



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information

Jelenko

Gustave Jelenko
Born: 1855, Vienna, Austria
Died: July 14, 1879, Kokomo, Colorado
Occupation: Merchant in Kokomo

Frederick “Fred” Jelenko
Born:
Died:
Occupation: Co-owner of a clothing and dry goods store

The Jelenko surname in Leadville includes two brothers, Gustave and Frederick (“Fred”). Detailed information about the brothers in early Leadville is sparse due to the absence of documented resources, particularly newspapers and city directories.¹

While the year Fred Jelenko arrived in the area is unknown, he was in Leadville by at least 1878. Fred had an undetermined business within the Robinson Block² located at the corner of Chestnut Street and Pine Street.³ A photograph by Manitou Springs, Colorado,⁴ photographer James Thomas Thurlow shows a long, narrow sign presenting “F. Jelenko” running perpendicular off the northwest corner of the Robinson building over the sidewalk. This business operated there through 1878⁵ which is the last known date⁶ he was in the Robinson building.

The 1879 Leadville city directory revealed that Fred established a business partnership with Joseph Freudenfeld⁷ for a clothing and dry goods store. This new venture shared the same building as the Grand Hotel, at 11 West Chestnut Street⁸ near Pine Street, which was a few doors east from the Robinson Block. The directory also showed that each of their residential addresses were the same as the business address⁹. They likely inhabited the Grand Hotel. Inn lodging was not uncommon during this era and maintaining a business and a residence in the same building would have been convenient.

Through March and April of 1879, *The Daily Chronicle* published a series of freight notifications that included the *Freudenfeld & Jelenko* business in the lists.

The notification published on March 12th stated, “The following goods, consigned to True & Sutton, left Colorado Springs, March 5:” with “Freudenfeld & J.” listed as the receiver. The notification on March 23rd stated:

“Goods consigned to True & Sutton are on the way from Colorado Springs for the following parties:

Loaded March 19th: [names include] Freudenfeld & Co.

Loaded March 18th: [names include] Freudenfeld & J

Loaded March 15th: [names include] Freudenfeld & J

Loaded March 16th: [names include] Freudenfeld & J [and] F Jelenko”¹⁰

Between mid-May and early June of 1879, Freudenfeld & Jelenko *The Daily Chronicle* published a series of identical classified listings that have no further explanation:

WANTED—A bright and intelligent boy, about fifteen or seventeen years of age. Apply to FREUDENFELD & JELENKO, Chestnut street.¹¹

Fred served on the arrangement committee for the acquisition of Leadville’s first fire wagon (referred to as a “truck” in the newspaper) for the *Harrison Hook & Ladder Company*.

It would be kept at the new building on dedicated land fronting Chestnut Street which had been donated by Mr. Harrison,¹² the likely sponsor of the *Harrison Hook & Ladder Company*.



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Fred's brother, Gustave, was born in 1855 in Vienna, Austria. He came to the Leadville area in March of 1879 and resided in the newly formed town of Kokomo.¹³ While Gustave was a prominent merchant there, the extent of his activities is largely unknown aside from an interest in town property and some mining pursuits. However, Gustave, was apparently quite busy in his first few months in the Kokomo community with the *Leadville Daily Chronicle* noting that with "...his energy and public spirit... [Kokomo] is indebted for much of its present prosperity".¹⁴

Gustave, along with five others, published a formal endorsement of Captain A.C. Smith as a mayoral candidate for the town of Kokomo in the *Leadville Daily Herald*. The same article also documents Captain Smith's reply, which was to deny the request in consideration of other obligations.¹⁵ Captain Amos C. Smith¹⁶ is credited with founding the town of Kokomo.¹⁷

Gustave's life was sadly cut short in July of 1879 when he never awoke from an overdose of morphine.¹⁸ The day after his funeral, *The Daily Chronicle* published this obituary:

A Large Funeral.

One of the largest private funeral processions ever seen on the streets of Leadville was that for the late Gustave Jelenko yesterday. Mr. Jelenko was a prominent merchant at Kokomo where he died Monday from an over dose of morphine, taken to quiet a pain of neuralgia. It put him to sleep from which he never awoke. Mr. [Fred] Jelenko, the well known Chestnut street merchant in this city, was a brother of the deceased. The funeral procession came from Kokomo yesterday morning, and the burial was in the

*Leadville cemetery. Deceased was born in the city of Vienna, Austria, twenty four years ago. He came to Leadville in March last, and was one of the first settlers in Kokomo, and to his energy and public spirit that town is indebted for much of its present prosperity. He was largely interested in town property as well as in several mines in the vicinity.*¹⁹

Gustave's obituary clearly stated that the funeral proceeded from Kokomo and that Gustave was to be buried in the "Leadville cemetery", of which there was only one at the time, located on the edge of town at the far end of West Chestnut Street. Unfortunately, early caretakers of the cemetery kept poor records,²⁰ if any at all. Later documentation of interments was extensive but recorded weeks before Gustave's death. The cemetery underwent a transition in 1879; limited burial space, the busy location, unpleasant surroundings,²¹ and the past mismanagement of the cemetery sparked continual criticism for a new and proper cemetery²² elsewhere.²³ However, burials continued there until early November of 1879.²⁴ In mid 1879, a new cemetery location was identified north of Capitol Hill, which would carry the name "Evergreen Cemetery". The *Leadville Weekly Herald* reported on the progress of the new cemetery:

The ground has been surveyed and located, and a strong force of men have been busily engaged during the past week in preparing these grounds for the reception of the dead...

*... Nature in her most saintly mood could not have created a fairer spot than this...*²⁵

According authors Don and Jean Griswold, in their book, *History of Leadville and Lake County, Colorado: From Mountain Solitude to Metropolis*, the *Carbonate Chronicle* newspaper published the following article on October 22, 1879:



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The committee from the Hebrew Benevolent Association²⁶ held a meeting last evening [October 21] at the office of Joseph Samuels,²⁷ and Messrs. B. Loeb²⁸ and Jacobs²⁹ were appointed to select a suitable site for a cemetery. These gentlemen entered upon the duties today and are inspecting vacant plats in different portions of the suburbs. They require about four acres and desire to find it as near the city as possible, that the transit to and from may not be impeded by snow in the winter. The proposed burial ground is intended for Jews in general and will be owned and controlled by the Hebrew Benevolent Association recently organized in this city.³⁰

The committee ultimately secured a subset of land, in the southwest corner of the newly established Evergreen Cemetery, for a Jewish necropolis. Once the land was prepared and appropriately consecrated, Gustave Jelenko was reinterred at the Hebrew Cemetery³¹ likely according to Jewish customs.

According to the 1880 Leadville city directory, Frederick resided at 136 E 8th Street.³² While Fred does not appear in the city directories after 1880, other records reveal his attention to his interests in Leadville for several more years.

A legal notice in the *Leadville Daily Herald* revealed that *Freudenfeld & Jelenko* had some legal matters by the filing of a suit on January 8, 1881: “—A suit entitled *The Bank of Leadville vs. Daniel E. Park*, assignee of *Freudenfeld & Jelenko*, was filed in the district court yesterday.”³³

This trial proceeded on January 20, 1881, with the court proceedings published by the *Leadville Daily Herald* the following day:

“685. D. E. Parks, assignee of Messrs. Fruedenfeld and Jelenko vs. L. R. Tucker, sheriff, occupied all of yesterday in the trial thereof. It was very hotly contested all through. The suit arose from an attachment having been made upon the goods which Mr. Parks was in possession of, for the benefit of some of the eastern creditors. This is a replevin suit to recover possession of the goods or their value and one thousand dollars damages for the detention thereof. During the trial strenuous efforts were made to introduce evidence to show that Mr. Parks and Freudenfeld and Jelenko were conspiring to defraud the creditors, but the court ruled out the testimony, it not being proper to show the fraud of Freudenfeld and Jelenko prior to the assignment to Mr. Parks. Mr. G. G. White made a very excellent speech, in favor of the plaintiff, followed by a masterly effort on the part of Mr. Robt. Thompson for defendant, considering that the law of the [cam?] was against him. Mr. P. M. Patterson closed for Mr. Parks in his noted style. The jury retired at about 6:15 and returned at 7:30 with a verdict in favor of the plaintiff that the goods should be returned to Mr. Parks, as assignee, or that in default thereof he should recover \$7,946.20, the value of the goods, and also one thousand as damages for the detention of the same.”³⁴

This summary of the resulting replevin suit³⁵ makes no mention of why Sheriff Tucker thought that *Freudenfeld & Jelenko*’s eastern creditors were being defrauded, prompting Tucker to confiscate the company’s goods. However, the jury favored the plaintiff, D. E. Parks, assignee for *Freudenfeld*



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& Jelenko. Because Parks served as proxy, it is likely that both Freudenfeld and Jelenko left Leadville prior to the trial. What became of the business afterwards is unknown as both Freudenfeld and Jelenko prove absent from the city directories following 1880.

Nearly a year later, identical notices of forfeiture due to nonpayment for assessment work on Fred's mining claims appeared in *The Leadville Daily Herald* between January 6 and April 6 of 1882, the required posting period:

Notice of Forfeiture.

*To H. Benedick, F. Jelenko,—
Freudenfeldt, S. M. Fisher, John
Walker—You are hereby notified that
the undersigned have expended
\$201.25 on the Mary and
Resurrection lodes, both situated in
California mining district, Lake
county, Colorado, as assessment
work for the year 1881. If within
ninety days after this notice you fail
or refuse to contribute your
proportion of such expenditure as
co-owners, your interest in the above
claims will become the property of
the undersigned under section 2324
of the United States statutes.*

*W. B. Johnson,
John R. Thomas,
Max Boehmer,
L. H. Wilmot,
C. F. Gilbert,
J. U. Gabathuler,
and others.*

*(First insertion Jan. 6—last April
6.)³⁶*

This notice suggests that Fred was probably not physically present in Leadville. Between the suit and the failure to pay for his share of the assessment work, the date of his apparent departure appears to be prior to 1881.

A different mining claim document showing “Receipt No. 791”³⁷ was filed at the land office with the paperwork activity published in the *Leadville Daily Herald* on October 19, 1882. The details of the receipt showed Fred Jelenko had partnered with Joseph Freudenfeld, William McClellen, Willard Teller, and Henry M. Teller³⁸ for the transferred ownership of the *Arctic Lode*.³⁹

No other records were found regarding Fred Jelenko in Leadville following 1882. However, the above mining claim for the Arctic Lode does suggest Fred had additional business in Leadville.



¹ The first newspaper in Leadville started in late 1878, and the first city directory was not until 1879.

² Geo. B. Robinson owned the Robinson building and ran a grocery. Commercial buildings of the time often contained multiple spaces leased out to other businesses even though the main sign on the building might only indicate a single business.

³ WM Clark, WA Root And HC Anderson. *Clark, Root and Co's First Annual City Directory of Leadville and Business Directory of Carbonateville, Kokomo and Malta for 1879*. (Denver, CO: Daily Times Steam Printing House And Book Manufactory.1879). P133.

⁴ Manitou Springs is a Colorado town situated approximately 120 miles southeast of Leadville close by Colorado Springs.

⁵ Christlieb, *Memorial Page for James Thomas Thurlow (13 Nov 1831–25 Dec 1878)*, 7234586. Find a Grave.com. 2019.

⁶ Because of James Thomas Thurlow's death in December 25 of 1878 and the new partnership of Fred Jelenko with Joseph Freudenfeld (mentioned in the next section), 1878 would likely be the latest date Fred has a solo business in the Robinson building.

⁷ Refer to Freudenfeld biography located at <http://jewishleadville.org/freudenfeld.html>

⁸ One page in the directory mistakenly stated that the businesses was located at "East" Chestnut.

⁹ Clark, Root and Anderson. Denver, CO. 1879. Pp 59, 85, 176. .

¹⁰ *Freights on the Road*. (Leadville, CO: The Daily Chronicle. Monday, March 23, 1879). Page 3.

¹¹ *Wanted*. (Leadville, CO: The Daily Chronicle. Monday, June 9, 1879). Page 1.

¹² *The Fire Boys*. (Leadville, CO: The Daily Chronicle. Friday, January 31, 1879). Page 1.

¹³ Kokomo was a small town approximately ten miles north of Leadville. It is currently flooded as a tailings pond for the Climax mining operations.

¹⁴ *A Large Funeral*. (Leadville, CO: The Daily Chronicle. Wednesday, July 16, 1879). Page 1.

¹⁵ *The Mayorality*. (Leadville, CO: The Daily Chronicle, Wednesday, May 28, 1879). Page 1.

¹⁶ The 1879 city directory for Leadville included pages of history for surrounding towns. For Kokomo, the history section included that Captain Amos C. Smith's "intention at this time was not to establish a town, but simply to erect a base or center, from which supplies might be distributed to the mines of the [The Ten Mile Land and Mining Company]" where he was the officer and agent. Ultimately, the location had advantages and effort was made to survey and plat 320 acres to establish a town. Captain Smith was elected as the Recorder for the developing town.

¹⁷ Clark, Root and Anderson. Denver, CO. 1879. P17-20.

¹⁸ Trigeminal neuralgia is a chronic pain condition that affects the trigeminal nerve, which carries sensation from your face to your brain. See Mayo Clinic description: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/trigeminal-neuralgia/symptoms-causes/syc-20353344>

¹⁹ *A Large Funeral*. (Leadville, CO: The Daily Chronicle. Wednesday, July 16, 1879). Page 1.

²⁰ Historical Research Cooperative. *Original Leadville Cemetery: November 1877 – November 1879*. (Leadville, Colorado: Historical Research Cooperative, 1982).

²¹ *City of the Dead*. (Leadville, CO: The Daily Chronicle, Wednesday, May 28, 1879). Page 1.

²² *A New Cemetery*. (Leadville, CO: The Daily Chronicle. Friday, June 6, 1879). Page 1.

²³ The "Mount Hope Cemetery" referenced in the newspaper article was an attempt to establish a new cemetery. However, the proposed cemetery apparently was never built.

²⁴ The listing of interments for the Evergreen Cemetery shows that those who died before November 8 of 1879 were moved from their original locations and reinterred at the Evergreen Cemetery starting in 1880. See: Nancy Manly. *Who's Where In Leadville's Evergreen Cemetery*. Leadville, CO; USA. Historical Research Co-operative.1981.

²⁵ *Evergreen Cemetery*. (Leadville, CO: Leadville Weekly Herald. Saturday, November 8, 1879). Page 3.

²⁶ For more information on the *Hebrew Benevolent Association*, Please visit:

<http://www.jewishleadville.org/hebrewbenevolentassociation.html>

²⁷ For more information on Joseph Samuels and his family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/samuels.html>

²⁸ For more information on Ben Loeb and his family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/loeb.html>

²⁹ For more information on the Jacobs surname and their time in Leadville, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/jacobs.html>

³⁰ Don L., and Jean Harvey Griswold,. *History of Leadville and Lake County, Colorado: From Mountain Solitude to Metropolis*. Vol. 1. Denver, CO: Colorado Historical Society, 1996. P382.

³¹ Hebrew Cemetery (Leadville, Lake County, Colorado), *Gustave Jelenko Grave Marker, B-6-3*; Read and photographed by Robert-George de Stolfe, August 27, 2014.

³² Corbett, Hoye and Ballenger. Leadville, CO. 1880. P203.

³³ *Local Jottings*. (Leadville, CO: Leadville Daily Herald. Sunday, January 9, 1881). Page 4.

³⁴ *District Court*. (Leadville, CO: Leadville Daily Herald. Friday, January 21, 1881). Page 4.



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³⁵ A “replevin suit” is one that attempts to reclaim actual property—instead of financial damages—that was wrongfully taken or detained, to have actual property returned to the rightful owner.

³⁶ *Notice of Forfeiture*. (Leadville, CO: Leadville Daily Herald. Tuesday, February 7, 1882). Page 3.

³⁷ *Land Office*. (Leadville, CO: Leadville Daily Herald, Thursday, October 19, 1882). Page 4.

³⁸ The Teller family is significant to Colorado history. Henry Teller was a U.S. Senator, and Teller County, which is named after them, is just west of Colorado Springs. For more information, please visit: <http://files.usgwarchives.net/co/gilpin/bios/tellerhm.txt>

³⁹ A plat survey of the *Artic Lode* signed on June 9 of 1882 provided a very long boundary description, along with a scaled drawing of the lode, showing the new ownership of the claim noted in the receipt. Please see: United States General Land Office. *Number 5971. Mineral Certificate, Number 791*. (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of the Interior. 1882).Page 349-354.



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