

Acknowledgements and sources

This covers a set of documents intended to enable students of the Cotopaxi pioneers to examine the primary and secondary documents regarding the colony. They are provided with annotations, cross references and an index. In addition the "Cotopaxi Papers" include a summary of findings and a collection of quantitative material, including demographic and financial data, plus a paper on mining employment and a paper on historiography. These are identified and acknowledged as follows:

Document	Principal providers of source material
CP-1 Summary of findings	As below
CP-2 Quantitative material	Generally as below plus Adam Fagin and Leah Klocek, Denver, Colorado, on behalf of author; and Jenny Moore Lowe, Cañon City, Colorado as published at http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/cotopaxi/land.html ; and http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/cotopaxi/family-names.html
CP-3 Schwarz. 29 July 1882	Andrew Eason, at that time of Bristol, England; and Rivka Schiller, New York City, on behalf of author.
CP-4 Tuska. c5 August 1882	Professor Adam Rovner, University of Denver, Colorado, in correspondence with author.
CP-5 Saltiel. 19 October 1882	As CP-4
CP-6 Schwarz. 23 October, 1882	Moshe Shaltiel, Miami, Florida, in correspondence with author.
CP-7 Saltiel, 27 December 1882	Author
CP-8 Kohn and Wirkowski. 5 January 1883	Leah Klocek, Denver, Colorado, on behalf of author.
CP-9 Meyer Hart. 8 February 1883	As CP-6
CP-10 Henry. 15 February 1883	As CP-8
CP-11 Schwarz, 2 March 1883	As CP-8
CP-12 Nussbaum, 13 March 1883	As CP-8
CP-13 Roberts. 1941	As CP-6
CP-14 Satt. 1950	Published by Nelson Moore, Cotopaxi Colorado, at http://www.cotopaxi-colony.com/flora-jane-satt-thesis.htm
CP-15 Shpall, 1950	As CP-8
CP-16 Gulliford. 1953	As CP-6
CP-17 The Bardine Assignment	Jenny Moore Lowe, Cañon City, Colorado, in correspondence with author.
CP-18 Historiography	As above, plus Yehuda Aharon Horwitz and Stephanie Ginensky, Jerusalem, Israel.
Index to CP-3 to CP-16	Compiled by Nic Nicholas, London, England.

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Generally

This text is taken to be definitive and appears in *the American Israelite* of 2 March 1883, immediately before an undated letter from Julius Schwarz, CP-11.

The central aspect of the historiography of this letter is its neglect. It was overlooked by Roberts (CP-13) and Satt (CP-14) although it is referred to by Shpall (CP-15), who wrote at exactly the same time as the latter.

It was then extracted together with selections from the letter from Kohn and Wirkowski, (CP-7), in the *Rocky Mountain Jewish Historical Notes* of June 1978 but only as an illustration of the nativism of Jews already resident in the US in the face of arrivals from Russia.

The records of the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center in Cañon City, Colorado, show that on 20 August 1987 they received a donation from Flora Jane Satt. This included her thesis, a copy of the June 1978 *RMJHN*, and copies of the letter from Schwarz (CP-11); and Nussbaum (CP-12). The latter was annotated in manuscript with the text of the one-sentence report from the *American Israelite* of 23 May 1883, stating "The settlement in Cotopaxi Col., has been abandoned and all the colonists have gone to other places."

The material from CP-7 and this document collected in the *RMJHN* contains *lacunae*, which exclude those parts of the originals which tend to demolish Satt's thesis. This means that the effect of her donation was to provide locally available material which supported her thesis and to exclude material which did not. This looks bad, but the evidence indicates that Satt acted innocently.

She was 63 at the time and may be taken to have been clearing house of material accumulated during her working life. Her donation included several pages of microfilm prints with manuscript annotations. Those containing Schwarz' letter give no clue of the collocation of the original with this document. In addition, her thesis included figures on lumber costs and miners' wages which differ from those herein, making it unlikely that she had seen it at the time of her thesis.

In any event, this is the first occasion when this letter has been fully examined with respect to its underlying subject matter.

To modern ears, Henry seems pompous and some of his remarks grate. Even so, we need to bear in mind that he was on his mettle, up against Herman Silver, one of the most formidable Republican politicians in the West.

New York, February 15, 1883

Messrs. H. Silver and George H. Kohn,

Committee, Denver, Col.:

GENTLEMEN

I am in receipt of your favor of 5th inst., covering the report of the special committee appointed by the Jews of your city to visit our colony at Cotopaxi.

This report has had the immediate attention of the Colonization Committee of our society, with a result which I will endeavor to set forth in this communication.

It is evident, that while Mr. Julius Schwarz's report has taken too rosy-colored a view of the prospects of the Cotopaxi people, your committee has erred on the other side. He derived his experience during the summer and a five months' residence there, your committee took the depth of winter, and a very few hours (not twelve, we are informed,) to arrive at their conclusions – and probably because of this very hurried investigation – they have reported as

Line 28

The "very few hours (not twelve, we are assured)", conveys that Henry has been briefed by Saltiel; as does page 6, lines 6 and 7, with the short interval indicating exchanges of cable.

But like Kohn in CP-7, page 3, lines 19 to 21 (and for similar reasons) something of a cheap shot with only slightly over eleven hours of visible light at the end of January.

1 facts many things that we know to be erroneous, and which upset completely the entire faith we
2 should desire to give to so very well written and forcible a literary production.

3
4 The colony at Cotopaxi was established by us at the instigation of Mr. E.H. Salteil, who
5 represented that for a limited number of families the parks near to Cotopaxi furnished abundant
6 land for the production of potatoes and other garden vegetables, which were always in demand
7 in that section of the State, while the mines and town nearby would enable able-bodied men to
8 procure work when the season of farm labor was ended.

9
10 An agreement was entered into with him for the creation of houses, etc., and the management
11 of the colony was given into his hands.

12
13 It is quite true, as your committee reports, that the society has suffered pecuniarily from this
14 arrangement, indeed, we are certain that an economy of perhaps \$2,000 could have been
15 effected by a more prudent investigation of cost, etc., and as Mr. Salteil did not carry out with
16 the expedition he promised the building of the houses for which he had already received the
17 money, we were induced to change the management. Mr. Schwarz, at first only clerk, became
18 manager, and left the colony only when the houses contracted for were certain to be completed,
19 and when he judged the colonists could get along without extraneous aid.

20
21 The colonists themselves were selected generally with a view for their fitness to their new
22 surroundings – they were not forced to go, but were told that pioneer life in this country was
23 generally a life of hardship – that to become independent industry, perseverance and courage
24 were necessary. It was explained to them that thousands of German and Irish immigrants,
25 without the fostering care of a society such as they were fortunate enough to secure, went out in
26 all directions westward, procured work, and out of the surplus of their earnings became in due
27 time land-owners and independent farmers.

28
29 Our people desired to settle on land, to found homes for themselves and families, and knew all
30 about what they had to contend with. It may read very well, therefore, to say:

Lines 4 to 8

Henry (or the newspaper's compositor) misspells Saltiel's name, but makes no bones that mining employment was always on the cards. On the other hand, "parks" looks ill-judged all round.

Lines 13 to 19

Henry skates over Saltiel's visit to New York for funds (CP--5, page 5, lines 14 and 15), offers a reason for Schwarz' departure from Colorado, but is silent on HEAS subsequent neglect

Lines 29 and 30

Henry's remarks are consistent with the agricultural idealism of the colonists. See Satt in CP-14, page 10, lines 21 to 26, page 11, lines 11 to 12, and page 35 lines 20 to 28.

1 "Theirs not to make reply,
2 Theirs not to reason why,
3 Theirs but to do and die."

4
5 But the quotation is not at all applicable to the case.

6
7 Furthermore, it seemed to us that the very nature of the land at Cotopaxi, and the kind of
8 farming required there, was specially adapted to the Russian refugee, whose previous
9 experience had been chiefly in the planting of vegetables, whose physique was less able to battle
10 with the clearing of land, and all the hardships necessarily attending settlement in the West and
11 Northwest.

12
13 There was a certainty of occasional work nearby, and, furthermore, some of our own people
14 were in the place already, and could render them a moral assistance, if nothing else. In no
15 respect, in any of these anticipations, have we been disappointed.

16
17 The possibility of the failure of the colony now is attributable to other causes.

18
19 The Russian refugee, as a rule, prefers begging of his fellow-Hebrews to expending money that
20 he has earned by his daily labor (however small that labor may be) for the supply of anything
21 beyond the commonest necessities of life. He likes to hoard his means against a rainy day, and
22 will beg for clothes and help generally, even while he has much by him, wherewith to provide for
23 his wants. Above all he has faith in the "rachmones" (compassion) of the Jewish race, which,
24 experience tells him, is never appealed to in vain. There is nothing about him of that sturdy
25 independence which has made great a less intellectual people – he whines and moans and
26 appeals for alms, when his own right arm should procure by the sweat of his brow the means of
27 subsistence for himself and family. How much he relies on this compassion is evidenced by the
28 disregard he has of all prudence in his marital relations. He marries and gets a family while
29 moaning that he has not bread to eat, and cannot earn it for himself, certain that in the end his
30 extreme selfishness will be condoned by his wealthy brethren for the sake of the wife and

Lines 7 to 11

Henry continues to buy in the over-optimism he has heard about vegetable production.

Lines 19 to 23

Henry will have learned of the colonists' mutual support fund from Schwarz, CP-6, page 16, line 18; as well as possibly Meyer Hart in CP- 8, page 3, line 8. As the president of a charity, he cannot object to the principle; rather is he registering his disapproval that the settlers are hanging onto their cash to pay Kohn (if not on contingency or *pro bono*), rather than paying down their debts to the store which threaten to lo lie at the door of HEAS.

Line 23 to page 4, line 5

Here, discord between Jewish traditions combines with the nativism on the part of earlier immigrants to the US in contemplating later arrivals.

1 children he has helped to make parties to his sad condition. This very compassion is answerable
2 for much of the trouble involved in the settlement of these people. A little hardship, such as a
3 German or Irish emigrant endures with equanimity – certain that with industry and perseverance
4 he will overcome it – is magnified by the peculiar philanthropic ideas of our people into a
5 condition of misery such as it ill befits the children of Israel to endure. Our views of comfort are
6 altogether urban – we shrink from the idea of a snow-clad land and a log cabin, even with plenty
7 of fuel at hand to make it habitable, and of all the discomforts inherent on the life of a pioneer –
8 while we take little heed of the miserable city tenements, whole families crowded into a single
9 room reeking with filth and malaria. These are to us the natural consequences of poverty, and, at
10 all events, the sufferers are at our doors, and can be kept from starvation, if from nothing else.

11
12 Instead of such a report as your committee has made, a committee sent by a German, Irish, or
13 Norweigan Emigrant Society would probably have encouraged the colonists by pointing out
14 that their present discomforts were only temporary; that with the return of spring and another
15 harvest, things would improve; that perseverance after all the expenditure of money would
16 certainly result in ultimate success; that they must try to get along with a trifle of money help to
17 the least fortunate of the settlers, which they would recommend, and that they would take care
18 that such implements and seed as they needed should be furnished along with somebody who
19 could instruct them in the necessities of the soil, etc. This committee would understand that to
20 start life in a new country is not child's play – that there are frequent disappointments and some
21 misery, but that after all, success, when obtained, opens out a vista of happiness and
22 independence to which a peddler or small artisan in a city can never reach, handicapped as he is
23 by a large family and competition by more experienced hands.

24
25 Your committee dwells on the dreadful condition of the women about to become mothers in
26 such an inhospitable clime, and amid such surroundings, and insist on removing them at once to
27 the genial soil of Denver. Although the population at Cotopaxi is scant, children have been born
28 there even among the colonists. There is a midwife there (the wife of Milchstein) who is
29 represented to be a good person, and whose services have already been availed of. Why she
30 should not be as competent now as heretofore, I am at a loss to understand, and I believe that

Lines 5 to 10

Without getting into the rights and wrongs of urban versus rural squalor, Henry's remarks remind us that 130 years later, we are so removed from pioneering conditions that our imaginations may run away with us..

Lines 25 to 29

This directly and circumstantially rebuts CP-8, page 6, lines 12 to 19.

1 the necessities of the case would have been fully covered without removal of these women to
2 Denver as proposed, by the supply of a little money to provide them with some comforts, which
3 their special condition required. The course pursued is a sure way to engender future trouble and
4 make it impossible for these people ever to become satisfied without perpetual outside aid.

5
6 There are undoubtedly a few families there who, from causes perhaps for which they are not
7 entirely responsible, cannot make anything at Cotopaxi by outside work – these should be
8 temporarily assisted, and if the new crop should demonstrate the impossibility of their
9 continuance on the farm, so as to become self-supporting, some other provision should be made
10 for them.

11
12 We know that the work at Salida would have been continuous for those that went there, had
13 some of them been willing to submit to a differential scale of wages, but those that received
14 \$1.75 per day wanted \$2.00, such as the more skillful hands obtained, and so the whole party got
15 sacked. In the mines we know that continuous work has been given to several of the men at
16 \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day – we know, too, that many of these men have money, and do not pretend
17 that they are needy – we know, too, that with the assistance proposed to be given to them for
18 the spring work, they have expressed themselves in writing (so late as the 11th January last) as
19 perfectly satisfied, predicting for themselves a hopeful future.

20
21 Your committee has, we believe, been imposed on to a certain extent, either by the Christian
22 famers, whom they have seen, or some interested parties – as to the character of the land at
23 Cotopaxi. It is not sterile, and may require in parts irrigation, which may render much labor
24 necessary. The result of last year's crop is no indication of the future. It was planted at least two
25 months later than it should have been, and froze in the ground before, or at maturing. The early
26 indications were for an abundant return of potatoes for the quantity sown and one farmer
27 realized it. If only fifteen bags of potatoes resulted from fourteen sown in one instance, it was
28 because the bulk of his crop got frozen, and not because the land was not rich enough to give a
29 larger return.
30

Lines 12 to 15

Henry's contemporaneous report of the colonists' conduct at the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in Salida authoritatively contradicts Satt's sources who recalled wages of "as much as \$3.00 a day" (CP-14, page 28, line 8). This has the effect of demolishing their representation of the railroad as the colonists' lifeline during the winter of 1882 to 1883.

Line 16

Compare Satt, CP-14, page 27, lines 16 and 17, "\$1.50 for the day shift and \$2.50 for the night shift".

Line 18

This letter has been lost, but on its face contradicts the sequence in Roberts and Satt.

Lines 21 to 24

Henry's take on faming and irrigation is decisively mistaken. Without any imposition by Christians, he may also be the wrong side of some *Yiddisher Kopfs*.

Line 27

As Henry replies to fourteen rather than four bags planted (as CP-8, page 4, line 6), we may take the larger figure as the original and the smaller as a typo peculiar to the edition of CP-8 printed in the *American Israelite* of 16 February 1883, which is otherwise taken as definitive.

1 At all events we know that other farmers in the neighborhood have succeeded without much of
2 the help given to our people, and we certainly should await another season before arriving at so
3 extreme a conclusion as that come to by your committee.

4
5 Your committee is correct in two of its strictures – that with regard to the leases of the town-lots
6 on which six houses are built, not having been executed, but the delay arose from not having
7 blanks at hand at first, and there is no question of their being executed on demand, and that
8 with regard to a competent Colorado farmer being employed to teach these people the
9 requirements of their agricultural work – and these suggestions have due weight – but we are
10 grieved to say that beyond this there is little of value in their report, while the following matters
11 can be proved to be the result of gross misrepresentations by some party or parties in Cotopaxi.

12
13 1st. The cost of a house such as is erected by the society fixed at \$100.00 is absurd. It takes about
14 5,000 feet of lumber, worth in Cotopaxi \$20.00 per thousand, to build it with, and this alone is
15 \$100.00, without labor, nails, tar paper, doors and windows or stoves; \$230.00 would be nearer
16 to the mark.

17
18 2d. The episode so touchingly expressed as to Mitkowsky plunging into the Arkansas River to
19 bring succor to his starving wife and children.

20
21 The facts are: Mitkowsky did plunge into and swim across the Arkansas River in July last, when
22 he was a single man, and had no wife or child. It was a Friday evening – he was belated and
23 desired to pass the Sabbath with his friends. A flood had carried away the bridge, he was a good
24 swimmer and took the risk. All honor to him for what he did – there was pluck in the act, and it is
25 not to be wondered at, that this man is said to be one of the best and most successful among the
26 colonists at Cotopaxi.

27
28 3d. The two men who earned for a day's work \$1.39 in moving and sawing timber for the
29 railroad.

Lines 13 and 14

Henry's quantity compares to Nussbaum's 3.500 feet (CP-12, page 3, line 4; and his cost with Satt's \$22.50 per thousand (CP-14, page 27, line 2).

CP-2, tables 6.1 to 6.6 resolve this controversy definitively, establishing that \$280 was a discounted price for houses, furnishings and utensils.

Lines 21 to 24

Mitkowsky is variously Miinkowsky or Mirkowsky This rebuttal could have come from CP-8, page 2, lines 17 to 24; or from Schwarz, CP-11, page 5, line 22 to page 6, line 1; or from Henry's Cotopaxi correspondent as page 1, line 28.

1 They did earn \$1.39, but they worked only about three hours to earn it. The company offered
2 them short work at \$1.50 per day; but they preferred to do the job by the piece. The weather was
3 so cold that they knocked off in three hours, one of the men getting his ears frozen, as your
4 committee reports.

5
6 In conclusion, I fear that more harm than good has resulted from the kind intentions of our co-
7 religionists of Denver; the morale of the colony is likely to be injured by their action, and our
8 efforts to render these colonists independent are thwarted to an extent now that it will be
9 difficult to re-establish it. We are not inclined to meet your demand for cash to help them
10 beyond a very limited sum to Grupitsky and one or two others, and our experience teaches us
11 that what one family gets the others, although not in want, will certainly demand.

12
13 We are unable to determine for the present just what to do, but we would recommend to you
14 that no steps, such as you propose, should be entertained, looking to the removal of these
15 elsewhere, unless you are prepared to take all the responsibility and expense of such a
16 movement.

17
18 The publication of the report of the committee was a most unwise proceeding. The whole press
19 of the country, especially the Jewish portion of it, will at once seize the opportunity of giving
20 expressions and advice about a matter of which they have little actual knowledge and this
21 Society will be forced against its will to publish some such statement as this I have made to put
22 the matter in its true light.

23
24 Our Society has no interest to serve; it may have made many mistakes, and this at Cotopaxi may
25 be one of them; but it was hardly courteous to publish such a document, the result of a few
26 hours' investigation, without waiting to hear from us, who have considered the matter for
27 months, as to what we thought of the conclusions arrived at.

28
29 I am, gentlemen, yours faithfully,

30 [Signed.] H.S. HENRY, President H.E.A.S.

Lines 6 to 9

Henry's remarks about the colony's demoralisation may have stemmed from the earlier exchanges described by Satt, in CP-14, page 27, lines 5 and 6. In any event, he was speaking of the colony as still operating six months later, in the *New York Herald*, of 18 July 1883.

Line 10

Grupitsky (Korpitsky, CP-2, table 39, no 2) is singled out as a middle-aged widower with infant children. Satt identifies him as one of the leaders of the colony (CP-14, page 24, line 30); and Roberts states that he was one of the two-man delegation to Denver (CP-13, page 7, line 6).

Lines 18 to 22

Henry's high-minded rebuke to Kohn is untoward, given the similar conduct of Tuska, Schwarz and Saltiel in the previous year. HEAS issued no statements on those occasions and it didn't on this.

Nor did his remarks do anything to discourage Kohn's press campaign. This eventually extended to the "Russian-Jewish" press, published in St Petersburg and elsewhere, to which he got the colonists themselves to write, as CP-8, page 1, initial comment.

Lines 24 to 27

This final sentence fully justifies Kohn's tactic by giving him what he was after: a form of words capable of construction as an invitation to direct discussions with HEAS.

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