

Atwood Colony, a historical compilation:

The town of Atwood, Colorado is located approximately 7 miles southwest of Sterling, Colorado along the Platte River in Logan County. It is about 145 miles north east of Denver (exit 115 off of Interstate 76, two miles north). The population according to the 2010 census was 133. It was founded in 1841 and the town was platted in 1885. There was a Jewish cemetery located behind the old Atwood School. Its current condition or location is not known at this time.

The Plan, 1894:

The Bnai Brith was trying to assist a plan to help distribute Jewish immigrants from Russia to move to Colorado. In 1894, the Nehry Investment Company along with the T. C. Henry Investment Company offered the following “opportunity” to a these Russian immigrants. These immigrants, who currently resided in New York and Philadelphia were thought to be hard-working, robust and sturdy, just the type to succeed in the harsh winters of northeastern Colorado and who would succeed in making this project a success.

Logan County had large and vast plains that were advertised as an excellent place to farm and the investment companies laid out a plan that would include assistance to the Russian immigrants. Seventy-five adults and six children arrived in Denver (via Galveston) on March 17, 1896. For \$20.00, each family was to receive forty acres of land with perpetual water rights. The company was to erect houses and supply implements, teams and a cow. There was no initial cost for the settlers and they could pay it back at 6 percent over 19 years.

T. C. Henry, of the Henry Investment Company handled the mortgage and perpetuated the plan. He and Miller noted that if there was a flaw in their planning, it could easily be rectified, and the settlers should be out of debt within 15 years.

The prospective colonists were told that the land was all fenced and broken. They would be able to build houses in a compact group, Russian style, and be supervised by the company as they knew nothing about irrigation methods. Much of the land would be in market gardening (Henry thought 1200 acres), the rest in small crops such as broom corn which could be made into useful articles by the farmers, and enough alfalfa for their stock. Later would come a creamery and cannery. In the meantime, the company would furnish seed, the colonists contributing only their labor.

Their first summer (1896) was marked with hope and despair. Henry sent 300 pound of potatoes and 900 pounds of flour and some implements. Farmers were hired to do the plowing. But, this still proved to be inadequate. The crops were not planted until the middle of June, the alfalfa crop was a poor one, horses arrived but they were in poor shape and needed to be fed and fattened before they could be used for anything on the farms. The colonists had no experience in farming or in organizing themselves and had no experience in farming so that they had to learn the most rudimentary practices of raising animals and crops.

In September, the Denver B’nai Brith sent out Sigmund Friedenthal, Moses Epperstein, and David Kline to report first hand about the Atwood Colony. On their visit they discovered that the colony was near starvation. On October 18th, they directed the secretary to write the Baron de Hirsch Fund for assistance for the colony. In March, 1987, they learned that the Fund Trustees would furnish two thousand dollars toward buying cows, land, and implements.

The Settlers:

Because of the continual fluctuation of colonists, arriving and departing it can only be estimated that at the peak there were approximately 200 colonists, but only about 16 families remained as of early 1897.

There is no complete list of members of the colony. In 1950, Dr. J. M. Morris interviewed Myson Forman and put together a tentative and partial list. More names have been added through other accounts and are listed below. The list is still probably lacking the documentation of approximately a hundred other names.

Names:

Original colonists:

Louis Fine

Fishman

Schutzman

Myson Forman (Meyer Forman*)

Pellish

Nathan Wiener,

H. Rossman or Rosman*

Nathan Schwartz

Samuel H. Schwartzburg (Nathan Schwartz's father)

Louis Rossman (also spelled Rozman)*

Lutz

Robinson

Shatz (Shochet)

Luboshefsky (Shochet)

Sam Troyansky

Moses Troyansky *

Schlomo Handleman (Sam Handleman (cattleman) was elected on the town board of trustee

Irving "Ick" Handleman (son of Shlomo) (great uncle of Nina Judd of Boulder) (Ira and Fanny)

William Handleman (brother of Irving)

Lesser Levy

Joseph Gass (Grandfather of Alan Gass of Denver)

Stein (blacksmith)

Morris Thierfelt*

Morris Begelman*

Moses Katz (born in Atwood)

Moses Katz's mother, father and three siblings *

Abraham Goldstein *

E. Katzerman *

Abraham Aschner*

Leopold Frisch* (head of the Philadelphia portion of the colony)

H. Goodman* (president of the New York portion of the colony)

* Names gathered from newspapers and personal accounts (not all authenticated documents)