



Infant Koko

Born: December 25, 1887, (Lake County) Colorado

Died: December 25, 1887, (Lake County) Colorado

The affiliations of a newborn identified only as “Infant Koko,” interred in Leadville’s historic Hebrew cemetery on Christmas day, 1887,¹ are a mystery. This baby has no known familial connections. There is a “Peter Koko,” an employee of the Arkansas Valley Smelter who appears in the 1890 Leadville city directory,² but the probability that this person was Jewish or related to the “Infant Koko” is almost nil. Research reveals that Meyer Koko of Queens, New York, who died in 1916, was the only person carrying the legal surname of “Koko” in the United States during this era.³ Also, it's unlikely that this uncommon surname was the newborn’s birth name.

It is quite probable that “Peter Koko” was recorded only once in Leadville with a coincidental alias and was totally unrelated to the “Infant Koko.”⁴ The best explanation for the baby’s unusual identifier is that he was stillborn and therefore unnamed. His moniker likely refers to his birth in nearby Kokomo, Colorado, sometimes abbreviated in local newspapers as “Kok’o”.⁵ A remote possibility is that the child was named after the wildly popular character in the 1885 opera *The Mikado*, which had achieved international acclaim by this time.⁶

¹ *Find a Grave*. [Database and Images]. “Memorial Page for Infant Koko (unknown–25 Dec 1887)”. Find a Grave Memorial ID [18472278](#). Citing Hebrew Cemetery, Leadville, Lake County, Colorado, USA; Maintained by Lauren A. Hubberman Cohen (contributor [49135178](#))

² 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). P160.

³ JewishGen, comp. *JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR)* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008.

⁴ There are a few digital records that return a positive scan for “Peter Koko”, however, in review of these original documents the surname is not KOKO, but other misidentified surnames or they are not from the correct time period.

⁵ *To Arrive Tonight*. (Leadville, CO: Leadville Daily Evening Chronicle). April 16, 1879. P1.

⁶ *Mr. Murray’s Opinion*. (Leadville, CO: Leadville Daily Evening Chronicle). June 2, 1887. P3.



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Mr. Murray's Opinion. Leadville, CO: Leadville Daily Evening Chronicle. June 2, 1887.

To Arrive Tonight. Leadville, CO: Leadville Daily Evening Chronicle. April 16, 1879.

AUTHOR: Jeffrey P. Grant

EDITOR: William Korn & Andrea Jacobs

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