

The Cotopaxi Papers - 3

Letter of Julius Schwarz to HEAS

HERRIT RESTAURANT AND SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES.
Cotopaxi, Col. June 29, 1882.
J. A. Karsheed, Esq.
Dear Sir:-

In order to secure a more speedy advance of the field work I have ordered the field overseer Leon Tobias, to stay at the farms for at least two days. All the farmers remain on their respective lands during the week, and return on Friday afternoon to observe the Sabbath which we keep very strictly. I have also ordered that during the night, watchmen shall walk up and down the land, so as to keep away the hundred of cows and oxen that graze on the rich pasture in the Mountain Valley. Myself rode ye today to inspect the work and I can say with conscientious assurance that the seed the New York Committee has sown will yield precious fruits.

It rains since two days, and every drop falling from the drifting clouds brings the tidings of a good success, and increases us more and more with the hope that the money invested and the work done, done with so much favor, zeal, good will and love, and done with so small means and under so many unfavorable circumstances was not in vain, and that our endeavors will not be frustrated. I found that we shall have an excellent and first class potato crop, and further I found that all the vegetables sown, spring up with surprising rapidity, thereby proving the richness of this virgin soil. I found further that the cabbage plants will yield cabbages of almost incredible largeness, and turnips in comparison to which the New

*Sent 29 June 1882
Sourced from YIVO Library, NYC
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Annotated by
Miles Saltiel

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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Publication information on back cover.

1 Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of the United States

2 Cotopaxi, Col

4 June 29, 1882

6 A. Kursheedt, Esq.

8 Dear Sir

10 In order to secure a more speedy advance of the field work, I have ordered the field overseer
11 Leon Tobias, to stay at the farms for at least two days. All the farmers remain on their respective
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15 mountain valley. Myself rode yesterday to inspect the work and I can say with conscientious
16 sureness that the seed the New York Committee has sown will yield precious fruits.

18 It rains since two days, and every drop falling from the drifting clouds brings the tidings of a
19 good success, and increases us more and more with the hope that the money invested and the
20 work done, done with so much fervor, goal, good will and love, and done with so small moans
21 and under so many unfavorable circumstances was not in vain, and that our endeavors will not
22 be frustrated.

24 I found that we shall have an excellent and first class potato crop, and further I found that all the
25 vegetables sown, spring out with surprising rapidity, thereby proving the richness of this virgin
26 soil. I found further that the cabbage plants will yield cabbages of almost incredible largeness,
27 and turnips in comparison to which the New York turnips are perfect dwarfs.

Generally

This text comes from a document found in the archives of HEAS, in the YIVO library, New York City. An article in the *New York Herald* datelined 22 July 1882 and published on 31 July 1882 contains much of the same language and sentiments. This initiated what came to be a feature of the Cotopaxi Colony, the internal politics of which were played out in the press of the day.

It is not clear if this should be regarded as one of a series of reports from Schwarz as clerk of the colony or as a one-off towards the end of his occupancy of the junior role; "usual" at page 3, line 11 suggests the former.

No other such report has been found in the New York archives; nor has any other such extract has been found in the press. On the other hand, we know that Schwarz became a frequent correspondent with the newspapers.

Whether singular or part of a series, it looks like what would now be called "collateral" for Tuska's report to HEAS. It was published coincident with the latter's inspection of Cotopaxi, arguing for co-ordination between the two men and a sophisticated approach to press-relations.

Lines 10 to 16

From this passage, we learn that the famers concerned were remote from Cotopaxi, but unfortunately no numbers or names are given.

Lines 24 to 27

It is impossible to tell if this is exaggeration or outright deception.

1 I found finally that the soil hides in itself wonderful growing powers, because cabbage, beans,
2 beets and cucumbers that have been sown on Wet Mountain Valley last week, came out on the
3 4th day after they had been sown. They came out despite of the intensive heat that threatened
4 to dry to powder every seed.

Lines 1 to 4

As the previous paragraph, this just beggars belief.

5
6 Had we had more time, and more means, we could have proved to the world that the prejudice
7 that the Jews are not fit for farming is a prejudice and nothing but a prejudice. We further would
8 have been able to repay almost every cent that the Committee has expended for the benefit of
9 this colony, and thereby been able to present at least one gratifying feature in the sad history of
10 the modern migration of nations. However, let us be contented with what we have
11 accomplished this year, and we surely will make up for the deficiency please God next year.

Lines 6 to 11

Here Schwarz comes close to subscribing to the notion (from our perspective, problematic) of agricultural redemption for the Jews.

In the *New York Herald* article, published a month later, Schwarz confines himself to writing of "partial" repayment, the stance taken by Tuska in CP-4, page 4, line 2.

12
13 One thing is proved by our efforts and that is the fact that the East has an exceedingly wrong
14 and erroneous idea of the qualities of Colorado. There is hardly one person out of every 500 in
15 the East but who believes that Colorado is a barren plain, utterly unfit for agricultural purposes.
16 It is the common belief that the State is good for nothing except mining and stock raising. It is
17 my unshaken belief and conviction that Colorado can be made one of the greatest agricultural
18 States in the Union if the proper efforts are taken to make it so.

Line 13 to page 3, line 8

These passages (broken up from a single paragraph in the original) seem out-and-out lunacy, unless seen as a slow build to the request for funds on line 5 of the next page.

19
20 One great bug bear that has gained wide circulation is, - it never rains in Colorado and
21 agriculture cannot be made a success in a desert. There never was a more egregious error than
22 this. This present season has simply verified the fact that it does rain in Colorado, but even if it
23 did not rain, farming could be persecuted (sic) successfully and profitably. The system of
24 irrigation commends itself to the farmers as the means of promoting the growth of agricultural
25 products, and there is no tiller of the soil but who will say that he prefers irrigation to natural
26 rainfalls. The system of irrigation enable the farmer to get just as much water as he needs and no
27 more, and to put it where it will do the most good. Therefore even the scarcity of natural rainfalls
28 would not operate to the detriment of Colorado and will not do as long as the means for
29 irrigation can be so easily taken advantage of.
30

1 The cost of irrigation cuts no figure in the case at all the increased production from the land
2 more than compensating for the cost of water. Myself and Tobias have carefully searched for
3 water on Wet Mountain Valley and have found in the mountains a natural reservoir that is
4 capable of binding for the time of eight months as much water as needed for the whole Wet
5 Mountain Valley. The cost of this reservoir would be in the neighborhood of 800 to 900 dollars,
6 the farmers however, would be able to repay this outlay after the next crop, as the irrigation
7 would increase the producibility (*sic*) of the soil and thereby also the financial condition of the
8 colonists. For this crop I believe we can make shift with the natural rainfall.

9
10 I am very glad indeed that I am placed in the agreeable condition of reporting success and
11 hoping that all will go well, I remain as usual

12
13 Yours very truly,

14 Julius Schwarz.
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Line 5

These figures should be compared with the \$4,000 cited in CP-8, Kohn and Wirkowsky, page 3, line 17.

Needless to say, Schwarz did not get his money.

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