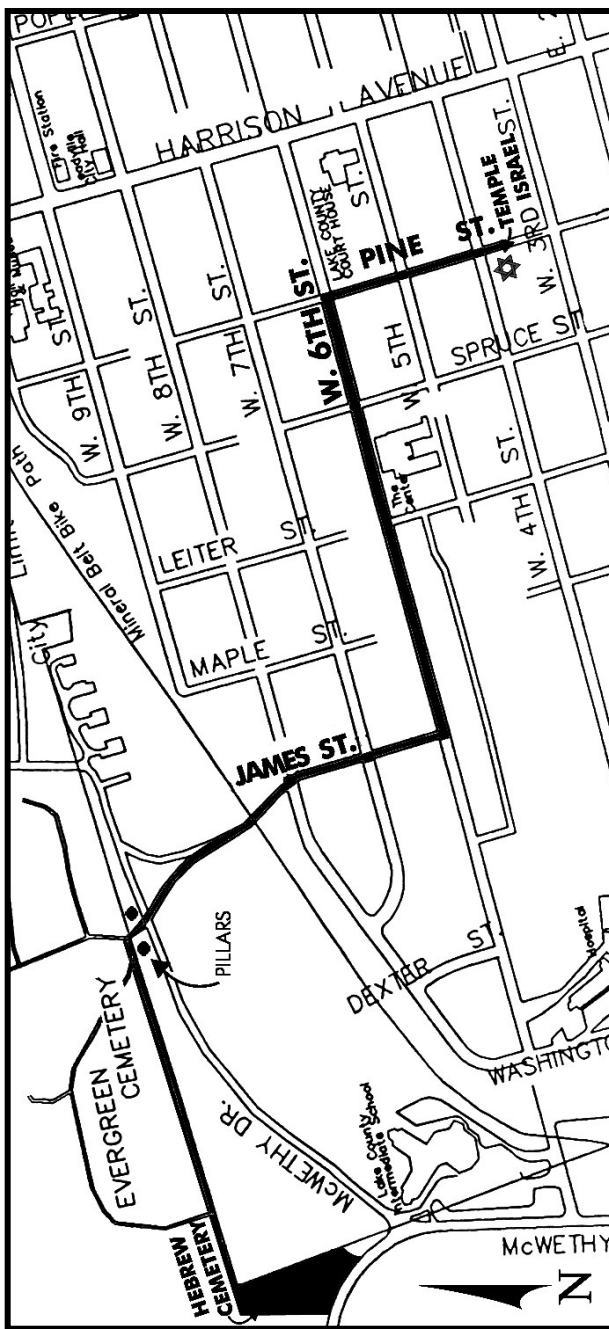


Temple Israel and Hebrew Cemetery Timeline

- 1880 Hebrew Benevolent Association acquires cemetery for Leadville Jews
- 1884 Temple Israel building erected and dedicated
- 1884-1908 Regular services held at the Reform Temple Israel synagogue
- 1892 Orthodox members split off to form Knesseth Israel
- 1912 Last recorded event, a wedding, at Temple Israel
- 1937 Temple Israel building becomes a home and radiator repair shop
- WWII Local miners board in former synagogue
- 1955-1966 Building serves as vicarage for St. George Episcopal Church
- 1966-2006 Building operates as rental housing
- 1992 Temple Israel Foundation purchases the former synagogue
- 1993 District Court awards Hebrew Cemetery title to Foundation
- 2001 Front façade of building restored
- 2008 Full building restoration completed
- 2012 The permanent museum exhibition, Frontier Jewish Leadville, opens

**29th Annual Cleanup
of the Hebrew Cemetery**
Leadville, Colorado
June 29, 2025
Hosted by Temple Israel and B'nai B'rith Denver.

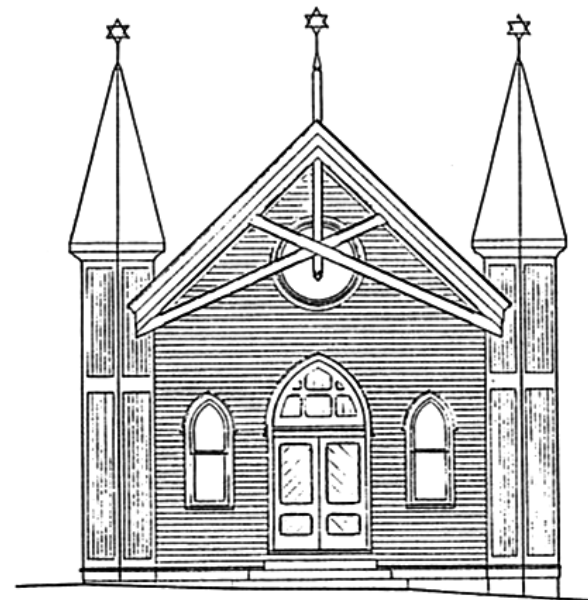
Hebrew Cemetery



Updated: June 5, 2024

Temple Israel

Frontier Synagogue & Museum



Built in 1884, restored in 2008
201 West 4th Street
Leadville, Colorado 80461
www.jewishleadville.org

Summer: 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Winter: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
or by appointment
call 303.709.7050

Hebrew Cemetery
Located in southwest corner of the
Evergreen Cemetery
Leadville, Colorado
See map on reverse for directions.

Jewish Pioneers

Jews migrated to the American West and to Leadville, Colorado, for many of the same reasons other people did—to improve their social and economic status, to find adventure, and to reinvent themselves. Leadville’s mining economy exploded in the late 1870s, resulting in an influx of migrants to this small mountain town.

The discovery of silver caused Lake County’s population to grow to approximately 25,000 residents by 1880, of which nearly 400 were Jews, including David May and Benjamin Guggenheim.

Leadville’s Jewish community had stabilized in size and strength by 1884, and on September 19, the Jewish community dedicated Temple Israel during Rosh Hashanah 5645.

The mining town’s population, including the Jewish component, declined slowly after the early boom and then more rapidly after the demonetization of silver in 1893.

The current Lake County population is about 8,000, with fewer than 100 of them Jewish, none of whom are descendants of the original pioneers.



David May, founder of May Department Stores, sold Levi's in Leadville, Colorado, circa 1880.

Hebrew Cemetery

In 1880, the Hebrew Benevolent Society established the Hebrew Cemetery in the southwest corner of Leadville’s Evergreen Cemetery. When the town’s overall population began to decline in the late 1880s, interment at the cemetery dwindled.

The Temple Israel Foundation acquired the title to the cemetery in 1993, ending a long period of neglect. Starting in 1996, the Denver chapter of B’nai B’rith has led volunteer efforts each summer to maintain the grounds and replace markers. Since then, the cemetery has been reconsecrated and began holding Jewish burials again in 2001.

Synagogue and Museum

Temple Israel is the only building of its kind west of the Mississippi River—both as a restored pioneer synagogue and as a home to a permanent museum exhibition documenting an oft-overlooked piece of U.S. history.

Over 80 objects from the permanent collection are on exhibit, including 19th-century photographs, whiskey jugs and other commercial items, ephemera, and household items such as a Kiddush decanter and Sabbath candelabra.

Come visit Temple Israel to learn more about the lives of a close-knit community that cared for the sick and orphaned while also providing goods and libations in a rowdy mining town.

www.jewishleadville.org

Temple Israel is a scenic two hour drive from Aspen or Denver.

Temple Israel Foundation

The Temple Israel Foundation is dedicated to the memory of Leadville’s Jewish pioneers and was incorporated in 1987 “to acquire, historically rehabilitate, and maintain” the synagogue building and cemetery.

An electrical fire in 2006 prompted the synagogue’s full restoration, which was supported by private contributions and four grants from the Colorado State Historical Fund. The restoration project was completed in 2008. In 2012, the building went into service as a museum commemorating Jewish life in pioneer Leadville.

The Foundation also researches the experiences of Jewish individuals during Leadville’s glory days. See our web site: www.jewishleadville.org.

While regular services are no longer held in the synagogue, the building is available for special events.

Please donate to support the museum



venmo



PayPal

To schedule a visit, reserve the synagogue for special events, make genealogical inquiries, or to make a contribution, please contact us:

Temple Israel Foundation

208 West 8th Street
Leadville, Colorado 80461
303.709.7050
wm.a.korn@gmail.com