



Temple Israel FOUNDATION

Biographical Information Sheet

Kuku

Abraham Kuku

Born: 1858. Austria.

Died: January 4, 1904. Commerce City, Colorado.

Fannie Kuku

Born:

Died:

Minnie Kuku

Born: 1883

Died:

The date of Abraham Kuku's arrival in the United States is unclear. In fact, the unusual surname and somewhat frequent misspellings of *Kuku* pose particular challenges in uncovering information about Abraham, his wife, Fannie or their daughter, Minnie. Abraham's naturalization records are incomplete and do not include birth or arrival dates, but he did attest that his country of origin was Austria.¹ Data from the Jewish burial registry confirms both the year and country of his birth.² Abraham, who likely came to Leadville during the latter portion of 1885, may have been in Colorado prior to this. He is not listed in the *1885 Colorado State Census*, which was conducted in June of that year,³ and the family is undocumented outside of Colorado at any point before 1886 or after 1904.

During 1886, Abraham was first recorded in the Leadville city directory employed as a tailor by Abraham Flaks.⁴ However, it's more probable that he was employed by Flaks' brother Sam, who had started his own tailoring shop. Abraham Flaks was working as a tailor for the Ed Jackson operation at this time.⁵ Abraham Kuku resided at 135 W. 4th Street, a few doors down from Sam Flaks' shop,⁶ and records show he was continually employed as a tailor there for the duration of his first Leadville stint from 1886 until 1890.⁷

Abraham and his family arrived in Leadville together. Although it is unclear how many members existed within the Kuku household, there is reasonable evidence that wife Fannie and daughter Minnie were present in Leadville during this period. Minnie, who attended Leadville's Central School during the 1889-1890 school year, was likely born in the early 1880s.⁸ The family changed addresses with relative frequency in Leadville, living at 209½ E. 6th Street during 1887,⁹ 113 S. Harrison in 1888,¹⁰ and 130 E. 3rd throughout 1889.¹¹

On February 5, 1890, Minnie attended the tenth birthday party for Sarah Runner at her parents' home in Denver.¹² It's probable that the family had relocated to the Mile High City by this time. While they are not recorded in any directories during 1890, they appear there during 1891 as living on 1427 9th Street.¹³ Apparently the Kukus remained in Denver until 1902, when they reemerged briefly in Leadville.¹⁴ Minnie was last recorded in Denver employed as a clerk at the vaunted Golden Eagle¹⁵ dry goods store chain owned by Jewish-Bavarian immigrant Leopold Guldman who also had connections to Leadville's history.¹⁶

Abraham then returned to Leadville in a new role. Although his documentation in Denver still records him working as a tailor during 1901, the following year he opened his own dry goods storefront within his residence at 200 E. 4th Street.¹⁷ It is reasonably certain that this venture proved unsuccessful for the Kukus; by 1903 Anna Jones and Ella Carey had assumed proprietorship of Abraham's store.¹⁸ The Kukus returned to Denver, where he took up the position of tailor for the Appel-Ziska firm. This was the last substantiated Leadville address for the family. However, on January 7, 1904, Fannie Kuku was reported to be ill and confined to the Leadville home of Richard Hagadorn at 127 W. 4th Street.¹⁹ Whether the rest of the Kuku family was in Leadville at this time, why Fannie was at the Hagadorn home and any further details about their illness, potential recovery or possible expiration are unclear. In fact, aside from this note, Fannie and



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Minnie effectively elude records in the following years.

The only clue of the Kukus' fate is another mention of Richard Hagadorn on January 29, 1904, noting that his health was "slightly" improved after battling his illness for four weeks.²⁰ There is no mention of Fannie at this point and no Kuku has been interred in any Leadville cemetery. This is the only record that may help explain Abraham's demise, which occurred in Commerce City (Denver metropolitan area), Colorado, on January 4, 1904.²¹



¹ *Naturalization Records*. National Archives at Denver, Broomfield, Colorado.

² JewishGen, comp. *JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR)* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008.

³ “General Information on the Census”. Census Information and Holdings. History Colorado. 2023.

<https://www.historycolorado.org/census-information-holdings>

⁴ To learn more about Abraham and Samuel Flaks, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/flaks.html>

⁵ Jeffrey P. Grant. “Flaks”. Leadville, CO: Temple Israel Foundation. 2023.

⁶ TB Corbett and JH Ballenger. *Corbet, and Ballenger’s Seventh 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 1886*. (Leadville, CO: Corbet and Ballenger Publishers). 1886. P119 & 162.

⁷ JH Ballenger and Richards. *Ballenger & Richard’s Eleventh 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 1890*. (Leadville, CO: Ballenger and Richards Publishers.1890). P167.

⁸ *An Excellent Showing*. Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat. March 2, 1890. P2.

⁹ 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*. (Leadville, CO: Corbet and Ballenger Publishers. 1887). P167.

¹⁰ 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*. (Leadville, CO: Ballenger and Richards Publishers.1888). P163.

¹¹ JH Ballenger and Richards. *Ballenger & Richard’s Tenth 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 1889*. (Leadville, CO: Ballenger and Richards Publishers). 1889. P189.

¹² *Here And There*. Denver, CO: The Rocky Mountain News. February 12, 1899. P18.

¹³ JH Ballenger and Richards. *Ballenger & Richard’s Eleventh Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City of Denver for 1890*. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Internet Archive. 2011). P823.

¹⁴ 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*. (Leadville, CO: Ballenger and Richards Publishers.1902). P203.

¹⁵ JH Ballenger and Richards. *Ballenger & Richard’s Twenty-ninth Annual City Directory: Containing a Complete List of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms etc. in The City of Denver for 1901*. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Internet Archive 2011). P809.

¹⁶ To learn more about Leopold Henry Goldman and his family, please visit: <http://jewishleadville.org/goldman.html>

¹⁷ Ballenger and Richards. Leadville, CO; USA. 1902. Pp 203 & 367.

¹⁸ JH Ballenger and Richards. *Ballenger & Richard’s Twenty-Fourth 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 1903*. (Leadville, CO: Ballenger and Richards Publishers.1903). P358.

¹⁹ *Personal Mention*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat). January 7, 1904. P2.

²⁰ *Personal Mention*. (Leadville, CO: Herald Democrat). January 29, 1904. P2.

²¹ *Find a Grave*. [Database and Images]. “Memorial page for Abe Kuku (1858–4 Jan 1904). Citing Rose Hill Cemetery, Commerce City, Adams County, Colorado, USA;



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