



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Rice

Solomon Rice
Born: Unknown
Died: Unknown
Married to: Mrs. Rice

Mrs. Solomon Rice
Born: Unknown
Died: Unknown
Married to: Solomon Rice

Unknown Rice Child
Born: Unknown
Died: Unknown

Little is known of Solomon (“Sol” in newspapers) Rice and his family before their arrival in Leadville. His place of origin, age, children’s and wife’s names, and his later movements were not forthcoming in existing records. However, during his time in Leadville, he was well documented in newspapers. Sol was a successful diamond merchant during the early and middle 1880s and a socially and politically active member of the city. He participated in the formation of the Jewish community, and partook in many of the group’s early events, including the opening ceremonies of the new Temple Israel in 1884.

Sol first appeared in a Leadville newspaper in October of 1880 as part of a dance organized by the “Standard Club”. According to the roster of attendees, the club was made up of a many of Leadville’s Jewish community with Sands, Loeb, Baer, Hauser, Londoner, Shoenberg Kahn, and Schloss among the most prominent.¹

The following spring, Sol attended the inauguration of President Garfield in Washington, according to an announcement in the *Leadville Daily Herald*.² In addition to his support for the Republican cause, Sol was also sent to the inauguration from Leadville as a representative of the Pitkin Guards militia. Sol was also listed in the notice as an employee of the jewelry shop H.S Brodie & Co. that spring,

although he does not appear in the directory until 1882. With this evidence, it is clear that Sol started working in an established shop before he opened his own business in 1882. In addition, it is clear that individuals do not always appear in the city directories the same year they arrive in the city.

During the spring and summer of 1882, Sol traveled to New York, California and Denver as part of an effort to collect merchandise for his new store.³ In the spring he took a trip around Colorado and rather boldly reported, “...everything as being dull, and says Leadville is the liveliest town he has been in.” A few weeks later he was reported as nearly recovered from a weeklong illness.⁴ Before a trip to New York in October, the *Leadville Daily Herald* reported, “...if his girl will have him he will keep house on his return.”⁵ The identity of this girl is unknown. Sol did open a successful diamond store that December and was often reported in newspapers as settled and content over the next few years. The first advertisements (right) for Sol’s diamond store appeared in Leadville newspapers during the first week of December. As the advertisement indicates, his store was located above Monheimer’s clothing store at 321 Harrison; the southwest corner of West 4th.⁶ His place of residence in 1882 was not listed.

During 1883, Sol continued to do business at 321 Harrison Avenue and was listed as a resident of the Union block; a three story commercial/residential structure a few doors south of the store. In March, Sol decided to run for county treasurer and was listed as a leading candidate for the republican nomination, next to Frank Bower.⁷ A few weeks later however his position was less favorable. The *Leadville Daily Herald* reported he had received only one vote in the informal primary and none in the formal session.⁸ While his political career did not take off, his business was brisk. In a March 25 issue of the *Leadville Daily Herald*, Sol’s stock of goods and his overall operation was described with unmitigated high opinion. Among his products were, “...diamond bangles, band and chain



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bracelets, full and half set cameo and turquoise rings, lace pins, Roman and bead neck chains, vest guards and chatelaines [necklace pendant], intaglio [engraved] rings, gold and silver thimbles and rare and unique filagree work."⁹ At the end of March, Sol participated in the banquet which celebrated the end of the Palace of Fashion fire trial.¹⁰ Among David May, Mannie Hyman, and Joseph Monheimer, Sol was listed as part of the "Committee of Arrangements".¹¹ Regular advertisements in Leadville newspapers indicated that Sol continued to do brisk business throughout 1883.

Athletic clubs were popular and numerous during the Victorian era. In addition to the Turner Halle, other athletic clubs vied for attendance and funding. The simply named "Leadville Athletic Club" recruited a trainer for one year and provided a salary of \$5,000. In addition, they planned to stage an exhibition at the summit of Mt. Massive on New Year's Day, 1884. In *A History of Lake County*, Griswold speculates that the Mt. Massive "exhibition" was a joking prod at the enthusiasm of the club. Sol Rice was listed among the "preferred members", the significance of which is lost to time.¹² In November, the polished items in his store were attractively described in the *Leadville Daily Herald*.¹³ At the end of November, it was reported that a fellow jeweler named Ed Stein from New York had joined Sol at the jewelry store as a second salesman.¹⁴

In December, much of the Leadville Jewish community participated in a Chanukah celebration arranged by the Hebrew Benevolent Association at City Hall on East 6th Street. Sol and his wife were listed among the members of the community who took part in the event.¹⁵ The day after the Chanukah ball, another positive review of the store appeared in a newspaper, touting the store's lively business.¹⁶

By January of 1884, the Leadville Jewish community was beginning to organize around the idea of constructing a temple for worship. The first meeting to discuss the specifics took place on January 13th, and the organization elected leaders and formulated a plan. A subsequent meeting on January 15th took place regarding the construction committee and the by-laws of the organization, which took place at "...the rooms of Mr. Sol Rice..."¹⁷ These rooms were likely his residence in room 20 of the Union Block, where he was listed in the 1883 directory. The same week as the meeting to discuss the new temple, an interesting insight into Sol's store was published,

"Notwithstanding the fact that the era is decidedly utilitarian, and that the average lady or gentleman prefers something serviceable to that of a gaudy trapping, Santa Claus persists in dispensing jewels, and during his last visit left a stock of precious gems, among which were the following furnished by Mr. Sol Rice..."

The extensive list of recipients includes A. V. Hunter, C. C. Davis, the Monheimers, David May and the Shoenbergs. All twenty six items listed as sold were multi-hundred dollar brooches, watches, rings, in addition to a one hundred year old tea set. Total sales, according to the notice and added by this author, were \$6,608.¹⁸ Depending on method of calculation, this could equate to over \$160,000 in today's dollar.¹⁹

One of the best attended of Leadville's Purim Masquerade Balls took place during the middle of March 1884. Sol and his wife were among the extended list of patrons who reveled at the event which took place at East 6th Street's City Hall. Mrs. Rice was listed with a "Chamber Maid" costume, while Sol's costume was not listed.²⁰ In July, Mrs. Rice returned from a visit to her parents in New York City which is the only evidence of her point of origin found by this researcher. On September 20,



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the new Temple Israel opened for Rosh Hashona services. Sol spoke some of the first official words to the congregation as part of this ceremony as detailed by the *Leadville Herald Democrat*,

“...Before the opening of the scriptures, Mr. Sol Rice addressed the meeting briefly as follows, ‘In the name of Mrs. M. H. Monheimer, who is about to retire from the position of president of the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society, permit me to present the congregation with the silver ‘yad’ which may guide you in searching after truth in the holy scriptures.’

Mr. Rice presented the ‘yad’ which is an instrument in the shape of a hand, and which was received with the proper acknowledgements...”

Rabbi Morris Sachs followed the yad presentation with the first Rosh Hoshana service at Temple Israel.²¹

Sol invested in the Parnell mine located in South Mosquito Gulch east of Leadville during 1884. In a short notice, Sol explained to a reporter that “good ore was in sight” and the drifts had been recently pumped of water.²² October of 1884 brought the national election season to Leadville. In addition to many Jewish merchants in Leadville, including David May, the Monheimers, and Shoenbergs, Sol Rice signed a pledge to form a German language Republican club to support the candidacy of James Blaine and his running mate J. Logan. The first meeting was scheduled to take place at the Turner Hall and called on other German-Americans to join the effort.²³ On the same page, Sol’s name also appears in a separate notice as a signatory member of the “Young Men’s Blaine-Logan Club”; leaving no doubt of Sol’s allegiance during the election season of 1884.²⁴ The two clubs, one German and one for young men, were unrelated and only a few

names overlap between the two suggesting Sol’s unique energy and enthusiasm for the cause.

An extended and elaborate service for Yom Kippur took place at Temple Israel during the beginning of October. Sol and Ike Baer are listed as the two basso members of the choir. In addition, Sol was listed as the reader of Psalms 18, followed by David May with a reading of Isaiah 40 and 42.²⁵ An insight into the Sol’s family life is revealed in a short notice published in November which reads, “That Sol Rice is the happiest daddy in Leadville.”²⁶ The identity and details surrounding this child are unknown. The same issue also reveals that Sol is thankful for “...his new and elegant quarters.”²⁷ This notice is a reference to his early November move to a new storefront at 425 Harrison Avenue; the Union block.²⁸

Despite his successes and prominence in 1884, the following year’s newspapers reveal little. An advertisement for the diamond store in the Union Block appeared in a January 1st issue.²⁹ Two days later, a *Carbonate Chronicle* social column asked to see “A happier man behind a baby carriage than Colonel Sol Rice”³⁰ This is the first time “Colonel” is used in connection with his name and is likely a reference to his time spent in the local militia, the Pitkin Guard. Further references to Sol Rice were not found by this researcher in Leadville newspapers. He does not appear in the Colorado State Census of 1885, nor does he reappear in the City Directory for the year. His burial place, further movements, and other details of his life are unknown.



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¹ “The Standard Club” Leadville Daily Herald, October 24, 1880 p. 4

² “All Hands Around” Leadville Daily Herald, February 13, 1881 p. 3

³ “Personal Paragraphs” Leadville Daily Herald, November 26, 1882 p. 3

“Articles” Leadville Daily Herald, September 7, 1882 p. 4

“Personal” Leadville Daily Herald, November 25, 1882 p. 4

“Personal” Leadville Daily Herald, May 11, 1882 p. 4

⁴ “Splinters” Leadville Daily Herald, April 28, 1882 p. 1

⁵ “Social Solstice” Leadville Daily Herald, October 8, 1882 p. 4

⁶ For more information on the Monheimers, see <http://www.jewishleadville.org/monheimer.html>

⁷ “Political Pointers” Leadville Daily Herald, March 11, 1883 p. 4

⁸ “The Nominations” Leadville Daily Herald, March 18, 1883 p. 4

⁹ “A Pretty Picture” Leadville Daily Herald, March 25, 1883 p. 4

¹⁰ For more information on this pivotal event, see <http://www.jewishleadville.org/palaceoffashiontrial.html>

¹¹ “A Banquet” Leadville Daily Herald, March 22, 1883 p. 1

¹² Griswold 1203

¹³ “Alive” Leadville Daily Herald, November 18, 1883 p. 1

¹⁴ “Personal Points” Leadville Daily Herald, November 29, 1883 p. 1

¹⁵ “A Brilliant Affair” Carbonate Chronicle, December 29, 1883 p. 12

¹⁶ “Housekeepers” Leadville Daily Herald, December 30, 1883 p. 1

¹⁷ Griswold 1342

¹⁸ “Holiday Presents” Carbonate Chronicle, January 12, 1884 p. 12

¹⁹ Samuel H. Williamson, “Seven Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1774 to present,” *Measuring Worth*, 2018.

²⁰ “Tuesday Night’s Ball” Carbonate Chronicle, March 15, 1884 p. 5

²¹ “The Hebrew New Year” Leadville Daily Herald, September 21, 1884 p. 4

²² “Mining Notes and Personals” Leadville Daily Herald, September 7, 1884 p. 3

²³ “For Blaine and Logan” Leadville Daily Herald, October 10, 1884 p. 4

²⁴ “Young Men to the Fore” Leadville Daily Herald, October 10, 1884 p. 4

²⁵ “Harbeth Tshuva” Carbonate Chronicle, October 4, 1884 p. 4

²⁶ “Positive Facts” Carbonate Chronicle, November 29, 1884 p. 1

²⁷ “Why They Give Thanks” Carbonate Chronicle, November 29, 1884 p. 3

²⁸ “Removal” Leadville Daily Herald, November 1, 1884 p. 4

²⁹ “Advertisements” Leadville Daily Herald, January 1, 1885 p. 1

³⁰ “The Chronicle Would Like to Know...” Carbonate Chronicle, January 3, 1885 p. 8



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