



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information

Klein

Leopold “Leo” Klein
Born: June 10, 1860
Died:

Mrs. Klein
(*Name and information unknown*)

Johnnie Klein
Born: Leadville, 1892
Died: Denver, 1893

Leo Klein was an accomplished musician and composer. His songs were played world over and performed by some of the biggest conductors of the era, most notably John Phillip Sousa who recorded Leo’s “Fidelity March” in the 1890s, and again by the United States’ Marine Corps Band under the direction of William Santelmann in the early 1900s. It is likely that Leo was a German immigrant as some of his compositions were adapted and recorded by popular artists there,¹ but there are no records of his origin. Leo likely arrived in Leadville in 1879 where he initially took a position as a clerk at the McMorran & Taylor drug store at 43 Harrison Avenue where he also resided.² Records for Leo between 1879 and 1887 are sporadic. He did marry sometime before 1887, though his wife’s name does not appear in records other than to be identified as “Mrs. Klein”. The spelling of Leo’s last name also is occasionally misspelled in records before he achieved a degree of notoriety in the late 1880s, sometimes appearing in documents as “Kline”.

In 1887, Leo was teaching music, primarily piano, from his residence at 612 Harrison Avenue,³ and this continued when he moved residences again in 1888 to 202 West 5th Street.⁴ By 1891, Leo was fully invested in his music career, performing regularly at R.C. Cummings Saloon at 114 West 2nd Street⁵ while teaching piano and organ⁶ from his residence at 208 West 4th Street.⁷ In 1892, his first sheet music composition, “Pretty May-Bells

Schottlesche”, was published and sold locally at Kolch’s Drug Store.⁸ Earlier that year, Leo and his wife had their only known child, Johnnie, who would die in Denver of unknown causes on August 20, 1893.⁹

In 1894, Leo moved his home and business to 144 West 6th Street¹⁰ where he remained until 1897 when he moved again to 116 West 6th Street.¹¹ By 1898, Leo had become quite popular as a musician and teacher and finally opened a music store and rehearsal studios at 708 Harrison Avenue¹² and found a new home at 122 West 6th Street.¹³ Leo published his second major composition, “March of the Sand Eaters”, which was released on June 21, 1898. Reviews of the song in local newspapers described it as a “...weird Oriental march.”¹⁴

By 1899, Leo Klein’s career was blossoming. By this time Leo began to conduct orchestras for events around the city that included the Armory Dance on September 14¹⁵ and the Conductor’s Masquerade Ball at Armory Hall on November 16.¹⁶ His highly successful music store diversified into home entertainment by selling the latest line of Gramophones, which he demonstrated with regular concerts featuring the newly developed flat-disk recording format that we are familiar with today as opposed to earlier models which used a hollow wax cylinder.¹⁷ His residential address changed again, this time to 129 West 6th Street.¹⁸

In 1900, Leo moved again to 109 East 9th Street,¹⁹ and again in 1902 to 114 West 6th Street, his last recorded Leadville address.²⁰ His fortieth birthday party was a grand affair that featured performances by some of the more renowned musical acts in the region.²¹ Throughout the early 1900s, Leo continued to perform and conduct at a variety of musical events in the city²² while teaching his pupils from his shop and studio. By 1907, Leo was the house pianist for the silent movie presentations at the Imperial Theater.²³ It is presumed that he moved to Denver but this has not been confirmed.



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¹ “A Popular Musician”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. January 1, 1900. P14.

² 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”. *Daily Times Steam Printing House And Book Manufactory*; Denver, CO: USA. 1879. P91.

³ TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. “Corbet, and Ballenger’s 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 1887”. *Corbet and Ballenger Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1887. P165.

⁴ JH Ballenger and Richards. “Ballenger & Richard’s Ninth 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 1888”. *Corbet and Ballenger and Richards Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1888. P161.

⁵ JH Ballenger and Richards. “Ballenger & Richard’s Twelfth 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 1891”. *Corbet and Ballenger and Richards Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1891. P98.

⁶ “Music Instruction”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. January 29, 1891.

⁷ Ballenger and Richards. Leadville, CO; USA. 1891. P157.

⁸ “Pretty May-Bells Schottlsche”. *Herald Democrat*. February 2, 1892. P5.

⁹ “Died”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. August 27, 1893. P5.

¹⁰ JH Ballenger 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 1894”. *Corbet and Ballenger and Richards Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1894. P157.

¹¹ JH Ballenger and Richards. “Ballenger & Richard’s Eighteenth 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 1897”. *Corbet and Ballenger and Richards Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1897. P175.

¹² “Building Up His Class”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. September 25, 1898. P8.

¹³ JH Ballenger and Richards. “Ballenger & Richard’s Nineteenth 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”. *Corbet and Ballenger and Richards Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1898. P169.

¹⁴ “The Sand Eaters”. Leadville, Co; USA. *Herald Democrat*. June 21, 1898. P6.

¹⁵ “Concert and Ball Tonight”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. September 14, 1899. P3.

¹⁶ “For The Conductors’ Ball”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. October 29, 1899. P6.

¹⁷ “Gramophone Concert”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. March 15, 1899.

¹⁸ JH Ballenger and Richards. “Ballenger & Richard’s Twentieth 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 1899”. *Corbet and Ballenger and Richards Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1899. P185.

¹⁹ JH Ballenger and Richards. “Ballenger & Richard’s Twenty-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 1900”. *Corbet and Ballenger and Richards Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1900. P201.

²⁰ JH Ballenger and Richards. “Ballenger & Richard’s Twenty-Third 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 1902”. *Corbet and Ballenger and Richards Publishers*. Leadville, CO; USA. 1902. P200.

²¹ “Prof. Klein’s Birthday”. Leadville, Co; USA. *Herald Democrat*. June 11, 1900. P3.

²² “The Dance Of The Elks”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. February 16, 1897. P5.

²³ “Imperial Theater”. Leadville, CO; USA. *Herald Democrat*. October 8, 1907. P9.



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