, the latter a third generation American from a leading Denver family. The East European Jews in the first decade of the twentieth century were ready for politics. Three Jews ran on the Republican ticket in 1904, which, by contrast, included millionaire Simon Guggenheim and an immigrant West Colfax merchant, Abraham Radinsky, who ran for the state legislature.

The highest political office ever held in the state by a Jew was that of United States Senator by Simon Guggenheim, when he was elected by the state legislature. During his tenure the vote for the office was given directly to the people, and Guggenheim, known to all as a Jew, especially because of some of the vicious attacks made on him involving his religion, did not seek re-election. Few Jews had such high ambitions. As the cities grew larger, and the Jews began their movement away from the small towns, fewer of them were elected from the districts outside of Denver to the House or Senate. The days when there were enough Jews in the legislature to hold a minyan came to an end about the end of World War I.

Footnotes

1Ben Draper, "Alphabetical Index to Officials of Denver and Colorado, 1858-1933."
2Vickers, op. cit., p. 642.
3Ibid., p. 547-8.
4RA, p. 7.
5Hill, op. cit., p. 122.
6RMN, Nov. 6, 1881, p. 4.
7RMN, Oct. 23, 1891.
8RMN, Apr. 1, 1890, p. 4.
9J. E. Smith, IJN, op. cit.
10IJN, Apr. 4, 1929.
11Art. of Inc., Aug. 17, 1895. Just prior to the Panic of 1893, a Hebrew Protective Association took part in the "joyous Republican" parade, with 1000 voters in line. This seems to be a typographical error, as much as the Swedish Americans are listed with 400 in line. Times, Nov. 11, 1894, p. 1.
In Boulder, the home of the state university, services were held regularly and at least two congregations were organized as they were needed. The first, Adath Zion, was formed in 1905. A second congregation, Anshe Emuno, was organized in 1919, with the encouragement of the Denver Jewish community. However, Boulder, but thirty-five miles from Denver, apparently did not need the congregation as badly as some of the other towns. With improved transportation it was more satisfactory to go to Denver for services and a social life than to try to build one in a small community.

Efforts to form a congregation were more successful in the agricultural community of Greeley, where the Orthodox Jewish community formed the Congregation Beth Israel in 1925. The community is augmented in the winter by Jewish students at the state college, which has no Jewish fraternities as do the two other northern college towns. The same congregation, with additional members from its second generation, built a new synagogue in 1954.

There appear to be no other Jewish services in Colorado, except for Grand Junction, which, with the impetus from the uranium industry, had a large enough Jewish community in 1955 to start planning a synagogue. For the fall holidays that year, Paul Laderman, the son of Denver’s Rabbi Laderman, was invited to conduct services.

5

When Simon Nathan came down from his mines in California Gulch to Beaver Creek in the Arkansas Valley, there was no town on the site of the old Fort Pueblo. After two years of farming and cattle ranching, he established the first clothing store in 1867 in the little town behind the stockade. He kept his farm for at least one more year, then devoted himself to his store.

Life behind the stockade was far from safe. The Nathan’s baby daughter was kidnapped by Indians and returned only after she had been ransomed by the Nathans. When the men and boys had to leave to round up their cattle, Mrs. Nathan, on more than one occasion, had to crawl to the barn to milk the cows, and return to the house the same way, somehow dragging the filled milk pail after her.

Nevertheless, the Nathans thrived on this life. With the exception of a child who was burned to death, all of the young Nathans grew to adulthood, and the adventurous second generation spread into others of Colorado’s small cities, Alamosa, Durango, Silverton, and Telluride. Around the Nathans grew much of Pueblo’s life. Where they first camped, the city’s leading department store, owned by another Jewish firm, was founded. It was the Nathan family who brought the first bathtub into the area, a tin affair which was the delight of the community which came first to admire it, then waited for an invitation to use it. The Nathan’s daughter, Rebecca, was in the first high school graduation class of 1884. When she was sixteen the family had a piano shipped out for her, which arrived by ox-drawn covered wagon.

The Nathans were a conspicuous couple in the community, not only because they were there early, but also because of Nathan’s generosity. After he retired he devoted himself entirely to charity. He imposed upon himself the task of visiting and helping the poor, which assumed such proportions that Mrs. Nathan “almost lost her mind.” Believing that a person should get what he asked for, Nathan soon had to be dissuaded from giving so much. When he had given all of his money away, he gave his house to a poor woman, to the chagrin of his family. Until the very end he made daily reports to the local associated charity office. The Nathans were founders of the Reform Temple Emanuel in Pueblo, but this in no way prevented Simon Nathan from making a generous gift to his friend, Henry Plonsky, for the founding of a traditional synagogue in Denver. As far as Nathan was concerned “a Jew was a Jew.”

Another family of Fifty-niners settled in Pueblo in 1872. They were the Goldsmith brothers, Abraham and Henry, and their families. They, too, made a valiant attempt at ranching, after similar attempts in the middle west, and after homesteading in Denver on the site of Denver’s tramway loop. After being flooded out three times in Denver, the brothers filed claims on the Arkansas, three miles from Pueblo. The very first deed ever handled in Pueblo was that of Henry Goldsmith, which was placed in the cornerstone of the courthouse when the building was erected.

The Goldsmiths were never too successful in holding their land. Even in Goldsmith subdivision in Pueblo, 125 of Henry’s lots were condemned for a right-of-way by the railroad, and Goldsmith took what he could get for his virtually confiscated property. Abraham, his brother, moved to Trinidad and then Las Vegas, New Mexico. Both brothers were in a runaway accident, which