



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Schenkein

Hyman (Herman) Schenkein
Born: March 1835 (Germany)
Died: 1909
Married to: Rebecca Schenkein (1856)

Bernard (Bernhart) Schenkein
Born: June 1859
Died: Unknown
Married to: Unknown

Morris (Maurice) Schenkein
Born: April 1862 (London, UK)¹
Died: Unknown
Married to: Unknown

Samuel Schenkein
Born: July 1867
Died: Unknown
Married to: Unknown

The Schenkein brothers, Samuel, Morris, and Bernard, with their father, Hyman, operated a jewelry business in Leadville from 1886 until 1889. The brothers also operated stores in Denver, Pueblo, and New York. According to Leadville city directories², only Samuel ever lived for an extended period in Leadville. The fact that the Schenkein brothers opened branch stores in Leadville and Pueblo, in addition to one in New York, is evidence of the economic power of those Colorado cities during that time.

According to the 1880 United States census, the Schenkein family lived in Brooklyn, New York. There were seven children in the family. The oldest to youngest siblings were nearly 20 years apart, and ranged from “Bernhard” (Bernard), the oldest aged 20, to Edward the youngest aged 7 months. Their father Hyman, identified in the 1880 census as “Herman”, was 50 years old and his wife Rebecca 40 years old. The ages of the children vary slightly in the next census data available from 1900. Death and burial records are not available, and this

researcher was unable to locate detailed information regarding the family prior to 1880.³

In June of 1881, the brothers published their first advertisement in a Pueblo newspaper. According to the ad, their watch repair shop was located within the liquor store of Frank Shrock.⁴ That same year, Bernard and Morris also appear in the Denver City directory as watchmakers.⁵ It was not until 1886, however, that the brothers appear in the Leadville city directory. The Leadville store was listed under both “Silver and Plated Ware” and “Watchmaking and Jewelry” in the city directory. The address of the store was listed as 313 Harrison Avenue; the Schenkeins probably had a kiosk or display case inside of Sam Rich’s “Lion Clothing Store”.⁶ While advertised in the directories, no advertisements appeared in Leadville newspapers for this first year of business in the city. The following year, the first advertisements for the business began to appear in newspapers. Early advertisements (right) referenced the Corner Bookstore of the Boston block (corner of 4th and Harrison); the brothers probably operated there in the form of a kiosk within the bookstore. The advertisement above captured the unique nature of the items the brothers sold during the early winter of 1887.⁷ The watches were probably designed to attract well paid miners, engineers, and managers with “dust proof” attributes. Within the same sentence in the ad, the brothers also offer to inlay precious stones; an interesting detail of the luxury emphasis on watches at the time.

Two Schenkein advertisements appear in Leadville newspapers during 1888. The first is a New Year’s Day advertisement which touted “Holiday Goods!” and included “diamonds, rubies, sapphires, opals, set in rings...” Doubtlessly many precious stones sparkled in the windows of the store. In 1888, they moved from the Boston block to a storefront at 313 Harrison Avenue.⁸ This building exists today. Samuel, the only brother who lived in Leadville while the business operated, lived above the shop at 313. Later in 1888, father Hyman appeared in the name of the Leadville branch store, and it became



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Schenkein

Schenkein & Sons.⁹ An article in April of 1888 revealed the details of a collection of bronze items the Schenkeins had on display at 313 Harrison:

“...In the show window and cases of Messrs. Schenkein & Son, are displayed some of the most beautiful specimens of the Italian school in the Etruscan bronzes, which are conspicuous by reason of the combination of high colors which are blended to produce an effect that is highly artistic and pleasing to the eye... The range of subjects in Schenkein’s collection is quite extensive including figures of dramatists and poets, as Shakespeare and Milton; studies as Don Caesar and Don Juan... The bronze clocks are also a feature of trade and one of them, valued at \$125 is said to be the finest specimen ever brought to Leadville... Although only a mining camp, the taste of the people of this city is luxurious, and the sale of bronzes is not restricted to one design, nor one price, as both firms which have been referred to say they find good sale.”¹⁰

The year 1889 was the final year the Schenkeins and their store were present in Leadville. On Christmas day 1889, a half page advertisement in a Pueblo newspaper announced, “We have determined to close our Leadville store January 1st.” The items which were advertised for the closing sale were various precious stones, china and dishes, as well as silverware. At the bottom of the ad, customers are directed to the Schenkein brothers store on South Main Street in Pueblo.¹¹ The store in Pueblo operated for another 6 years before it closed in 1895.¹²

While little detail of their short presence in Leadville is available, the Schenkeins choice to open a branch luxury store in the mining city demonstrates the economic vitality of Leadville during the 1880s. The lack of social presence in newspapers, and the absence of children or wives in Leadville reveals the strictly business nature of the brother’s presence in the Carbonate City.

¹ 1922 Passport Application “Maurice Schenkein”

² 1887 Leadville City Directory p. 236

1888 Leadville City Directory p. 229

1889 Leadville City Directory p. 220

³ Year: 1880; Census Place: Brooklyn, Kings, New York; Roll: 853; Page: 100A; Enumeration District: 197

⁴ “South Park” Colorado Daily Chieftain, Number 2791, June 7, 1881

⁵ 1881 Denver City Directory p. 459

⁶ 1886 Leadville City Directory p. 292 and p. 295

“A Clean Sweep” Leadville Daily/Evening Chronicle, June 22, 1886 p. 4

⁷ “Advertisement” Herald Democrat November 17, 1887 p. 1

⁸ 1888 Leadville City Directory p. 229

⁹ 1888 Leadville City Directory p. 229

¹⁰ “Leadville’s Bronze Collection” Leadville Daily/Evening Chronicle, April 11, 1888 p. 4

¹¹ “H. Schenkein & Sons” Colorado Daily Chieftain, December 24, 1889 p. 7

¹² “Going Out of Business Jan. 1” Colorado Daily Chieftain, January 3, 1895 p. 7



Bibliography

Directories:

Corbett, TB, Hoye, WC and Ballanger, JH. "Corbet, Hoye and Co's Fifth-Tenth 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 1885-1890". Democrat Printing Company; Leadville, CO: USA. 1885-1890.

Corbett, Hoye. "1881 Corbett, Hoye & Co.'s 9th Annual Denver City directory: City directory of all residents and businesses in the Denver area in the year 1881." News Printing Company; Denver, CO: USA. 1881

Newspapers:

Colorado Daily Chieftain (Pueblo, Colorado)

Leadville Daily/Evening Chronicle (Leadville Colorado)

Herald Democrat (Leadville, Colorado)

Census Records accessed via ancestry.com:

Year: 1880; Census Place: Brooklyn, Kings, New York; Roll: 853; Page: 100A; Enumeration District: 197

Year: 1900; Census Place: Ocean, Monmouth, New Jersey; Page: 5; Enumeration District: 0125; FHL microfilm: 1240986

Photograph:

Brisbois, Alfred "Boston Block, Leadville, COLO" *Mountain History Collection*. Lake County Public Library, Leadville, Colorado



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Schenkein

Passport Application for Morris Schenkein:

1903: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; Roll #: 635;
Volume #: Roll 635 - 15 Aug 1903-31 Aug 1903

1922: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; Roll #: 2016;
Volume #: *Roll 2016 - Certificates: 187350-187725, 07 Jun 1922-08 Jun 1922*

AUTHOR: Trevor Mark

EDITOR: William Korn

SOURCE: Jewish Surnames/Schenkein

PUBLISHED BY: Temple Israel Foundation. Leadville CO; USA. 2018

STABLE URL: <http://www.jewishleadville.org/schenkein.html>