



#### Cohn (Nathan and Jessie Household)

Nathan Cohn (Cohen)

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

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 1830<sup>1</sup>, and may have been married in 1850 when his first son, Joseph was born.<sup>2</sup> It is unclear who Joseph's mother was because by 1870<sup>3</sup> he may have been in his second marriage with Jessie (surname unknown). Jesse was also from Russia and was born in 1847.<sup>4</sup> Nathan and Joseph immigrated to the United States in 1858.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>



# Temple Israel FOUNDATION

## Biographical Information Sheet

**Cohn**

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.<sup>8</sup> There is even a case of a 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.

On 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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."<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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 foundering 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."<sup>11</sup>

Nathan and Joseph continued to work together at their pawn shop at 221 1/2 Harrison Avenue until 1883.<sup>12</sup> In 1884 Joseph Cohn ceased working with his father and started his own pawn shop with his wife, Fanny (maiden name unknown).<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> In 1886 Jesse, Nathan's wife, began to work with her husband and she began running a loan office out of their 221 1/2 Harrison



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Avenue address.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> The next year Louis was working as a confectioner for J. W. Hall.<sup>17</sup>

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 store opened at 225 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup> Louis also appeared in the Leadville newspapers during 1898 when his wife Amelia Friedlander passed away after suffering from an illness in Cripple Creek.<sup>21</sup> It is unclear when Louis and Amelia were married. Amelia was interred in the Leadville Hebrew Cemetery.<sup>22</sup>

In 1898 another business owner came out of the Nathan household when Ben started a Jewelry shop at 412 Harrison Avenue.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> Joseph seems to have left town after 1907,<sup>25</sup> his wife Fanny, had passed away in 1904.<sup>26</sup> Ben and Nate left after 1909.<sup>27</sup> It is unclear where all of Nathan Cohn's family members moved. Despite this, Nathan Cohn's household is an example of a family which grew and started many enterprises in the Cloud City during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Daniel Cohn

Immigration: Poland, year unknown

Occupation: Clothier

Daniel Cohn was born approximately 1838 in Poland.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> At that time Cohn lived at 102 West Chestnut Street.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> In 1887, Ruben resided in Brooklyn Heights.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup>

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.<sup>34</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>35</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 1880 Census.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 1900 Census.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 1885 Census.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 1900 Census.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "District Court." *Leadville Democrat*, May 28, 1881. Accessed October 30, 2016.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

<sup>9</sup> "Byrne's Raid." *Leadville Democrat*, February 8, 1881. Accessed November 9, 2016.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

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

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

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

<sup>12</sup> 1883 Leadville City Directory

<sup>13</sup> 1884 Leadville City Directory

<sup>14</sup> "Patent Application." *Leadville Daily Herald*, January 17, 1885. Accessed October 30, 2016.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

<sup>15</sup> 1886 Leadville City Directory

<sup>16</sup> 1889 Leadville City Directory

<sup>17</sup> 1890 Leadville City Directory

<sup>18</sup> 1884 Leadville City Directory

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 1900 Census.

<sup>20</sup> 1895 Leadville City Directory

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

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

<sup>22</sup> Leadville Hebrew Cemetery

<sup>23</sup> 1898 Leadville City Directory

<sup>24</sup> 1909 Leadville City Directory

<sup>25</sup> 1907 Leadville City Directory

<sup>26</sup> Leadville Hebrew Cemetery

<sup>27</sup> 1909 Leadville City Directory

<sup>28</sup> 1880 U.S. census, Lake County, Colorado, Leadville, pg. 73, Daniel Cohn.

<sup>29</sup> City Directory, 1880, pg. 111.

<sup>30</sup> 1880 U.S. census, Lake County, Colorado, Leadville, pg. 73, Daniel Cohn.

<sup>31</sup> 1886 Leadville City Directory

<sup>32</sup> 1887 Leadville City Directory

<sup>33</sup> Leadville Hebrew Cemetery

<sup>34</sup> 1880 U.S. census, Lake County, Colorado, Leadville, pg. 81. Nathan Cohn, Millie Cohn, Jennie Cohn, Mary Cohn, Sally Cohn, and Kate Cohn.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.