



Martin Weitz

Occupation: “Tailor,” con man

Born: N/A

Birthplace: N/A

Died: N/A

Prior to his unfortunate debut in Leadville, the facts of con artist Martin Weitz’s life were probably invented — and the one clue regarding his former job smacks of deceit. Soon after his arrival here, Martin advertised his newly opened “tailoring” business in the *Herald Democrat* newspaper, in which he described himself as an alumnus of the Redfern & Sons tailoring firm.¹ At the time, and up until 1940, Redfern was a well-known couture business with branches in the United Kingdom, France, and in the United States. Martin advertised himself as being “late of Redfern’s, New York,” most likely a ruse to attract a more discerning and wealthier clientele. Whether he ever actually worked for Redfern is unverifiable.

Martin stayed in Leadville for a few weeks in September of 1899. In order to set up the con, he rented rooms from Mrs. John Kennedy at 132 West 4th Street, where he began taking tailoring commissions from local women.² Advertisements for his “business” appeared in local newspapers over five days, between September 18³ and September 22.⁴ On September 26, the Leadville

community learned that Martin had fled town with a large number of expensive textiles and tailoring supplies provided by his clients.⁵ Among his victims were Mrs. Will Evans and Mrs. Kate Larson, who said he didn’t even bother taking their measurements before accepting the materials they bought. The *Herald Democrat* article reporting Martin’s thievery concluded that his destination after taking flight was unknown. No update on the theft or Martin’s capture exists in Leadville’s local newspapers, suggesting he succeeded in escaping consequences.

The sole indication that Martin was Jewish came from his landlord Mrs. Kennedy, who reported that he was planning to work Sunday “as he was a Jew.”⁶ He packed up expensive tailoring supplies and left to work at friend’s home so he wouldn’t disturb the “gentiles” on their Sabbath. Then Martin promptly quit Leadville and was never seen or heard from again.

Decades later, an unrelated and very ethical Weitz visited Leadville. Martin Mishli Weitz, a student rabbi at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, stopped in Leadville on his tour to “stimulate religious activities” in Colorado cities during the High Holy Days of 1930.

¹ *M. Weitz Ladies’ Tailor* (Leadville, CO: *Herald Democrat*), September 18, 1899, P6.

² *Wanted Mr. Weitz* (Leadville, CO: *Herald Democrat*), September 26, 1899, P8.

³ *M. Weitz Ladies’ Tailor*, September 18, 1899, P6.

⁴ *M. Weitz Ladies’ Tailor* (Leadville, CO: *Herald Democrat*), September 22, 1899, P8.

⁵ *Wanted Mr. Weitz*, September 26, 1899, P8.

⁶ *Wanted Mr. Weitz*, September 26, 1899, P8.



Bibliography

M. Weitz Ladies' Tailor. Leadville, CO: *Herald Democrat*. September 18, 1899.

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