

# Russian Jews As Colonists In America.

A Thorough Investigation of the Hebrew  
Settlements about Vineland, N.J., Goes  
to Show That the Much Reviled  
Refugee Possesses All  
the Qualifications for  
Good Citizenship.

FROM KIEV ALLIANCE,  
ODESSA TO ROSENHAYN.

Fruit Gardens Thrive Where a Wilderness  
Prevailed, Profits Accrue Where All Was  
Barren Waste, Shopkeepers and  
Mechanics Till the Soil With-  
out Previous Experience.

## FACTS FOR BARON HIRSCH.

Is Baron Hirsch to be a modern Moses to lead the sorely pressed children of Israel away from contumely, persecution and extermination?

Is the continent of America to be another promised land flowing with milk and honey to which his benevolence shall direct them?

These are questions which begin to stir the sympathies of the philanthropist and command the scrutiny of the political economist.

The Hebrews of Western and Southern Russia are a proscribed people in the land of their birth. Their homes, shops, schools and synagogues are regarded as plague spots, breeding and disseminating foul miasmas. Deprived of civil rights, shunned in society, boycotted in trade, these unhappy outcasts are at last reduced to an alternative between isolated degradation at home or hopeless banishment abroad.

At Kief, Odessa and Elizabethbund the first faint wails of distress were so sternly rebuked and

suppressed by the utterance of that one dread word "Siberia" that it was years before the sob broke through the environments of iron rule to reach the ear of compassion beyond. Once freed it grew to such an angry, passionate howl of complaint that the civilized world first stood aghast and then hastened to frame measures of relief.



THE SYNAGOGUE.

This was obviously a case for private interference and benevolence. There was no appeal possible to the Russian government. Charity, not diplomacy, must be invoked. The people of the United States became the more deeply interested in the fate of these wretched refugees, because the tide of exiles sets naturally toward the shores of the free. It is in the nature of our institutions and precepts to share with all who are worthy the blessed haven which we found and built upon so well.

The beginnings of relief were small. In 1882 the Jewish Immigrant Society of New York found that refugees from Russia were arriving in larger numbers than could be provided for in the city. A tract of land, comprising about 3,000 acres of shrub oak land was acquired five miles from Vineland, a thriving town in the southwestern corner of New Jersey. As fast as practicable the land was cleared, divided into small farms, a wooden shanty was run up on each, the easiest kind of terms were made for immediate possession, and the long, hopeless j R y

through a wilderness of shrub oak and stunted pines, stopping incidentally here and there at little hamlets to take on and put off sundry crates of fruit, but primarily to give the train hands a few minutes gossip with pretty girls, who must come from the backwoods, but don't look it.

At Winslow Junction there is such a great hubbub of four trains meeting like friends in a desert that a general stop of half an hour is made while notes are compared from Philadelphia, New York, Cape May and Atlantic City.

From Winslow on the aspect improves rapidly. We are now running through peach orchards, grape-



jolly and careless as youngsters should be the world over. They all sat in the smoking car, of course, and fairly littered it with their household effects, contained in bundles (there was no sign of a trunk or box of any kind) which ranged in size from the huge bag of bedding to the little brown paper package of Penates.

Only the son could speak a little broken English. I learned from him that they were from Kief. His father had been well to do, a shopkeeper, until oppression began to press to heavily upon his patience and profits and he was forced to emigrate. The son was a machinist. They had friends at Alliance (the first Jewish colony out of Vineland) and two or three hundred roubles between them. They would buy land if they could, but had been warned it was scarce and high priced. They knew where they could board

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nication with the colonists to explain that our mission is conciliatory and peaceful.

The opportunity occurs. On the porch of a small shanty to the right an entire family is taking dinner (it is ten A. M.). They are the most Russian looking people I have ever seen in or out of a picture book. The head of the house occupies the usual head of the table, the wife the tail, with a liberal assortment of children between. My approach is most respectfully received and recognized by many salaams and a jargon of speech that reminded me of Billy Birch's stage French. We bowed and grinned, but not a word passed that was intelligible.

This would never do. The potatoes, berries, milk and bread and butter, which formed the meal and were offered in pantomime, were declined with pantomimic thanks, and we passed on to the next house.

As in most communities, so at Alliance prosperity is fringed with poverty. I learned afterward that the outskirts of Alliance, through which we were now passing, were the home of the very poorest of the immigrants. Indeed, this was self-evident, for the next building on the road was a long, low, rambling shed, infested with at least twenty families, the men and women to be seen making cheap cigars within, the children running wild about the premises.

There was no international code of signals to be exchanged here either. So, contenting ourselves with a look at the barracks and passing one or two prosperous looking little inclosures on either side, we pushed on to a very neat brick house which was just receiving its finishing touches from two or three Russian artisans.

The owner, Mr. M. Bayuk, I found to have been one of the original settlers of Alliance in 1882. To my delight I found he not only spoke English with some fluency, but was a man of education and discernment, who had been a lawyer in his native town and, as he described it himself, was never more surprised in his life when he found himself set down in an unknown land thousands of miles from home and was told that he was now to become a farmer! It was in conversation with Mr. Bayuk and a neighbor of his, of whom more anon, that I received the most valuable information about the hopes, the prospects,

the character and capabilities of the Russian colonists in America.

Mr. Bayuk, his energetic little wife, his two pretty children, his workmen and the faithful old dog that followed them into exile were all duly photographed in front of the fine new house which the owner proudly informed me had cost \$2,000, which sum, he naïvely explained, he didn't care to trust to a bank, so he had put it into a house of his own.

They are witty as well as shrewd, some of these high cheek boned, Tartar looking fellows.

#### **SYNAGOGUE AND GRAVEYARD.**

Directly opposite the Bayuk homestead is the synagogue, an unpretentious frame structure, in which the community religiously gathers every Sabbath (Saturday). When I asked who conducted the services M. Bayuk shrugged his big shoulders and said:—

“We have no need for rabbis here. Every man and woman may speak or exhort from the fullness of t

**SOME ODD CHARACTERS.**

I had not got far from my adieux with Bayuk and on the road to Balys when a group of men, women and children, old, young and infantile, suggested material for a sketch. But our wagon was no sooner halted for the purpose than the entire group of tilters of the blackberry bush forsook their vocation and surrounded the wagon with complaints and appeals.

It was evident that we were taken for represen-

“Please, sir, to gif me Baron Hirsch’s address. I vill write him von letter myself.”

“I think simply ‘Paris’ will reach him,” I replied, confidently.

“No? Ees it not Wien?” and I saw him actually make a note, “Baron Hirsch, Paris.” If the philanthropic Baron ever receives such a missive, signed by one Lewinsky—I think he so called himself—he will perhaps pardon the innocent part played in the correspondence by a newspaper man rattled in the performance of his duty.

While all this was going on a funny looking little old chap, with the face of a child, who had been dancing up and down on the outskirts of the crowd, sputtering unintelligibly, pressed up to the wheel and got a spokesman to explain that he wanted to write his name in my notebook. What for no one will ever know, except it was an application for one of my job lot farms.

I have forgotten to say that the driver of our vehicle was a Jerseyman, with a suspicious taint of Irish brogue lurking round the wag of his tongue.

As the little Russian spat on the pencil and began in the right hand lower corner of a page to write Hebraic hieroglyphics backward and upward from right to left the ill mannered driver gave such a loud guffaw that our lazy horse started on, and, barely missing running down some women and children, dragged us out of the crowd and rescued me from a position that was becoming falser and more false every moment.

Thence on to Mr. Baly’s it was plain sailing, and so let us throw aside the ludicrous in our experience and come down to the plain, unvarnished truth about this foreign colonization of Russian Jews.

### **THE BALY HOMESTEAD.**

The Baly house is one of the simplest in the settlement—in fact it is nothing more than the cheapest and most ordinary kind of frame cottage—two rooms, a kitchen-dining room and a sitting room, on the first floor and three living rooms above. There is not a vestige of carpet on any of the floors. A few little pictures and photographs, evidently treasured relics of other days, adorn the white walls. The rooms were scrupulously neat and clean.

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It is not pleasant to go into details of a gentleman’s home in which you have been cordially received and given the best the house affords, but I am sure that Mr. Baly himself will be the first to

much pride, her diploma and a photograph of her class, most of whom are now scattered in exile like herself. Mr. and Mrs. Baly both converse fluently in Russian, French, German and English.

Our talk lasted so long that Mrs. Baly insisted upon serving refreshments, preserved fruits, black bread and milk, a feast over which she presided with as much grace as though at home in the old drawing room in Odessa. Baly's brother-in-law, a young





keep a horse and a cow, as most of the colonists do,  
are obliged to buy feed.

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ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE COLONY

company of Polish players comes down from Philadelphia and treads the boards.

The universal language is of course Russian, but many of the colonists already speak very good English and the children who attend school are making such famous progress that a number of them are to enter the high school at Vineland in September. Their teachers report that they are exceptionally bright and capable, rather outstripping in capacity and application the children to the manor born.

#### **ONE GREAT NEED.**

The dark side of this picture which I could not see but heard of on all sides is the winter—there is nothing for the people to do there—little to earn and many to keep.

The great need at Alliance and in all similar colonies is factories, in which all hands may work while the land lies fallow. There is a certain amount of sewing done on men's clothes and shirts sent from Philadelphia and New York, but the wages are on the starvation scale, twenty-five cents a day being the very utmost that a man and a machine can average.

Baly hopes to be able to establish a co-operative berry canning factory before long. The berries often

ripen on the vine faster than they can be picked, and such a factory would be economic both in saving loss and adding to gain. Capital, however, is very scarce. The first mortgages on the farms preclude the lending of more money on them, and the land trust apparently either does not recognize such a need or has no funds available for such a purpose.

#### **OTHER SETTLEMENTS.**

I have devoted the whole of my space to Alliance, because this is the original settlement, the best developed, the most thoroughly tested and the fairest criterion of what has been accomplished to colonize the Russian Jew.

But Alliance is only the centre of a whole circle of similar communities which have grown up around it and ramify through Cumberland, Salem and Atlantic Counties.

There are Malaga and Estelville and Newport and Port Elizabeth and Bridgeton and Rosenhayn and Carmel, all merging one into the other, with a total population of some two thousand five hundred Russian Jews.

Each and every one of these is modeled after the mother colony. From all come the same reports of thrift, industry, sobriety and perseverance. In one or two, hat factories have been established to the great advantage of the general weal, proving, as I am persuaded, that winter employment and an increased acreage of farms are the only two things needed to make out a perfect case for the success of this enterprise and for the triumph of that greater one which Baron Hirsch has under consideration.

#### **CASES IN POINT.**

But Baron Hirsch is not all, not the only one to whom this subject appeals with pity and reason.

The Jewish Alliance of America has just issued a pronouncement from their headquarters in Philadelphia inviting the attention of philanthropists and economists to the cause of the exiled Russian and urging their colonization away from seaboard cities, as outlined above.

A despatch just comes from Boston stating that forty Russian Jews are refused admission at that



