



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Cohn

Nathan Cohn (Cohen)
(Nathan and Jessie Household)
Born 1830
Born in Russia
Married to Jessie
Occupation Pawnbroker

Jessie Cohn
Born 1847
Born Russia
Married to Nathan

Louis Cohn
Born 1870
Born in Kansas
Married to Amelia Friedlander

Morris Cohn
Born 1872
Born in Kansas

Ben Cohn
Born 1875
Born in Texas

Jacob Cohn
Born 1878
Born in Texas

Rebecca Cohn
Born 1880
Born in Colorado

Joseph Cohn
Born 1850
Born in Polish Russia
Married to Fanny
Father of Hattie, Samuel, Uncle of Gus

Fanny Cohn
Born 1855/1856
Born in New York
Died 1904
Married to Joseph

Mother of Hattie, Samuel, Aunt of Gus
Hattie Cohn Garrett
Born in 1879
Born in Texas

Samuel Cohn
Born in 1882
Born in Colorado

Gus Cohn
Born 1877
Born in Texas

Amelia (Friedlander) Cohn
Born 1870
Died 1898
Married to Louis Cohn

Nathan Cohn was an immigrant from Polish Russia who eventually became a patriarch of one of Leadville's largest Jewish families. Nathan was born in 1830¹, and may have been married in 1850 when his first son, Joseph was born.² It is unclear who Joseph's mother was because by 1870³ he may have been in his second marriage with Jessie (surname unknown). Jesse was also from Russia and was born in 1847.⁴ Nathan and Joseph immigrated to the United States in 1858.⁵

By 1870 Nathan had married Jesse and they had their first child, Louis, in Kansas. Morris was born next in 1872. The family then moved to Texas where Ben and Jacob were born in 1875 and 1878 respectively.⁶ Nathan moved the family to Leadville in 1879 where he began a pawn shop where he worked with his eldest son Joseph. In 1880 Rebecca was born.⁷

In the early 1880s, Nathan and Joseph appeared frequently in Leadville's papers in relation to questionable activities at their pawn shop. There are several instances where the Cohn's are accused of receiving stolen goods.⁸ There is even a case of a



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raid on the Cohn pawnshop in February of 1881. The following article depicts the investigation and subsequent raid.

“For the past few months Captain Byrnes has suspected that the pawn shops of Nathan Cohn, on East Third street, and Joseph Cohn, on Harrison avenue, were the receptacles of stolen property. But not until within the past week has Captain Byrnes had sufficient power and authority to carry out his well laid plans to both capture the crooks and their allies.

Upon going to the shop on Third street, he was asked to describe the goods he was in search of, and informed Mr. Cohn that he wanted a pistol and various other small articles that were stolen on or about the 25th of last January, from August Mepier. Cohn gave them up very readily.

But when he went to the shop of the old man Cohn he met with an evasive answer, in fact being told that there were no stolen goods in that shop.

Not being satisfied with the outlook of things on the premises, the captain placed several policemen in charge of the stores and swore out warrants about three o'clock yesterday afternoon before Judge Quigley for the arrests of the Cohns, father and son, and also obtained a search warrant to scour their premises. The Cohns gave bond for their appearance before Judge Quigley tomorrow at 2 pm, and were allowed to take possession of their shops.

A well known crook stated to Captain Byrnes that he could steal a revolver and take it into these shops, pawn it, and ten minutes afterwards the captain might enquire for it and receive the answer that no such article had been pawned there, as no checks were ever given out by the pawn brokers, simply money.

Captain Byrnes while standing behind the scenes last evening at one of the shops observed a party

come in with a suit of clothes which he attempted to pawn, whereupon the captain placed him under arrest and lodged him behind the bars of the county jail. Without a doubt the Cohns will plead innocent to the charges brought against them and swear that the goods came into their possession in the regular course of their business.”⁹

The day after the raid Nathan posted an advertisement in the *Leadville Democrat* informing the public that the police had confiscated a number of his goods which they believed were stolen.¹⁰ After this incident the number of times the Cohns appear in the papers for questionable circumstances decreases. Instead Nathan and Joseph next appear in the paper in November, 1881, when they started the Horseshoe and Sheep Mountain Mining company. Christian C. Hopple, David Hopple and Nathan Cohen were the incorporators. The founding members and Joseph Cohn served on a board, “The principal office of the company shall be kept in this city and the work shall be carried on in Park and Lake counties.”¹¹

Nathan and Joseph continued to work together at their pawn shop at 221 1/2 Harrison Avenue until 1883.¹² In 1884 Joseph Cohn ceased working with his father and started his own pawn shop with his wife, Fanny (maiden name unknown).¹³ Nathan continued to occasionally invest in Leadville's mining industry. In January, 1885, he filed a patent for a claim on the Eagle Horn Lode.¹⁴ In 1886 Jesse, Nathan's wife, began to work with her husband and she began running a loan office out of their 221½ Harrison Avenue address.¹⁵ The city directories list the office in Jesse's name and Nathan is usually listed as a manager. In 1889, Louis began to run his own fruit shop next door at 223 Harrison Avenue.¹⁶ The next year Louis was working as a confectioner for J. W. Hall.¹⁷

When Joseph moved out of his father's shop he began working at his own business with his aforementioned wife, Fanny. Joseph's wife did not appear in the city directories until 1884 when their



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store opened at 225 W. 6th Street.¹⁸ Fanny was born during 1856 in New York. The 1900 census reveals that she and Joseph were married in 1875. In 1879 the couple had their first child, a daughter named Hattie, during 1879 while the family lived in Texas. After moving to Leadville, Samuel was born in 1882. Gus Cohn is also recorded in the 1900 census for Joseph's household. Gus is listed as his nephew and was born in 1877 in Texas.¹⁹

Both the Nathan and Joseph Cohn households were usually involved in the pawn shop or loan office industry. The children of both families primarily worked in their respective businesses, although there are exceptions such as Nathan's son Louis, who worked in confectionary until he last appeared in the 1895 city directory.²⁰ Louis was again mentioned in the local papers in the winter of 1898 when his wife, Amelia Friedlander Cohn died on June 28 from a sudden illness in Cripple Creek.²¹ The passing of twenty-eight year old Amelia becomes slightly more tragic in that she and Louis had only been married a little over a year,²² which left them little opportunity to start a family. Amelia remains currently rest in the Leadville Hebrew Cemetery.²³

In 1898 another business owner came out of the Nathan household when Ben started a Jewelry shop at 412 Harrison Avenue.²⁴ It is unclear whether these Cohn businesses were in competition with each other or whether they were all part of some wider family owned enterprise. Regardless of the nature of ownership, the Cohn family continued to appear in city directories until 1909.²⁵ Hattie married local retail clerk Sol Garrett on April 5, 1902, and shortly thereafter departed for Phoenix. They would return shortly after the death of Hattie's mother, Fanny, who died of a brief and sudden illness in February 1904.²⁶ Hattie and her husband would leave Leadville for good in 1907 when they moved to Spokane Washington.²⁷ Joseph left town some time after 1907,²⁸ Ben and Nate left after 1909.²⁹ It is unclear where all of Nathan Cohn's family members moved. Despite this, Nathan Cohn's household is an example of a family that grew and started many enterprises in the Cloud City during the late 19th century.



Daniel Cohn

Immigration: Poland, year unknown

Occupation: Clothier

Daniel Cohn was born approximately 1838 in Poland.³⁰ When Cohn immigrated to the United States is unknown, but he first appears in Leadville's city directories in 1880 as a clothier employed at Cohn & Harris.³¹ At that time Cohn lived at 102 West Chestnut Street.³² Cohn remained in the city for a single year and is not found again in subsequent city directories. There are no other written records on Cohn and his whereabouts are unknown following his departure from the city.

Ruben Cohn

Born 1823

Died February, 1888

Ruben Cohn appears in the city directories in 1886 and 1887. During 1886, he was listed as residing at California Gulch on Leiter Avenue.³³ In 1887, Ruben resided in Brooklyn Heights.³⁴ He does not appear in the 1888 directory because he unfortunately passed away in February, 1888, and was interred in the Hebrew Cemetery. His gravestone lists his age as 65.³⁵

Nathan Cohn

Birth: Germany, approximately 1838

Immigration: Hanover Germany/Russia,
approximately 1870

Occupation: Pawnbroker

Spouse: Millie Cohn

Children: Jennie, Kate, Mary, Sally

Nathan Cohn was born in approximately 1838 in Hanover, Germany. Cohn's wife, Millie, was also from Hanover Germany. Records indicate that the couple met and married in their native country as they had three of their four children while living in Europe. The 1880 census reports that Jennie, Mary, and Sally were all born in Germany and were aged 18, 14, and 12, respectively at the time of the census.³⁶ The youngest, Kate, was born in Colorado in 1870 and was 10 years old during the 1880 census year. Due to their children's reported birthplaces, it is believed that the Cohn's immigrated sometime between 1868 and 1870.

In the 1880 census, Cohn is listed as a pawnbroker but where Cohn's place of business was located is unknown, as he does not appear in any of the city directories. According to census records they lived at 121 West 7th Street.³⁷ The Cohn family's goings on in Leadville are difficult to know since there are no other records save the 1880 census which specifically pertain to them. What happened to the Cohn family after 1880 is unclear as are their whereabouts.



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¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 1880 Census.

² U.S. Census Bureau. 1900 Census.

³ "Colorado State Census, 1885,".

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. 1900 Census.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "District Court." *Leadville Democrat*, May 28, 1881. <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

⁹ "Byrne's Raid." *Leadville Democrat*, February 8, 1881. <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

¹⁰ "Notice to Persons Having Pawns With Nathan Cohn's Two Stores." *Leadville Democrat*, February 9, 1881. Accessed October 30, 2016. <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

¹¹ "Leadville Laconics." *Leadville Daily Herald*, November 23, 1881. Accessed October 30, 2016.

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¹² Corbett, TB and Ballenger, JH. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Fourth 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 1883".

¹³ Corbett, TB and Ballenger, JH. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Fifth 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 1884".

¹⁴ "Patent Application." *Leadville Daily Herald*, January 17, 1885. <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

¹⁵ Corbett, TB and Ballenger, JH. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Seventh 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 1886".

¹⁶ Ballenger, JH and Richards. "Ballenger & Richard's 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 1889".

¹⁷ Ballenger, JH and Richards. "Ballenger & Richard's Eleventh 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 1890".

¹⁸ Corbett, TB and Ballenger, JH. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Fifth 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 1884".

¹⁹ "United States Census, 1900".

²⁰ Ballenger, JH and Richards. "Ballenger & Richard's Fifteenth 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 1895".

²¹ "Death of Mrs. Cohn." *Herald Democrat*, June 28, 1898. Accessed November 10, 2016.

²² Nancy Manly. "Index To Marriages And Marriage Licenses Recorded At The Lake County County, CO". *Manly & Wolford*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1990.

²³ "Who's Where In Leadville's Evergreen Cemetery". *Historical Research Co-operative*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1981.

²⁴ Ballenger, JH and Richards. "Ballenger & Richard's Seventeenth 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 1898".

²⁵ Ballenger, JH and Richards. "Ballenger & Richard's Twenty Eighth 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 1909".

²⁶ "Death Of Mrs. Joseph Cohn, Well known Leadville Lady". *Herald Democrat*. CC Davis And Co. Leadville, CO; USA. February 23, 1904.



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²⁷ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MGJR-66Y> : accessed 2 September 2017), Hattie S Garrett in household of Sol J Garrett, Spokane Ward 2, Spokane, Washington, United States

²⁸ Ballenger, JH and Richards. "Ballenger & Richard's Twenty Sixth 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 1907".

²⁹ Ballenger, JH and Richards. "Ballenger & Richard's Twenty Eighth 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 1909".

³⁰ 1880 U.S. census, Lake County, Colorado, Leadville, pg. 73, Daniel Cohn.

³¹ Corbett, TB, Hoye, WC and Ballaneger, JH. "Corbet, Hoye and Co's First 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 1880". P 111.

³² 1880 U.S. census, Lake County, Colorado, Leadville, pg. 73, Daniel Cohn.

³³ Corbett, TB and Ballenger, JH. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Seventh 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 1886".

³⁴ Corbett, TB and Ballenger, JH. "Corbet, and Ballenger's Eighth 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 1887".

³⁵ "Who's Where In Leadville's Evergreen Cemetery". *Historical Research Co-operative*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1981.

³⁶ 1880 U.S. census, Lake County, Colorado, Leadville, pg. 81. Nathan Cohn, Millie Cohn, Jennie Cohn, Mary Cohn, Sally Cohn, and Kate Cohn.

³⁷ Ibid.



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