



Benjamin Davies (“Davis”)  
Occupation: Jeweler, pawn broker, loan office  
owner  
Born: 15 May 1846  
Birthplace: Russia (Warsaw, Poland)  
Died: 7 April 1896

Fannie Davies (“Davis”) (“Goldwater”)  
Occupation:  
Born: est. 1848  
Birthplace: England  
Died: 20 January 1886

Annie (“Anna,” “Annetta”) Davies (“Davis”)  
Occupation:  
Born: est. 1872  
Birthplace: New York  
Died:

Bernard (“Barney”) Davies (“Davis”)  
Occupation: Clerk  
Born: est. 1873  
Birthplace: New York  
Died:

Dora Davies (“Davis”)  
Occupation:  
Born: est. 1877  
Birthplace: New York  
Died:

Bertha Davies (“Davis”)  
Occupation:  
Born: est. 1879  
Birthplace: New York  
Died:

Francis Davies  
Occupation:  
Born:  
Birthplace:  
Died:

Unnamed (Daughter) Davies  
Occupation:  
Born:  
Birthplace:  
Died:

Clementine Davies (“Raabe”)  
Occupation:  
Born: 1866  
Birthplace: Germany (Alsace Lorraine)  
Died: 21 June 1943

Lillian Davies (“Raabe”) (“Hartwell”)  
Occupation:  
Born: August 1891  
Birthplace: Colorado  
Died:

Harry Davies (“Raabe”)  
Occupation:  
Born: December 1892  
Birthplace: Colorado  
Died:

C. Davies  
Occupation: Jeweler  
Born:  
Birthplace:  
Died:

The Davies family was one of the most prominent Jewish families in Leadville during the time of their residence with Benjamin (“Ben”) being a renowned local businessman and holding significant sway in the town’s Jewish community. Ben was born in Russia on May 15, 1846, to Russian-born parents and came to the United States at an undetermined date, first settling in New York.<sup>1</sup> He moved to Leadville sometime before 1881 with his English wife Fannie (b. 1848 or 1853), his daughters Annie (born est. 1872), Dora (born est. 1877), and Bertha (born est. 1879), and his son Bernard (born est. 1873).<sup>2</sup> All of his children were born in New York according to the 1885 Colorado Census.



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First documentation of the Davies' residence in Leadville is the 1881 city directory, listing Ben as a jeweler both working and residing at 204 Harrison Avenue.<sup>3</sup> Ben moved to a new residence by 1882 at 209 Harrison Avenue and expanded his occupation to include managing a loan office in addition to continuing his business as a jeweler.<sup>4</sup>

Ben began appearing infrequently in Leadville's newspapers by 1883, first in an article describing his conducting of Passover services as cantor to Leadville's Jewish community.<sup>5</sup> The article reported that he later addressed a gathering of Jewish scholars at Turner Hall on the importance of Passover and educating children. In 1885, Ben became unknowingly involved in a racket relating to a gem-like object made from glass which a man purchased from his pawn shop for \$3.<sup>6</sup> A sensational article from the *Carbonate Chronicle* relates the events in detail, ending in the man selling the bit of glass for \$100 to another who thought it a diamond. In another case of off-chance involvement in criminal activity, a man named Frank Burns "borrowed" a "rusty" gun from Ben's store.<sup>7</sup> Burns then took the gun with him to confront Mike Goldsmith and "accidentally" shot him. Burns purchasing of the gun from Davies played into the testimony he gave during court hearings.

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1885, Ben participated in Simchat Torah celebrations, making an impromptu presentation with Jacob Bernheimer.<sup>8</sup> Leadville's Jewish congregation also gave Ben an envelope containing \$100, signifying the community's appreciation for his services. In the same year, Ben obtained a new business location at 222 ½ Harrison Avenue.<sup>9</sup> Sadly, Ben's good fortune in Leadville did not last long with the passing of his wife, Fannie, who died on January 20, 1886 at "twenty-five minutes past 4" in the morning.<sup>10</sup> She was interred for a time in Leadville's Hebrew Cemetery, but her remains were exhumed and moved only a few weeks later to an unknown location.<sup>11</sup> Her obituary claimed that she had five children, only

four of which are known and named at this point. More unfortunate events occurred in December, 1886, when a stranger entered Ben's pawn shop wanting to purchase cartridges for his gun, claiming that it was not loaded as he waved it in front of the store's clerk, Sam Gould.<sup>12</sup> The gun discharged and the bullet struck Gould in the hand but fortunately without causing any permanent damage.

From 1887 to 1889, mention of Ben in the newspapers largely related to his duties as cantor for Temple Israel. In September, 1887, Ben conducted services for Yom Kippur at the Temple.<sup>13</sup> In December of the same year, he officiated a wedding at the temple for Jacob Frankie and Jennie<sup>14</sup> Shoenberg.<sup>15</sup> He conducted services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur again in late-September and early-October, 1889.<sup>16</sup> Breaking from the spate of temple related items, a *Carbonate Chronicle* article sought Ben's opinion, among other businessmen in Leadville, on the state of local trade. He simply claimed that business was good and that he was expecting a good fall season.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps a signifier of good business, Ben also owned at least three properties, two of which were related to his businesses: his pawn shop at 309 Harrison Avenue, a loan office at 222 ½ Harrison Avenue, and the family residence at 222 Harrison Avenue.<sup>18</sup> His son, Bernard, also began working as a clerk at the loan office, incorrectly listed in the directory as 222 Harrison Avenue.<sup>19</sup>

For the first half of 1890 Ben's life in Leadville was uneventful with only brief mentions of participation in a Purim Ball and a multi-week trip to New York in early-March.<sup>20</sup> While on his trip to the east, a shootout occurred in front of Ben's pawn shop between Frank Cole, Clarence Wolfington, and Albert N. Dunley in which Dunley lost his life.<sup>21</sup> Ben returned from his trip in early-April and on May 18<sup>th</sup> listed three properties for sale with prices ranging from \$200 to \$1260.<sup>22</sup> On June 15<sup>th</sup>, Ben purchased the building his pawn shop resided in from the Monheimer family<sup>23</sup> – at this point liquidating their Leadville assets – for \$14,500.<sup>24</sup>



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He then purchased portions of lots owned by the Monheimers a week later for \$750.<sup>25</sup> Ben became superintendent of Temple Israel's Sunday School at an undetermined point, the first mention of him occupying the position appearing in a *Herald Democrat* article detailing a picnic held in honor of the school.<sup>26</sup>

Ben became the life of town gossip in August 1890 with the beginning of the Raabe-Davies Affair,<sup>27</sup> an extramarital incident taking place between himself and Clementine, the wife of Julius Raabe, a local confectionary vendor and member of the Jewish community. The *Herald Democrat* described the events in a lengthy, sensational article titled "His Ruined Home" published on August 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>28</sup> Clementine supposedly became enamored with Ben's wealth and the magnificent diamonds from his jewelry store on Harrison Avenue. Ben became romantically interested in Clementine, having remained unmarried since the death of Fannie more than four years earlier. He reportedly visited Raabe's confectionary store frequently to interact with Clementine. Julius, observing his frequent visits to the store, determined that Ben and Clementine were having an affair and left for Salt Lake City. Clementine quickly accused Julius of abandonment and sought a divorce which Leadville's Judge Hall approved. Ben and Clementine then left for Denver where they married, returning to Leadville on August 19<sup>th</sup>.<sup>29</sup> Ben faced repercussions in the Jewish community because of his actions, however. As cantor for Temple Israel and superintendent of the Sunday school, he held a prominent public position in the Jewish community and his participation in infidelity was not overlooked. At an emergency meeting at Temple Israel, Leadville's Jewish leadership removed Ben from his duties as cantor, a position which he had held since at least 1883.<sup>30</sup> It is likely that he also lost his position as superintendent of the Sunday school. The final mention of the affair in the newspapers related to the newly-wedded Clementine Davies confronting Julius Raabe upon his return from Salt Lake City after a week-long

absence and giving him custody over their children.<sup>31</sup>

After the conclusion of the affair, life for the Davies returned to relative peace. It becomes clear that the fifth child between Ben and Fannie was an unnamed daughter as a notice in the October 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Herald Democrat* stated that Ben returned from a trip to New York with his four daughters.<sup>32</sup> Annie first appears in the town newspapers on March 3, 1891 noted as the host of a party at the family residence at 222 Harrison Avenue to which she invited family and friends of both Ben and Clementine.<sup>33</sup> More criminal excitement occurred at Ben's pawn shop when the local court charged a woman named Lizzie Wilson – previously employed as a "domestic" by Ben – with theft of numerous pieces of clothing and jewelry from stores in town, including Ben's.<sup>34</sup> An April 5<sup>th</sup> blurb in the *Herald Democrat* named two previously unknown "young" Davies children, Francis and Rose, when mentioning a surprise party held for them.<sup>35</sup> They are likely children from Ben's marriage to Fannie and so would have been at least five-years-old.

On May 6<sup>th</sup> of the same year, Dora and Bernard left for Rochester, New York to reportedly reside permanently.<sup>36</sup> By late-July, Ben came into significant legal trouble as twelve of his New York creditors simultaneously filed attachment against him in the county court. Apparently having come into some financial trouble, the creditors requested that the court transfer property or money to them from Ben to pay off his debts totaling nearly \$10,000.<sup>37</sup> In an interview with the *Herald Democrat* published on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, Ben appeared to be in good spirits, claiming, "I am now making negotiations with my New York creditors, and I feel confident I will be able to settle everything."<sup>38</sup> When asked how his creditors came to know of his financial troubles, he stated, "I do not know, unless it was the contemptable libeling of some of my enemies here in the city. There is one man, and only one, in town who will stoop to anything to cause my



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disgrace and ruin.”<sup>39</sup> It is unclear to whom he was referring. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, Ben managed to postpone a sheriff’s sale of his stock, claiming he could pay off his debt.<sup>40</sup> Reports of his financial trouble end after this date. Ben and Clementine apparently wasted no time after their marriage, alleviating the family’s woes by welcoming two new children into the family: Lillian in August 1891, and Harry in December 1892.<sup>41</sup> Curiously, the 1892 city directory lists a previously unknown C. Davies working as a jeweler at 404 Harrison Avenue.<sup>42</sup> Ben was listed in the directory working as a manager for C. Davies and Bernard was listed as a clerk working for Ben.<sup>43</sup> It is unclear who C. Davies was and whether he had any relation to Ben Davies’ family.

After a hiatus of nearly two years, Ben’s name re-enters the papers with a lengthy article announcing his untimely death on the night of August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1893.<sup>44</sup> According to the *Herald Democrat*, Ben was tending to his pawn shop when a gasoline lamp exploded, causing a fire which quickly spread to the Clipper Saloon next-door. He reportedly opened the front door of his shop and yelled for help. Bystanders ran to see what was happening but remained outside, waiting for the fire brigade to arrive. Ben, fearing for his shop and the expensive stock, ran back inside to see what he could do. His son, Bernard – having apparently returned to Leadville at an earlier date – and his daughter, Annie, arrived at the scene and were told that their father was safe. After waiting a lengthy period and searching for his father in the crowd, Bernard realized he was still in the store and ran in to find him. He found Ben in a corner of the store’s back room, having suffered from severe smoke inhalation. Helping hands quickly brought Ben to

Dr. Sol Kahn’s<sup>45</sup> practice nearby where the doctor pronounced him dead.

Ben’s obituary, written in the same lengthy article discussing the events of his death, unfortunately contains inaccuracies and otherwise questionable information.<sup>46</sup> He was reportedly born in Warsaw, Poland, then a part of the Russian Empire. It accurately stated that he immigrated to New York City as a young man where he married Fannie Goldwater with whom he had five children. He then moved to Leadville in 1879 – a claim which is difficult to substantiate – with Fannie’s death noted as 1888, two years after she actually died.

Ben’s death is curious as he was apparently still in debt, with the American National Bank attaching a small pawn shop branch store on Harrison Avenue near the intersection with Third Street and his stock at his main store soon after the fire.<sup>47</sup> He also had insurance on his shop’s stock valued at approximately \$15,000 of which he reportedly lost upwards of 80%.<sup>48</sup> Finding his death odd, the coroner began an inquest three days after the fire to determine if any others may have been responsible for the events.<sup>49</sup> The inquest ended after two days, finding no one else responsible.<sup>50</sup>

Clementine and her children left for De Moines, Iowa on May 4<sup>th</sup>, a month after Ben’s death.<sup>51</sup> Three days later, Annie and “her younger sister” left for New York where they planned to remain permanently.<sup>52</sup> Clementine remarried Julius in late-September of the same year, bringing Lillian and Harry, her two children by Davies, into the Raabe family and signifying the end of the Davies family’s influence in Leadville.<sup>53</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> "Colorado State Census, 1885," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K8WN-GT3>: 1 April 2016), Ben Davis, 1885; citing NARA microfilm publication M158 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 498,507; "Benjamin Davies," Block C, Plot 4, Hebrew Cemetery (Leadville, Colorado) <http://www.jewishleadville.org/tombstonedetails.php?PersonID=1026> (accessed August 20, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> "Fannie Davies," Hebrew Cemetery (Leadville, Colorado) <http://www.jewishleadville.org/tombstonedetails.php?PersonID=1027> (accessed August 20, 2018); "Colorado State Census, 1885," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K8WN-GTQ>: 1 April 2016), Fannie Davis in entry for Ben Davis, 1885; citing NARA microfilm publication M158 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 498,507; "Colorado State Census, 1885," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K8WN-GT7>: 1 April 2016), Annie Davis in entry for Ben Davis, 1885; citing NARA microfilm publication M158 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 498,507; "Colorado State Census, 1885," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K8WN-GT4>: 1 April 2016), Dora Davis in entry for Ben Davis, 1885; citing NARA microfilm publication M158 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 498,507; "Colorado State Census, 1885," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K8WN-GTH>: 1 April 2016), Bertha Davis in entry for Ben Davis, 1885; citing NARA microfilm publication M158 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 498,507; "Colorado State Census, 1885," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K8WN-GTW>: 1 April 2016), B Davis in entry for Ben Davis, 1885; citing NARA microfilm publication M158 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 498,507.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas B. Corbett and John H. Ballenger, *Corbett & Ballenger's Second Annual Leadville City Directory Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms, Etc. in the City of Leadville for 1881* (Leadville: Corbett & Ballenger, Publishers, 1881): pp. 112, 343.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas B. Corbett and John H. Ballenger, *Corbett & Ballenger's Third Annual Leadville City Directory Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms, Etc. in the City of Leadville for 1882* (Leadville: Corbett & Ballenger, Publishers, 1882): pp. 111, 317, 327.

<sup>5</sup> "The Passover," Carbonate Chronicle (Leadville, CO) April 28, 1883: 7.

<sup>6</sup> "An Old Racket," Carbonate Chronicle (Leadville, CO) April 18, 1885: 6.

<sup>7</sup> "Before the Bar," Carbonate Chronicle (Leadville, CO) August 8, 1885: 8.

<sup>8</sup> "Hebrew Hop," Carbonate Chronicle (Leadville, CO) September 26, 1885: 4.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas B. Corbett and John H. Ballenger, *Corbett & Ballenger's Sixth Annual Leadville 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* (Leadville: Corbett & Ballenger, Publishers, 1885): pp. 99, 265, 269.

<sup>10</sup> "Fannie Davies," Hebrew Cemetery (Leadville, Colorado) <http://www.jewishleadville.org/tombstonedetails.php?PersonID=1027> (accessed August 20, 2018); "Death of Mrs. Davies," Carbonate Chronicle (Leadville, CO) January 23, 1886: 7. Relating to the exact day of Fannie's death, these two records are contradictory. Fannie's grave marker claimed her death occurred on January 20<sup>th</sup> while the newspaper claimed her death as January 23<sup>rd</sup>. This biography assumes her death date is that noted on the grave marker.

<sup>11</sup> *Temple Israel Foundation*, Leadville, CO. USA. Hebrew Cemetery Records.

<sup>12</sup> "Shot in the Hand," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) December 16, 1886: 3.

<sup>13</sup> "Amusements," Leadville Evening Chronicle (Leadville, CO) September 27, 1887: 2.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on the Shoenberg family please visit: <http://www.jewishleadville.org/shoenberg.html>

<sup>15</sup> "Frankie-Shoenberg," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) December 6, 1887: 3.

<sup>16</sup> "Rosh Hashanah," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) September 25, 1889: 4; "Yom Kippur," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) October 4, 1889: 4.

<sup>17</sup> "Status of Local Trade," Carbonate Chronicle (Leadville, CO) November 18, 1889: 1.

<sup>18</sup> John H. Ballenger and William H. Richards, *Ballenger and Richards' Tenth Annual Leadville 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* (Leadville: Ballenger and Richards, Publishers, 1889): pp. 102.

<sup>19</sup> John H. Ballenger and William H. Richards, *Ballenger and Richards' Tenth Annual Leadville 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* (Leadville: Ballenger and Richards, Publishers, 1889): pp. 102.

<sup>20</sup> "A Season of Rejoicing," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) March 8, 1890: 4; "Personal Mention," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) March 9, 1890: 4.

<sup>21</sup> "Who Shot Bart Dunley?" Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) March 11, 1890: 4.



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- <sup>22</sup> "Personal Mention," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) April 6, 1890: 3; "List of Delinquent Taxes for the Year 1889," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) May 18, 1890: 13.
- <sup>23</sup> For more information on the Monheimer family, please visit: <http://www.jewishleadville.org/monheimer.html>
- <sup>24</sup> "Curbstone and Corridor," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) June 15, 1890: 1.
- <sup>25</sup> "With the Recorder," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) June 21, 1890: 8.
- <sup>26</sup> "Congregation Israel Picnic," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) July 8, 1890: 7.
- <sup>27</sup> For more information on the Raabe Family, please visit: <http://www.jewishleadville.org/raabe.html> For more information on the Raabe-Davies affair, please visit: <http://www.jewishleadville.org/raabedaviesraabeaffair.html>
- <sup>28</sup> "His Ruined Home," Leadville Evening Chronicle (Leadville, CO) August 15, 1890: 3.
- <sup>29</sup> "Hotels and Personals," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) August 19, 1890: 5.
- <sup>30</sup> "His Ruined Home," Leadville Evening Chronicle (Leadville, CO) August 15, 1890: 3.
- <sup>31</sup> "The Husband Returns," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) August 24, 1890: 4.
- <sup>32</sup> "Hotels and Personals," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) October 30, 1890: 1.
- <sup>33</sup> "A Pleasant Party," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) March 3, 1891: 4.
- <sup>34</sup> "A Second Fischer," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) March 4, 1891: 11.
- <sup>35</sup> "In the Social Swim," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) April 5, 1891: 4.
- <sup>36</sup> "Personal Mention," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) May 4, 1891: 1.
- <sup>37</sup> "Court Calendar," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) July 23, 1891: 3.
- <sup>38</sup> "The Davies Failure," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) July 23, 1891: 4.
- <sup>39</sup> "The Davies Failure," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) July 23, 1891: 4.
- <sup>40</sup> "Sale Postponed," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) July 28, 1891: 4.
- <sup>41</sup> "United States Census, 1900," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MQM8-85G>; accessed 8 July 2018), Lillian Raabe in household of Julius Raabe, Precinct 1-3 Leadville city Ward 1, Lake, Colorado, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 44, sheet 16A, family 323, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,240,125; "United States Census, 1900," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MQM8-85P>; accessed 8 July 2018), Harry Raabe in household of Julius Raabe, Precinct 1-3 Leadville city Ward 1, Lake, Colorado, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 44, sheet 16A, family 323, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,240,125.
- <sup>42</sup> John H. Ballenger and William H. Richards, *Ballenger and Richards' Thirteenth Annual Leadville City Directory, Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms, Etc. in the City of Leadville for 1892* (Leadville: Ballenger and Richards, Publishers, 1892): pp. 103.
- <sup>43</sup> John H. Ballenger and William H. Richards, *Ballenger and Richards' Thirteenth Annual Leadville City Directory, Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms, Etc. in the City of Leadville for 1892* (Leadville: Ballenger and Richards, Publishers, 1892): pp. 103.
- <sup>44</sup> "Perished in the Smoke," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) April 8, 1893: 8.
- <sup>45</sup> For more information on Solomon Kahn and his family, please visit: <http://www.jewishleadville.org/kahn.html>
- <sup>46</sup> "Perished in the Smoke," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) April 8, 1893: 8.
- <sup>47</sup> "Perished in the Smoke," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) April 8, 1893: 8.
- <sup>48</sup> "Perished in the Smoke," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) April 8, 1893: 8.
- <sup>49</sup> "Where was Ben Davies," Leadville Evening Chronicle (Leadville, CO) April 11, 1893: 6.
- <sup>50</sup> "The Inquest is Ended," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) April 13, 1893: 2.
- <sup>51</sup> "Personal Mention," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) May 4, 1893: 8.
- <sup>52</sup> "Personal Mention," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) May 7, 1893: 6.
- <sup>53</sup> "Just like a Story Book," Herald Democrat (Leadville, CO) September 28, 1893: 8.



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SOURCE: Jewish Surnames/Davies

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

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