



(Myers Household)

Myers Harris

Born 1831 – 1832

Born in Poland

Married to Janett (Surname Unknown.)

Janett Harris

Born 1834 – 1835

Born in Poland

Married to Myers

Anna Harris

Born 1856 – 1857

Born in Poland

Sarah Harris

Born 1863 – 1864

Born in New York

Daughter

Ettie Harris

Born 1865 – 1866

Born in Michigan

Daughter

Rebecca Harris

Born 1874

Daughter

Myers Harris was a successful Jewish business owner in early Leadville. He was born around 1831 in Poland.¹ His wife was Janett Harris, also from Poland. Janett was born around 1843.² The couple had at least three children according to the 1870 census: Anna, Sarah and Ettie born in 1856, 1863 and 1866 respectively.³ Anna was born in Poland but Sarah and Ettie were born in New York and Michigan.⁴ The family must have immigrated to the United States between 1856 and 1863.⁵ The family lived in New York and Michigan before moving to Boulder by 1870.⁶ The Harris family also had another daughter, Rebecca, in 1874. Her 1880 census record claims she was born in Michigan⁷, but the family's 1870 census record already placed them in Boulder, Colorado.⁸ It is possible Myers was a brother or close relative of Ellis, Barnabas, Jacob and Sam Harris.

Myers Harris first appears in the 1879 Leadville City Directory. He is listed as a partner in a clothing business with the Herman brothers, Max and Solomon.⁹ Myers reappears in the 1880 directory working with the Herman brothers but his residence is listed as Boulder.¹⁰ From 1881 to 1883 Myers does not appear in the city directories at all and it is possible he temporarily returned to Boulder.¹¹ However, in 1884 Myers was back in Leadville and continued running a clothing and furnishing goods shop on Harrison avenue.¹² In 1885 Meyers appeared in the *Carbonate Chronicle*, as a charter member of Colorado No. 2 mining company.¹³ Meyers remains in Leadville city directories until after 1892.¹⁴ By 1894, Meyers had passed away and Henry Frankle, another Leadville Jew, was the administrator for Myers' estate.¹⁵ Myers rarely appeared in the city newspapers. When compared to the other Harris family members in Leadville¹⁶, this lack of publicity may reflect the more stable and respectable nature of Meyers Harris.



(Ellis Harris Household)

Ellis Harris
Born 1845
Born in Poland
Married to Augusta
Merchant and Grain Dealer
Parents from Poland

Augusta Harris (Maiden name unknown)
Born 1854
Born in Poland
Married to Ellis Harris
Housewife
Parents from Poland

One of Jewish Leadville's most colorful characters was Ellis Harris. He possessed a rather troubled history during his five years in the silver mining town. Ellis Harris was born during 1845 in Poland.¹⁷ His wife, Augusta (surname unknown) was born in 1854 and was also from Poland.¹⁸ They were married in Titusville, Pennsylvania in 1871.¹⁹ Little else is known of their history prior to moving to Leadville.

Ellis first appears in the 1879 Leadville City Directory as a flour, grain and feed merchant at 25 West Chestnut Street.²⁰ The next year Ellis worked at 224 West Chestnut Street at the same business.²¹ Ellis does not appear in the 1881 or 1882 city directories. In 1883 Ellis is listed as a commerce merchant at 131 East Chestnut Street.²² Ellis disappears once more in the 1884 directory before resurfacing in 1885 as the owner of Ellis Harris & Co., an ore purchaser located at California Gulch.²³ Ellis was partners with an A. Harris during this time.²⁴ A. Harris may have been one of Ellis's relatives. Newspaper articles from this period also reveal that Ellis was the manager of the Colorado branch of the Colorado and Utah Ore company.²⁵

In between all his business engagements, Ellis and his wife appeared frequently in Leadville newspapers. Augusta was involved in Leadville's Jewish social life. In 1880 Augusta Harris hosted a meeting of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society at her home.²⁶ Augusta was the secretary of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society.²⁷ Other appearances of the Harris family in the newspapers were due to more disreputable events, particularly in relation to Ellis. In October, Ellis was listed in the *Leadville Daily Herald*, appearing in court due to being accused of stealing 19 dollars from Mr. Winewright.²⁸ The same month Ellis also got into an argument with Jacob Sands and was assaulted.²⁹ A later article suggests that Ellis suspected Sands and Augusta were having an affair.³⁰ In November, Ellis once again appeared in the paper in a bizarre incident which appeared initially to some to have been an attempted suicide.

"Rumor was current on the street yesterday morning that Ellis Harris was dead, and that this had been accomplished by a dose of poison administered by his own hand. The fact in the case did not merit this rumor, as Mr. Harris is now convalescent and will be on the avenue before long, as well as ever. The report gained credence from the following: About half-past eight O'clock on Tuesday evening a man, evidently in great pain, was brought into the Women's Christian Temperance Union hospital by a stranger, who said he had found him lying on the sidewalk in the vicinity. As the patient was writhing in agony and displayed the symptoms of a person who had taken arsenic or strychnine, the medical staff was notified and summoned to the sick man's bedside. At first it was thought that poison had been taken, but subsequent symptoms failed to make themselves apparent. He gave his name as Ellis Harris, and requested to see certain friends. He also expressed a desire to have his wife near him and a messenger was dispatched for that purpose. The news was broken gently to the lady, who, without any



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unnecessary delay, hastened to her husband's relief and remained there during his illness. Harris denied having taken poison and this was corroborated by the physician. He thought his end was near, however, and desired a friend to remain by his side till the last.

This sudden attack of Ellis Harris is attributed by some to cold and irregularity of living, while others not so charitable assign other motives and causes which need not be repeated."³¹

This was a rather bizarre incident, but is not surprising due to some of the other events Ellis is involved in. The article suggests that other Leadville citizens suspected Ellis of attempting suicide, "others not so charitable assign other motives and causes which need not be repeated."³² Regardless of whether this suspicion is true, it suggests that Ellis was in such a state for his fellow citizens believe that an attempted suicide was possible. 1881 does not seem to have been a good year for Ellis. In addition to his aforementioned appearances in court, he was also consistently listed as losing other court cases throughout the year. In December, Ellis was again listed in the *Leadville Daily Herald*, for "disturbing the peace."³³ Ellis does not reappear in Leadville papers until 1883³⁴ and this corresponds to his absence from the city directory.³⁵ He may have left Leadville to pursue different business interests during this period.

In 1884, Ellis was once again in trouble. In May of that year he was arrested in a gambling house³⁶ and brought to court where he was accused of dealing in "bogus checks."³⁷ In September 1884, Ellis was in court against M. J. Monheimer, but the details of the case remain unknown.³⁸ In October 1885, Ellis had his most infamous run in with the law yet. The following article from the *Carbonate Chronicle* covers the nefarious incident.

"Scandals were fairly bumping against each other in the air in Leadville last night. It was no sooner ascertained that Judge Gaston had been slugged in the rear of No. 124 West Sixth street, that a Democrat reporter saw a crowd gathering around Pat Healey's tailor shop, No. 112 East Sixth street, and heard that a lively skirmish was going on between Mrs. Healey and Mrs. Gilmer. Another difficulty occurred ten minutes later when Judge Gaston broke a cane over the head of Ellis Harris, in front of the Congress saloon, on Harrison avenue. As Judge Gaston's case came first, it was the first one investigated, and the reporter found the judge at home in his house in the rear of 124 East Sixth street. He said he was going through the alley which leads from his house to the street, and was surprised to see a man standing in the shadow of the house. The judge says the man stepped out into the moonlight as he approached, so that he positively identified him as Ellis Harris and he and just gotten up to him when he saw him raise his arm. In another instant the old lawyer says he was felled to the ground with a blunt instrument in the hands of Harris. He was stunned for time, he does not know how long, when he was assisted to his feet by friends who heard him fall and came to the rescue. The judge shows a scalp wound on the back of his head in verification of his statement.

He says he went back into his house and though finding the wound quite painful, went out on Harrison avenue to keep an appointment he had with a friend. He was passing in front of the Congress saloon, and just stepping down the incline on the pavement, when he came face to face with Harris. He says his indignation at Harris' treatment of him only a few minutes before, got the best of him, and he struck him over the head with an ivory handled bamboo cane, which made the blood fly in every direction. Mr. Harris' head was cut open on top with the first blow, and the cane was shivered to splinters on the side of his head with the second blow. When the cane broke,



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Judge Gaston fell to the ground, but was soon on his feet again. There was a good deal of blood on the wooden pavement by this time, and the telegram which Harris held in his hand when the judge struck him, was covered with blood.

A Democrat reporter met Harris on Harrison avenue about a half hour after the affray, and Harris said there was a great deal of bad blood between the judge and himself because the lawyer had failed to account to Harris for \$162 that he had given the judge to pay into court for him in a case he had with Tom Hill. He also declared the judge had collected \$600 for him for which he had failed and refused to account. He denied most positively that he had seen the judge at any time earlier in the evening, and said that he had not been near him or conversed with him for three months.

“Did you not accept service of a summons in a divorce case to-day, which Judge Gaston brought against you for your wife?” asked the reporter. “I admit that I did,” said Harris, “and the answer is returnable on the sixteenth of next month. It is a mutual consent case, but it is understood it is for suspicions and cruel treatment my wife wants to get a divorce.”

“Has the fact that the judge brought this divorce suit for your wife no bearing on the difficulty which occurred between you and him this evening?” urged the scribe.

“Not a bit. The divorce is friendly and we both want it. I am living now at 123 East Eighth street and my wife somewhere else.”

The reporter then called on Mrs. Harris, who lives in the house in the rear of No. 111 East Ninth street, where she has recently moved. She refused to give the reporter any information in regard to the trouble between Judge Gaston and her husband, or the causes that lead to it.

Mrs. Harris is a Russian and quite a pretty, plump brunette. She dresses richly and is very quick at repartee. No amount of cross questioning could get her to divulge what she knew of the origin of the trouble between her husband and the old lawyer.

Later in the night Officer Kelly served a warrant on Judge Gaston, charging him with a breach of the peace and citing him to appear before Judge Rose at 8 o'clock this morning.

All of the parties connected with the sensation are old residents of this city, and are well known. Judge Gaston is an old gentleman, being nearly sixty and quite infirm in his step. Harris is about thirty-four years old, and is very strong and robust.

Judge Gaston admitted that he had been Harris' lawyer, but said he had paid the \$162 the latter gave him about a year ago to Mr. Parks, Mr. Tom Hill's lawyer. He denied the other charges made by Harris regarding the unlawful detaining of money which the judge had collected for his client.”³⁹

Only a month later Ellis appeared yet again in the papers. This subsequent affair did not redeem his reputation.

“Why Mrs. Augusta Harris Got a Divorce – A Bad Bird that Fouled Its Own Nest.”

“The decree in the case of Augusta Harris against Ellis Harris, was entered up in the county court yesterday, and the complaint stripped of its legal persiflage is as follows:

Augusta and Ellis were married in Titusville Pennsylvania, November 29, 1871. They have resided in Leadville since the lofty buildings on Harrison avenue loomed up to the fret of the skies; on December, 1881, Ellis commenced an action for divorce against Augusta, wherein he maliciously



and falsely charged her with having committed adultery with Jacob Sands, in his (Harris') house, in the city of Leadville, at diverse times prior to the commencement of the suit. Ellis also alleged in the same complaint that Augusta had been improperly and criminally intimate with diverse other men during the time aforesaid, all of which charges Augusta declares are wholly false and untrue, and that Ellis knew he lied when he made the charges. In consequence of these cruel wrongs Augusta left Ellis December 14, 1881, and refused to cohabit with him any more, until March 31, 1883, when in consequence of his repeated and pressing solicitations, and upon his promising to stop lying about her, and originating stories of her criminal intimacy with other with other men, she returned to live with him as his wife in Leadville. But her kind treatment of him soon made him forget his promises, and again began to originate reports about her having lovers, and meeting them at his own home and divers other places in this city, for improper and criminal purposes.

Augusta alleges that her married life was so unexceptionally pure that, like Caesar's wife, she was above suspicion, and that the cruel and lying reports or her husband nearly broke her heart. Finally people began to believe some of her husband's lying reports concerning her intimacy with other men, and she has suffered greatly in character and reputation, and this cruelty on his part has made her life miserable and unendurable. In conclusion, she alleges that the defendant is not worth much and she does not sue for or desire alimony, provided the court will sever the matrimonial yoke which weighs so heavy upon her."⁴⁰

After his divorce from Augusta, Ellis ceases to appear in Leadville records. It is not known what became of Augusta. It appears Ellis left Leadville by 1886 and may have sought employment and a new life elsewhere.⁴¹ While Ellis was only in Leadville a short time, he was definitely one of its most colorful Jewish characters.



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Barnabas Harris
Born 1847
Born in Poland
Clothier

Barnabas also known as Barney Harris, was born in Poland in 1847.⁴² By 1880 he had immigrated to the United States and was listed in the 1880 Leadville City directory. He resided as 102 W. Chestnut Street and ran a small store with Daniel Cohen.⁴³ Barney was only in Leadville for a brief period because of his nefarious business dealings. The following article relates the intrigue and deception Barney and Daniel undertook in their Leadville Business.

“For some time past the city has been remarkably quiet, and items of news have been distressingly quiet, and items of news have been distressingly scarce, but the heart of the humble reporter was made to throb with glee yesterday by the discovery of an extensive robbery, which although it had been in progress for some months, was only made public at that time. The particulars, ascertained by the reporter are as follows: Several months ago two men, names, respectively, Daniel Cohen and Barney Harris, both Polish Israelites, came to Leadville, like a great many others, to seek their fortunes in the famous silver fields of the carbonate camp. They were without means, but Barney Harris, being a brother of Mr. Solomon Harris⁴⁴, of the firm of Harris & Herman Brothers, clothiers, on Upper Chestnut street, found no difficulty in making arrangements by which the two men were enabled to start in business for themselves. A partnership was effected between Harris & Herman Brothers and Cohen and Harris, by which the latter opened a clothing store on lower State street, receiving their goods from the store of the former, the arrangement being that the profits of the store should be equally divided between the parties. Business went on for some time, goods being constantly removed from the

Chestnut street store to the one on State, and although the latter firm seemed to be doing a very good business, no profits showed up. Harris and Herman brothers, thinking all was not right, dissolved partnership and closed up the State street store. Shortly thereafter Cohen and Harris opened a store at 102 West Chestnut street, at which place they have been conducting business for seven or eight months past.

This closes chapter one, and the reader will now be introduced to Mr. Herman Langsdorf, a gentleman who figured conspicuously in the affair. Langsdorf was a clerk in Lew Shoenberg’s “buss” clothing store, having come to Leadville completely “busted,” being taken in charge by Mr. Lew Shoenberg and shown many favors by that gentleman. As he was poor, he was allowed him to sleep in the store at nights. It subsequently transpired that Cohen and Harris were in the habit of making midnight visits to the store of Mr. Shoenberg, receiving from Langsdorf various articles of clothing, paying him at the rate of about fifty cents on a fifteen dollar suit of clothes. This discovery was made about twenty days ago and Langsdorf was discharged, two suits being missed at that time. This put Sol Herman and Lew Shoenberg on the scent, and they determined to work up the case, and manner in which it was done was worthy of a first-class detective. It appears that Langsdorf had a woman to whom he was paying particular attention, and thinking that considerable information might be gleaned from her, it was resolved to visit her and see what could be learned. Accordingly Shoenberg called upon the female and passed the night with her, and by continual questioning succeeded in getting at the bottom of the whole affair, and from that time to this the two men have been working diligently at the case.



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Mr. Herman is a member of the Knights of Pythias and Barney Harris also belongs to the same order. One night a week or two since, the two met in the lodge room, and Mr. Herman said, as all things had been settled, he would like to know just how much he (Harris) had made out of the store, the latter replying that he had made about \$2,200 in cash, besides clothing.

Yesterday Messrs. Herman and Shoenberg appeared before Justice O'Brian and swore out a warrant for the arrest of Langsdorf, who was shortly afterward arrested. He was then taken to the law office of Mr. M. J. Waldheimer, where, upon the later gentleman agreeing to defend him, he "gave the whole thing away."

A warrant was then sworn out for the arrest of Cohen and Harris, and a search warrant issued for an examination of the store, Mr. Shoenberg identifying about one thousand dollars worth of clothing in the store and Mr. Herman about fifteen hundred dollars' worth, the goods being sold with the same marks upon them as when they were in the stores of Messrs. Shoenberg and Herman.

Cohen and Harris were taken before Justice O'Brian, who held them in fifteen hundred dollars each on two charges, three thousand dollars each in all, which they were unable to furnish and were sent to jail.

Constable L. B. O'Brian served the warrants and made the arrests, which he accomplished in an exceedingly creditable manner, placing Mr. M. J. Oaks in charge as guardian of the property for the night.

Langsdorf is a New York defaulter, and has a wealthy brother in New York city. When arrested, he said he "expected to get sent up for ten years, but didn't care a d-d." Cohen objected somewhat to being arrested, but was marched off to jail, where the twain will reside until their case is reached by the district court. The prospects for the men spending a lengthy season at Canon city are exceeding bright.

Harris & Herman Brothers estimate their loss at thirty-five hundred dollars and Mr. Shoenberg's loss will reach three thousand dollars."⁴⁵

Barney Harris disappears from Leadville records after this incident and as the article alludes, it is likely he ended up in prison.⁴⁶ What became of him afterwards is unknown.



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Samuel Harris
Born 1861
Born in Poland
Parents from Poland
Clerk

Samuel Harris was born in Poland during 1861. At some point Samuel immigrated to the United States and arrived in Leadville in 1885.⁴⁷ At first he worked as a clerk for A. Hirsch at 125 E. 6th Street until 1886.⁴⁸ In 1888 Samuel worked with Meyers Harris at 319 Harrison avenue, who was a probable relation.⁴⁹ In March 1888, Samuel was in court for larceny, but was found innocent and the charges were dismissed.⁵⁰ After 1888 he no longer appears in Leadville and he may have moved on to pursue a living elsewhere.

Jacob Harris

Jacob Harris was only in Leadville for a brief period in 1880.⁵¹ He appears in that year's city directory and is listed as an auctioneer working for A. Goldsoll. Harris' residence was listed as 102 W. Chestnut Street.⁵² After 1880 Harris disappears from Leadville records and it is unknown what happens to him.



¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 1870 Census.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 1880 Census.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. 1870 Census.

⁹ 1879 Leadville City Directory.

¹⁰ 1880 Leadville City Directory.

¹¹ 1881 – 1883 Leadville city directories.

¹² 1884 Leadville City Directory.

¹³ "Colorado No. 2." *Carbonate Chronicle*. October 24, 1885. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

¹⁴ 1892 Leadville City Directory

¹⁵ "Administrators Notice" *Herald Democrat*. December 18, 1894. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

¹⁶ See Ellis and Barnabas Harris.

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 1880 Census.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "Ruined Her Reputation." *Carbonate Chronicle*. November 7, 1885. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

²⁰ 1879 Leadville City Directory.

²¹ 1880 Leadville City Directory.

²² 1883 Leadville City Directory.

²³ 1885 Leadville City Directory.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "A New Sampling Mill." *Leadville Daily Herald*. June 21, 1884. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

²⁶ "Business Locals." *Leadville Daily Herald*. November 4, 1880. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

²⁷ "Society." *Leadville Daily Herald*. December 5, 1880. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

²⁸ "Entered into Life." *Leadville Daily Herald*. October 21, 1881. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

²⁹ "Leadville Laconics." *Leadville Daily Herald*. October 21, 1881. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

³⁰ "Ruined Her Reputation." *Carbonate Chronicle*. November 7, 1885. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

³¹ "He Didn't Attempt It." *Leadville Daily Herald*. November 3, 1881. Accessed June 28, 2017.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>



³² Ibid.

³³ "Leadville Laconics." *Leadville Daily Herald*. November 11, 1881. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

³⁴ "Leadville Ore To Utah." *Leadville Daily Herald*, December 19, 1883. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

³⁵ 1881 – 1882 Leadville city directories.

³⁶ "Harris in Hoe." *Carbonate Chronicle*. May 10, 1884. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

³⁷ "A Leadvillian In Trouble." *Leadville Daily Herald*. May 10, 1884. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

³⁸ "County Court." *Leadville Daily Herald*. September 16, 1884. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

³⁹ "Tit for Tat." *Carbonate Chronicle*. October 24, 1885. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

⁴⁰ "Ruined Her Reputation." *Carbonate Chronicle*. November 7, 1885. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

⁴¹ 1886 Leadville City Directory.

⁴² U.S. Census Bureau. 1880 Census.

⁴³ 1880 Leadville City Directory.

⁴⁴ The reporter may have mixed up the names of Meyers Harris and Solomon Herman as the directory lists these two men as the business owners of the Harris and Herman Bros., a Solomon Harris is not mentioned in other records.

⁴⁵ "An Extensive Robbery." *Leadville Weekly Herald*. July 31, 1880. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 1885 Census.

⁴⁸ 1886 Leadville City Directory.

⁴⁹ 1888 Leadville City Directory.

⁵⁰ "Legal Log." *Herald Democrat*. March 15, 1888. Accessed June 28, 2017.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

⁵¹ 1880 Leadville City Directory.

⁵² Ibid.