Session 4 E   Jewish Entrepreneurs in the Pacific Northwest: Who they were and how I
                found them

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JEWISH ENTREPRENEURS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST: WHO THEY WERE, AND HOW I FOUND THEM

Julia Niebuhr Eulenberg

Presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Association of Jewish Librarians, July 5, 2010, Seattle, Washington

Washington Territory's Jewish entrepreneurs shared several characteristics with other mercantile pioneers in the Pacific Northwest.   They were young, most of them in their twenties, although Ben Burgunder was barely seventeen when he arrived. Nearly all of them were unmarried when they came to Washington Territory. While assimilation did occur elsewhere, most of Washington Territory's Jewish bachelors went to great effort to find Jewish wives. They acquired varying degrees of mercantile experience before coming to the Pacific Northwest and expanded on it after their arrival.

Almost all of them lived somewhere else in the United States before coming west. Most of them spent several years in the Deep South, living with and working alongside family

members who had arrived a decade earlier. Washington Territory's Jewish pioneers left the South two to five years before the Civil War began. The hostilities cut them off from family support at a time when they most needed the commercial and kinship networks that are the backbone of Jewish business patterns. Most of them were now truly on their own.

The next stop for many of them was California. Some worked briefly in San Francisco, but their ultimate destination was northern California where the gold mines were. Five of Washington Territory's Jewish entrepreneurs spent time in Nevada City, California.

Religious persecution, the primary reason that Jews left Germany, bore a resemblance to the experience of other southern and western pioneers who came from the German-speaking states. However, the experience of German Jews differed in some crucial ways. Persecution against the Jews went beyond the religious antagonism faced by Catholics who lived in the Protestant regions of Germany or Protestants who lived among Catholics. Antisemitism was cultural, social, religious— and legal. Jews who came to America sought freedom not just to practice their religion, but to marry, participate as full citizens, live where they wanted to live, and carry out a wider range of business activities than German law permitted.

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The young Jews who came to Washington Territory established small mercantile stores soon after their arrival. However, they quickly branched out into a broad range of entrepreneurial activities. In the old Oregon Country, two of them were hay ranchers, another two were involved in wheat farming, one successfully placed himself and his sons in the international hops market, and still another bought and sold cattle. Transportation activities among the entrepreneurs ranged from the ownership and management of seagoing vessels to the development of railroads

and interurban lines.   At least two of them enlarged upon the concept of mercantile credit and founded banks.

The earliest Jewish entrepreneurs in the Pacific Northwest were German Jewish immigrants who arrived in Oregon and Washington territories between 1840 and 1880. The timing of their arrival, their primarily liberal religious backgrounds, and their commercial experience dictated a particular type of business pattern. Through their small mercantile outlets, they sold goods and offered credit to the farmers, homesteaders, and miners who made up much of the region's nineteenth-century white population. The Jewish merchants parleyed their mercantile success into expanded operations. There was hardly a peddler among them.

Two important events in the 1890s altered this entrepreneurial experience. At the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Frederick Jackson Turner told an international audience that the American frontier had ceased to exist. Turner's thesis hinged on the loss of untamed wilderness and room for expansion. He mistook the continental United States for the far flung frontier the American government continued to pursue, as American possessions in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and elsewhere testify. Nonetheless, his point was legitimate. The free-wheeling days were over, and those doing business in the Pacific Northwest would have to look for other ways in which to prosper in the commercial world.

The second nineteenth-century event that altered entrepreneurial behavior was the mass migration of millions of European Jews and other ethnic groups from southern and eastern Europe. The migrants came to the large cities of Europe—Vienna, Berlin, Paris, London. They fled to the Americas—Canada, the United States, Mexico, Argentina and other places in South America. The sheer volume of migrants made it seem as if everyone had picked up and moved

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somewhere else. The problems the mass migration created were immense.   The cities to which the immigrants moved were already crowded. The immigrants themselves came with a wide range of aspirations that were almost impossible to fulfill. Some were intent on carrying out their own version of the back-to-the-soil movement. Others expected instant wealth and were forced instead to deal with grinding poverty. Moreover, most of the immigrants came out of an old-fashioned culture and visibly reflected its old ways.

Some of the East European immigrants separated themselves from the new world they entered, in an effort to maintain their way of being. The earlier immigrants often kept their distance from the new immigrants as well. In America, however, the relationships between the two groups shifted almost immediately. Americanization efforts from the secular community included English-language courses and child welfare assistance programs. Efforts to Americanize religious practices got off to a rockier start. The willingness of liberal Jews to overlook rules of *kashrut* shocked the new immigrants into taking responsibility for their own religious lives in Seattle and elsewhere.

The mass migration lasted until the outbreak of World War I. Initially stopped by the war, immigration from Eastern Europe was further curtailed by postwar legislation. In 1924, the U.S. Congress passed the National Origins Act, which used the 1890 federal census to establishing immigration quotas. In using this census, the Act aimed specifically at preventing any further significant immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

From 1840 to 1890, few immigrants had declared themselves to be from Poland or other parts of East Europe. During those years, European politics had shifted borders back and forth between nations.   The cities from which most of the East European immigrants and the Jews

from Posen had come belonged to any one of several countries, given a particular year. Isaac Pincus serves as a good example of this. When he was born, his home town of Grodno was in Poland. When he left Europe for the United States, Grodno was in Prussia. Still later, it was returned to Poland. Pincus gave both Poland and Prussia as his birthplaces at one time or another during his years in America. Census interpreters and transcribers gave still more as Grodno fell under the rule of the Soviet Union, and again became part of Poland.

Perhaps the federal census takers also had their own formula for determining where a person was from. They certainly had their own notions about how the names of individuals should be spelled, and these varied from decade to decade as well.

When the place of birth mattered in 1924 and 1939, the German and Prussian birthplaces were once again part of Poland. Had the nineteenth-century Jewish immigrants declared themselves to be Polish in 1840 and later, they might have set the stage for a different set of immigration laws and a different outcome during World War II.

The mass migration brought two major groups of Jewish immigrants to the Pacific Northwest. The first came out of the Pale of Settlement, a no-man's land between Poland and Russia, and then from locations further east. Sometimes called Russian Jews, they created entrepreneurial activities that filled their need for kosher goods, work schedules that met their stricter religious requirements for Shabbat and the holidays, and their preference for an urban landscape. For the most part, they were less interested in commercial risk taking than the pioneers had been. The initial entrepreneurial efforts of this group included small mercantile outlets, tailor shops, and the collection of scrap, all of which the immigrants expanded into larger operations, just as previous immigrants had done.

The second arrivals came after the turn of the century. These were the Sefaradim, descended from the Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal during the Inquisition. Some had fled north to Amsterdam, but the largest number made their way east to France, Italy, and parts of the far-ranging Ottoman Empire. The Sefaradim who came to Seattle were from Marmara, the Island of Rhodes, and Istanbul. They arrived initially in the company of Greek fishermen who declared that Seattle reminded them of their beautiful island home. The Greeks continued to be fisherman. The first business activities of the Sephardic Jews who had come with them included selling fish.

The background of these Jews differed significantly from that of both the German Jews who had come to Washington Territory in the middle of the nineteenth century and that of the East European Jews who had arrived in the 1880s. Like the East European Jews, the Sefaradim were religiously orthodox. However, their liturgy and synagogue music differed not only from the city's other Jews; the melodies and liturgies differed among themselves. At one point, Seattle was home to three different Sephardic synagogues—and still is home to two.

The first entrepreneurial success of the Sephardic Jews was in marketing fish. They soon moved into other venues. However, all of these activities occurred well after the period covered in the book I am writing, but one example of their entrepreneurial experience is worth mentioning.

Nessim Alhadeff understood the importance of marketing fresh fish. He did so initially at a stand at the Pike Place Public Market. Eventually, he was confronted with a loss of business as the new street car and interurban railways led to the development of housing away from Seattle's urban core. Housewives liked to dress up and come into town on the interurban to shop

downtown at the stores, but then they were dressed for going to the butcher or the fishmonger.

The businesses that supplied their household needs had followed them out to the end of the rails.

They no longer needed to shop for produce, meat, and fish in downtown Seattle. Decades earlier,

German-Jewish merchants followed their former customers across the forty-ninth parallel border

into British North America. In taking the interurban cars to his former customers, Alhadeff

followed the same business pattern.

At first he carried a basket of fresh fish on his lap and sold the fish door to door. It was a

step below marketing with a horse-drawn delivery wagon, but Alhadeff soon expanded beyond

the interurban cars and bought his own wagon. That is part of a later economic history of

Washington's Jews.

Today, I want to limit the scope of the story to only one pioneer's experiences. Bailey

Gatzert, one of Washington Territory's Jewish entrepreneurs, arrived in the United States in

1849.

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The working title of my forthcoming book is *They Knew the Territory: Nineteenth-*

Century Jewish Entrepreneurs. The dissertation proposal 25 years ago that suggested that topic

was nearly turned down. No one believed there had been enough Jews in the Pacific Northwest

to make it an appropriate thesis. Early research located nearly 250 Jews doing business in

Washington Territory between 1853 and 1889. The dissertation topic was accepted, and the rest

has been history. Subsequent research has increased the number of Washington Territory's Jews

to nearly 300. The intent of this paper is to describe the history of these pioneers by telling the

story of one of them, and to explain how I located more than the handful of Jews rejected as unworthy of study.

HistoryLink.org is an on-line research site founded by the late Walt Crowley and others. The site contains biographies, thumbnail sketches of the state's towns, and full accounts of events that shaped the state's history. Like all other sources, the accuracy of information depends on the author. *HistoryLink* does make an effort to vet its contributes for accuracy and, in general, its reputation among Pacific Northwest historians is good. Yet, *HistoryLink's* biography of Bailey Gatzert is scanty. The essay notes that Gatzert came to America at the age of twenty to join a sister in Natchez, Mississippi. The biosketch goes on to say that Gatzert was the brother-in-law of a famous entrepreneurial family, the Schwabachers, and mayor of Seattle for a single, one-year term.

I have used a variety of research tools to broaden this narrow picture of Gatzert. Genealogists use several of them to locate family members, but these sources prove equally valuable for historians.

The World Deluxe Version of Ancestry.com contains European as well as American census data. Census data and a family tree provided information about Gatzert's birth (date and place) and the birthplaces of both parents and most of his siblings. I used other sources to verify that this was "my" Bailey Gatzert and his siblings.

I want to stress the importance of this issue of verification. In Gatzert's case, both of his names are unusual for Jews and make it somewhat easier to accept my finds as correct. Other names, like Isaac Pincus, turn out to be far more common. More than one individual with that set of names appears in the censuses documenting the places that other sources have indicated as

residences for "my" Isaac Pincus. The only way to verify accuracy in such cases is to check

additional sources, watch birth dates closely, and either accept that a previous wife and child

might well have existed somewhere else or dismissing the married father as the "wrong" Isaac

Pincus.

Bailey Gatzert was born in 1829 in Bavaria. The birthplace locations of his siblings

varied. Among the German states, Bavaria was the most vigorous in observing the *matrikel*—a

series of harsh rules against the Jews. The *matrikel* limited the number of Jewish marriages in a

given town, restricted the types of occupations Jews could engage in, and prevented Jews access

to higher education and civic activities. These rules limited the aspirations of the Gatzert family

and may have accounted for the number of places in which the Gatzert children were born.

Sarah Kahn Gatzert was born in Hofheim; her husband, Abraham Gatzert, was born in

Alsbach. The family regularly traveled back and forth from Alsbach to Hofheim to Worms

between 1817 and 1839. This may have been for family or business reasons; it may also have

reflected legal restrictions. Seligmann, Samuel, and Lazarus Gatzert were born in Alsbach.

These three sons apparently remained in Germany.

Ancestry.com lists a passport application for Bailey Gatzert and his wife, Babette. The

application declares Bailey Gatzert's intention to visit family and friends in Europe. Presumably,

visits to Gatzert's three brothers and their families were part of the couple's itinerary. The rest of

the Gatzert siblings emigrated to America. Among them was a brother, Joseph Loeb Gatzert,

who signed his brother's passport application.

Abraham's Gatzert's occupation is unknown, but he may have carried out some kind of business activities for both the Kahn and the Gatzert families on these trips between Alsbach and Hofheim.

The children may have viewed the family's constant traveling as a series of adventures. Depending on the family's reasons for travel and the possible harassment they may have experienced at border crossings, it may also have been more traumatic. The refugee experiences of children often are. For Sarah Gatzert, however, the experience could only have been grueling. She spent fifteen years traveling on rough and sometimes muddy roads by horse and wagon. During all of that time, Sarah was pregnant, nursing, or merely caring for a growing family which would, in the end, consist of nine surviving children. (There may have been other children who were miscarried or died at birth, and whose births were not recorded.) Sarah died in 1842, three years after the birth of her last known child.

Abraham Gatzert remarried almost immediately. His new wife, Sette Kaufmann, was fourteen years younger than he. (Her name was probably Yette, a common Jewish name while "Sette" is not. Census takers and their transcribers constantly scrambled the spelling of names. I have seen a copy of the original census, and I believe that what the transcriber took to be an "S" is actually a "Y.")

Men often remarried quickly in those days. How else could they care for their children and work? Abraham and Sette/Yette added only one child to the Gatzert line, but Simon, born in Hofheim in 1842, did not survive his first year. Another death took place in that same year, that of Bailey Gatzert's —paternal grandfather. A year later, Bailey Gatzert's father was also dead.

The deaths of mother, father, and grandfather almost certainly determined the emigration of Bailey Gatzert's eleven-year-old sister, Fanny (Vögel). Her eighteen-year-old sister Babette may have married about that time and agreed to take Fanny along with her to America. Or it is possible that both girls were still single when they were packed off to Mississippi to live with their maternal relatives, the Kahns. The older brothers may have been unable to care for them, but it is equally possible that sending the girls to America was a reflection of Jewish population limits and restrictions on their ability to marry in certain towns. Once the girls were safely settled in America, young Bailey had some place to go.

Nathan Gatzert, three years older than Bailey, settled in New York for a while, but eventually moved to Chicago where he would live with or near two other brothers, Joseph and August. Nathan had some difficulty supporting himself and would not have been a good candidate to shepherd a younger brother into the business world. Joseph, younger than Bailey Gatzert, was already in Chicago when Nathan and August arrived, but still unmarried and not yet well enough established in business to take on his older brother. The chain migration pattern exhibited by this family was common not only for German Jewish immigrants, but for the East Europeans who followed them to America.

Both *Ancestry.com* and *Teri Tillman, a volunteer at the Natchez Historical Society in Mississippi* helped rectify *HistoryLink.org's* error of a single sister by locating the two Gatzert girls and their families in Natchez. The passport records of *Ancestry.com* and librarians at the *Spertus Library in Chicago* provided resources on the three Chicago Gatzert brothers, much of which is not presented in this paper.

Bailey Gatzert arrived in Mississippi in 1848 or 1849. He was almost twenty years old. By that time, his sister Babette had married David Moses, an upstanding Natchez businessman. Fanny, at eighteen, soon married Aaron Beekman, who owned a small mercantile store in the Under-the-Hill neighborhood of Natchez. Beekman's store fronted on the Mississippi River. The neighborhood, though poor, stood at the center of a constant swirl of business as goods, bales of cotton, and slaves were loaded on and off of the steamboats that docked there. Beekman added his young brother-in-law to the payroll as a clerk.

In Natchez, Bailey Gatzert learned to speak English with a Southern accent. Several other Jewish entrepreneurs arrived in Washington Territory with variations of the same accent. Isaac Pincus gained his accent in Tennessee; D.C.H. Rothschild and the Oppenheimer brothers picked up theirs in Kentucky. Abraham Schwabacher learned English in Georgia and Mississippi. *The Jewish Archives Collection at the University of Washington, JewishGen, and Ancestry.com* support these early sites of settlement, and one interviewee whose oral history is in the *Jewish Archives Collection* remembered Schwabacher's accent. In all these cases and others, German Jews formed communities and lived among other German-speaking individuals. They probably spoke and read German much of the time.

In Aaron Beekman's store, Bailey Gatzert increased his mercantile skills. He accumulated enough money to embark on the next stage of his entrepreneurial career. While still in Mississippi, he may have met one or more of the Schwabacher brothers. His later connection with the brothers in San Francisco makes more sense if they had met while they were still living in the South.

Four years after Bailey arrived in Mississippi, he left his sister's home and headed west. The Beekman and Moses families had begun to expand with the births of their children, and space may have been cramped. Life in the South was also growing more difficult. The rumors of war along with the crushing impact of slavery in the South and the region's growing economic difficulties were also surely part of his reasoning.

Bailey had other options as well, and now was the time to take them before he married or otherwise became stuck in Mississippi. He might have gone to Chicago where three of his brothers lived, but he chose instead to go west. The most crucial factor in his decision was probably the discovery of gold in 1849, the same year he had arrived in America. Given the efforts of so many to make it to California "or bust" at that time, it is remarkable that he stayed in the South for so long.

Bailey Gatzert's trip west in 1853 was almost certainly by wagon train. He would have traveled up the Mississippi by steamboat to St. Louis and then to St. Joseph, Missouri, the jumping-off point for wagon trains headed west. *Footnote 47 on page 66 of Hubert Bancroft's History of Washington, Idaho, and Montana (vol. xxi, 1890)* captures the moment when Bailey Gatzert completed his westward transit from Natchez, Mississippi, to Washington Territory's Nachess [sic] Pass in the autumn of 1853. The lure of gold held, and Gatzert continued on his way to San Francisco.

By the time Bailey reached the gold fields near Nevada City, California, the search for gold had begun to shift from individual prospecting efforts to corporate endeavors. This pattern increased over the next decade or two, with Jews participating at the corporate level. The Piny Hill Quartz Ledge, Marks and Company, the Eureka Lake and Yuba Canal Company

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Consolidated, the Miner's Ditch Co. in Nevada County, in which Marks Zellerback had an interest; all these and others were owned or underwritten by Jews. Owners of these companies and those owned by non-Jews hired men to search for the Mother Lode in large underground mines. Later, hydraulic mining operations in California and British Columbia hired workers to sluice down the mountainsides.

Yet, the primary business of Jews in Gold Rush California lay in the sale of dry goods and groceries to those around them. Jewish merchants, not the absentee owners of the large mines or the miners who came and went, were responsible for making life more pleasant in the gold rush towns and for encouraging settlement there. *(See Chapter 2, "The Mining "Economy," in* The Jews in the California Gold Rush *by Robert Levinson [New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1978].)*

Bailey undoubtedly tried his hand at prospecting; everyone else did. Like most of the others, he did not strike it rich. He was not much more successful in his early days as a businessman. He opened a small grocery store. His customers were miners, townspeople, and the entertainers who performed at Nevada City's opera house. Bailey Gatzert must have thought business would continue to grow at a fast rate. Either it didn't, or he failed to manage his cash flow adequately. By 1860, he was overextended to the tune of nearly $10,000. Able to repay barely half of what he owed, he declared bankruptcy in the district court of Judge Niles Searls. His remaining assets consisted of $50 worth of clothing. Bailey Gatzert's was not the only bankruptcy Judge Searls oversaw, and while $5,000 was a great deal of mining, it was far smaller than the bankruptcy cases of the numerous mining companies who also lost money on their dreams.

Despite the bankruptcy, Bailey was back in business a year later. The *1861 Directory of Nevada City and Grass Valley* listed him as a clerk in a grocery store. The store may have been one of the Furth family's mercantile sites in the Nevada City area. Jacob Furth and Bailey Gatzert would meet again in Seattle, where they carried their entrepreneurial skills to new heights. *The information on Gatzert, the Furth family, and a potential Rothschild living and working in Nevada City, California, came from June Rice, a volunteer at the Nevada County Historical Society. June Rice also provided copies of the bankruptcy decree and its related promissory notes.*

Gatzert left Nevada City for San Francisco in late 1861 or early 1862. In 1862, he married the only daughter of the San Francisco branch of the Bloch-Schwabacher family. He may have met and courted Babette Schwabacher when he first arrived in San Francisco nearly a decade before. That they did not marry immediately suggests that Bailey—and perhaps the Schwabacher family as well—felt he should establish himself financially before marrying. The bankruptcy notwithstanding, he appears to have succeeded in that goal.

With the marriage, Bailey Gatzert was now one of the Schwabacher brothers. Washington Territory, particularly its eastern half, had developed enough to support the four young entrepreneurs and others like them. The three Schwabacher brothers had already spent several years working for their uncle, Isaac Bloch, at The Dalles and Portland, Oregon. In 1862, Isaac loaned or gave the brothers $1,000 to stake their own mercantile enterprise in Walla Walla, W.T. It was one of his best investments.

The Schwabacher Brothers started out with a small store which they built up into a wholesale/retail outfit. From this base, they branched out until their operation included a series

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of partnerships. The retail outlet at Walla Walla continued to supply miners on their way to gold

fields and silver mines to the east. The warehouse side of the business supplied the retail stores

located in Walla Walla, Dayton, Colfax, Idaho Falls, and Boise. Their partners were both Jews

and Gentiles, a number of whom had clerked at Schwabacher Brothers before being selected as

partners.

Bailey Gatzert was destined to be the managing partner of a much larger operation. In

1869, twenty years after Gatzert's arrival in America, his three brothers-in-law sent him to

Seattle, to open the Seattle branch of Schwabacher Brothers and Company. Seattle was now a

bustling little town of about eleven hundred residents who had money to spend. In Gatzert's first

year as general manager, the Schwabacher store at Seattle did a fine business of $120,000.

The firm's first advertisement offered dry and wet goods of every kind—clothing, boots,

shoes, hardware, crockery, and provisions, as well as groceries, liquors, cigars, and tobacco.

Initially established as Schwabacher Hardware, a branch of the company eventually took the

name, Pacific Marine Hardware. This corporate shift clearly indicated a move beyond the

original, land-based, wholesale/retail venture that had met the needs of towns people, farmers,

and miners. Now the Schwabacher firm, like a growing number of other operations, would meet

the needs of the great ships whose masts and smoke stacks filled the harbors of Puget Sound.

Another advertisement *(Seattle's* Intelligencer *newspaper, September 25, 1871)* claimed that a

customer could get anything at Schwabachers' from a needle to an anchor.

Other merchants had already begun to act as shipping agents and purveyors of marine

goods on Puget Sound. D. C H. Rothschild was particularly well situated at Port Townsend.

The Articles of Incorporation of the Schwabachers' Seattle store include an intention to act as

agents for ships landing in Seattle. *(Articles of Incorporation, housed at the Washington State Archives Repository, Bellevue, Washington, as well as contemporary newspapers, HistoryLink.org, the Jewish Archives at the University of Washington, and Julia Niebuhr Eulenberg's dissertation.)*

Like other businesses in early Seattle, the Schwabacher store was located on the waterfront close to Henry Yesler's saw mill. Gatzert and Yesler became close friends, playing New Year's Day pranks on their friends, sending greeting cards together, and serving in tandem as the city's mayors. Yesler served as mayor from 1874 to 1875, during the anti-Chinese riots. Gatzert cleaned up after the riots the following year.

Gatzert was not the first Jewish mayor in the United States. Two years earlier, Iowa City, Iowa had elected Moses Bloom as its mayor; Bloom served from 1873 to 1875. Bailey Gatzert began his involvement as mayor of Seattle, but he also served on the Seattle City Council. In addition, he was a founding member and second president of the nongovernmental Seattle Chamber of Commerce.

With Jacob Furth, Gatzert helped develop the first street railway system, although he blocked another line that wasn't approved until after his death. Both men were among the boosters who fought for Seattle's designation as the terminus for the northern route of the transcontinental railroad. Gatzert was also a proponent of the Lake Washington ship canal that connected Lake Washington and Lake Union. The Schwabacher Company built a warehouse and wharf at the foot of Union Street. Gatzert and others convinced the Japanese Nippon Yuren Kaisha steamship line to add Seattle to its ports of call. More precisely, the Schwabacher wharf served as the line's berth in Seattle. This commitment opened up the city and its business people

to the Orient trade. The Schwabachers themselves took full advantage of this opportunity by shipping wheat from their eastern Washington growing fields to the Orient. Gatzert's first efforts in the transportation arena were more modest. While serving as the postmaster at Wallula, he operated a stage coach line.

Clarence Bagley, an early historian of Seattle, described his friend Gatzert as "the embodiment of commercial prosperity." *(Clarence Bagley,* The History of Seattle from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time, *1915, p. 669.)* Among the examples of that commercial success was Gatzert's investment in the Spring Hill Water System, Seattle's first water company. The privately held company established by Gatzert, Jacob Furth, and others formed the basis of Seattle's modern public water supply system.

Gatzert was also among the first Jewish entrepreneurs to recognize the importance of fish packing as a local industry with the establishment of the Puget Sound Salmon Canning and Packing Company. *(Articles of Incorporation (1880), housed at the Washington State Archives Repository, Bellevue, Washington, along with the Articles of Incorporation for other Jewish enterprises and two of Seattle's synagogues.)* Gatzert's salmon packing company and others like it led to Washington's domination in the trade for many years.

Gatzert, "one of the most companionable of men" *(Bagley, p. 669),* held forth at his own table, at those of his business colleagues, and at the new Rainier Club which he helped found. Most of the Jews among them made little or no effort at keeping the traditional Jewish laws of *kashrut.* The menu of a Gatzert dinner, in its celebration of the Pacific Northwest's abundance, rivaled the menu of the infamous *treife* banquet held in Cincinnati to celebrate Judaism's Reform

movement. Both included crab and oysters. *(Jewish Archives Collection, University of Washington)*

In general, Washington's early Jewish families followed Reform traditions. Perhaps what was important to the Gatzerts was that others be comfortable at their table, and not the other way around. Among those who dined with the Gatzerts was Rutherford B. Hayes, the first American president to cross the Rockies. He must have been amazed to find such elegance and fine food on the other side of that great continental divide.

Bailey and Babette Gatzert had no children, but they worked tirelessly to ensure a better life for Seattle's children. Together, they endowed a child welfare program. *(The first annual report of the Bailey and Babette Gatzert Foundation for Child Welfare is housed in the Suzzallo Library's Special Collections Division at the University of Washington.)*

Babette Gatzert joined other women—Jewish and non-Jewish—in working for community welfare. She was the only Jew among the founding trustees of the King County Ladies' Relief Society whose goals were to help "the poor and destitute regardless of creed, nationality, or color." *(Articles of Incorporation, housed at the Washington State Archives Repository, Bellevue, Washington.)* Babette Gatzert's presence among the likes of Sarah B. Yesler, Sarah Ferry, Elizabeth Minor, and Mary B. Leary is good evidence that, like them, she was considered one of Washington's pioneer women. In addition to her work for the King County Society, she joined her Jewish friends in establishing the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society. *(See Jewish Collections, University of Washington.)*

Like many of the German Jews in Seattle and elsewhere in the country, Bailey Gatzert participated in the activities of the Jewish, German, and general Seattle communities. He was a

member of the local *Sing Verein* and may have been involved in other German-language organizations as well. The notes written in German by family members and friends following Gatzert's funeral are testimony of the family's continued use of German as their "at home" language. *(These condolence notes can be found in the Gatzert-Schwabacher Papers at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.)*

Although the Gatzerts did not observe traditional Jewish laws at their table, they were among the founders in 1892 of Ohaveth Sholum, one of Seattle's first synagogues. They were also among those who soon acknowledged the need for a larger Reform synagogue which led to the eventual establishment of Temple de Hirsch.

Bailey Gatzert's died on April 19, 1893. His funeral was held the day after his death at Seattle's Rainier Hotel. It was not a typical Jewish funeral. Flowers surrounded the casket, and the funeral services followed the Masonic rite. Fellow Masons, civic functionaries, friends, and members of Congregation Ohaveth Sholum were in attendance. Following the funeral, Mrs. Gatzert, her brother Louis Schwabacher, his wife, and what one community member described as a committee escorted the remains of Bailey Gatzert to San Francisco for his burial. *(A newspaper clipping with the date line, Seattle, April 20, 1893, but no newspaper name, carried this information. The clipping was found in the Gatzert-Schwabacher Papers at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.)*

Even after the dedication of Hills of Eternity, a properly consecrated cemetery in Seattle, some Jewish families still buried their dead elsewhere. Babette Gatzert took her husband's body by train to be buried in San Francisco. Bailey Gatzert, a resident of Seattle for nearly twenty-five years and one of the founding members of Congregation Ohaveth Sholum, was nonetheless

buried in San Francisco. Babette Gatzert also stayed in San Francisco, living at a residential

hotel with other members of the Schwabacher family until her own death. She was ultimately

buried beside her husband.

Bailey Gatzert was memorialized after his death in a variety of ways. Temple de Hirsch

dedicated its new pipe organ in his name. Seattle named an elementary school after him, a

school located incidentally in Seattle's immigrant neighborhood where East European Jews had

first settled and where other new immigrants still make their first homes. Jacob Furth, Gatzert's

old friend from Nevada City and fellow Seattle entrepreneur, named a newly built sternwheeler

the *Bailey Gatzert.*

Seattle Steam and Navigation and Transportation Company launched the *Bailey Gatzert*

from John J. Holland's shipyard at Salmon Bay [Ballard] on November 22, 1891. The steamship

made only a few runs on its original Seattle to Olympia route. She later made daily trips between

The Dalles and Portland, Oregon, as one of the Columbia River & Puget Sound Navigation Co.'s

steamers. During this period, the *Bailey Gatzert* and her master participated in steamboat races

that were much talked about among old-timers on the Columbia and Willamette Rivers.

Gordon Newell (*editor of* The H. W. McCurdy Marine History of the Pacific Northwest

[Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1966], pp. 8, 291, and 423) provides an excellent

history of what he describes as "the finest sternwheeler on Puget Sound."

The *Bailey Gatzert* was still in service during the 1905 Lewis and Clark

Exposition at Portland. A popular song, *The Bailey Gatzert March,* was played at the exposition.

The steamer's career lasted another twenty years. She became part of the so-called mosquito

fleet that operated on Puget Sound. The Navy Yard at Bremerton bought her for its Seattle-

Bremerton run, which was in heavy use during World War I, because of the Bremerton naval installation's activities. The *Bailey Gatzert's* career ended in 1926, but the ship's whistle and name board are still located at *Seattle's Museum of History and Industry.*

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Washington Territory had nearly 300 Jewish entrepreneurs. Among all of them, Gatzert provides the most complete example of their lives and commercial and communal activities. Although adequate records have proved more elusive for the others, Gatzert shows how Jewish entrepreneurial development worked. Multiple points of settlement in the United States were standard for this group. Nearly all of them lived somewhere in the Deep South and California before settling in Washington Territory. Bailey Gatzert may have traveled more than most of them, if his childhood experiences are included.

Occasional business failures were accepted as learning experiences which rarely deterred the entrepreneur's intent to become financially viable.

Remaining Jewish was important. Washington Territory's Jewish entrepreneurs created Jewish infrastructures as they succeeded economically. They sought out Jewish wives among their business colleagues and partners. Bailey Gatzert's marriage to Babette Schwabacher, sister of his business partners, was not unusual. There were several other examples of this in Washington Territory alone. Such marriages cemented business relationships and created new kinship and commercial networks. A surprising number of these women were already living in the United States, although some brides were brought over from Europe.

Gatzert's grocery store in Nevada City and his involvements with Jacob Furth and the Schwabacher brothers all paralleled the initial experiences of other Jewish entrepreneurs. The

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small mercantile store was synonymous with Jewish business practices. Like Gatzert's brothers-in-law, Jewish entrepreneurs expanded their stores, moving outward in concentric commercial circles.

These newly Westernized Jews did not hesitate to get involved in politics. They ran for office and served at every level of secular government. They were also to be found on the boards of interlinking and sometimes competing businesses. Moreover, they participated in Jewish communal activities, serving on the boards of Jewish organizations such as their synagogues, lodges, and free loan societies.

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Jewish librarians and archivists hold the keys to the history of the pioneer Jews of the American West and South. Those keys open the doors to both Jewish and non-Jewish collections. Until recently, there have been few secondary sources on Jews in the South and the West. This means there is still much left to uncover. Help your users find the unexpected in non-Jewish sources, and keep collecting Jewish materials.

A sometimes overlooked resource, located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the *R.G. Dun Collection of Credit Records at the Baker Library, Harvard Business School*. The large credit ledgers are filled with good and bad nineteenth-century penmanship and the prejudices of the period's credit reporters. To the benefit of historians of ethnic and racial groups, however, these men often indicated the ethnic or racial background of the individual being rated. Details are sparse for some individuals. Clearly, the more business someone did, the more apt a reporter was to note gossip, business partners, wives, and other information.

In addition to more traditional resources, *new, on-line sources* have begun to appear. Just as a researcher ought to compare newspaper articles of the period with other sources, an internet researcher must recognize that not all articles are created equal. Even so, *Ancestry.com and JewishGen* provide good access to census records, passenger lists, naturalization records, burial information, and the like. However, the researcher must still compare one piece of information against another. Washington's *HistoryLink.org* and *Wikipedia* both depend heavily on the willingness of historians to contribute articles. The articles are not always complete, although *HistoryLink* appears to take a more active role than *Wikipedia* in insuring that its materials are accurate.

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Through my work, I've come to admire these early Jewish entrepreneurs. There is something special about them. They arrived in the United States as young men, some as teenagers. They worked hard alongside their experienced relatives and learned the ins and outs of the mercantile business. Like some of their Southern relatives, they brought a strong ethos to their business practices. In the South, Jewish merchants were more likely than others to give their Negro customers a fair deal, or even to let them try on clothing before they bought it. In the West, that same credo was transferred to Jewish entrepreneurs' treatment of Asians and Hispanics. The Schwabachers called it a fair deal for everyone.

These Jewish entrepreneurs moved across the Plains in covered wagons or came to the West around the Horn or through the Isthmus of Panama. Living in the West for awhile, they underwent what Frederick Jackson Turner called the transforming nature of the frontier and became Westerners. Modern historians of the West tend to be more frank than earlier historians

about the effect of this transformation on existing native populations. I will do the same in the book I am writing. But we had better not throw out the baby with the bath.

These Jewish immigrants were almost natural Westerners. This new way of being allowed them a freedom that Germany would never have permitted. Even in America's older cities, it was difficult to find this kind of leveling process. The West was a land of diversity in its population, its landscape, and its outlook. These young men brought a willingness to work hard, and they were rewarded. They helped build the infrastructure that is today's West—and the Pacific Northwest you have enjoyed during your visit here. They did it despite rain on this side of the mountains and lack of it on the other side.

Within the communities they helped develop, they built the infrastructure of Jewish communities—synagogues, cemeteries, and welfare societies to take care of the most vulnerable. In doing so, they created Jewish communities as diverse and open as the West itself.