



MAINE + JEWISH +

RITUAL



ot all of those whose Jewish parentage might suggest the label "Maine Jews" are affiliated or observant. However, thousands of Jews in and from Maine have viewed their faith as part of a vital, ongoing, millennia-old tradition and one that is realized and perpetuated through practice.





ewish weddings are another joy-filled occasion for assembling. In synagogues or banquet halls, indoors or out-of-doors, with opulence or minimal frills, countless Jewish couples have married in Maine. They have been "launched" under a *chuppah* (canopy), sometimes with seven ancient blessings and almost always with the smashing of a glass, or glass stand-in, underfoot.

Through institutions like the Jewish Home for the Aged, and, later, The Cedars in Portland, Maine Jews have demonstrated their commitment to caring for elders and to affording them dignity in declining years.





Ornaments for the Aron Kodesh (Holy Ark) that contains sacred Torah scrolls



ccordingly, they attend synagogue on a daily, weekly, annual or as-theoccasion demands basis. They mark holidays with Jewish foods and special family customs. They participate in life cycle events that follow prescribed Jewish rituals or are imbued with Jewish flavor. These images, spanning decades, highlight some holidays and festivals of the Jewish year in Maine.

Portland.



Raphael Gribetz ushers in the New Year in Presque Isle





The *mizinke* dance, honoring parents as their last child is wed, at the nuptials of Phil Levinsky and Elizabeth Zaitlin, 1950

Garden of the Jewish Home for the Aged, later The Cedars

hen lives come to an end, Maine Jewish mourners are supported by relatives and friends, by clergy, and by members of the *chevra kadisha* (burial society) and cemetery associations, who, respectively, minister to the dead and help to arrange Jewish funerals.





Seal of the Hebrew Burial



festival

Zachary Olstein of Auburn celebrates the harvest

Community Passover seder in Bangor, 1947



Making Purim masks



The first Chanukah for a Lewiston baby

Funeral chapel in Bangor



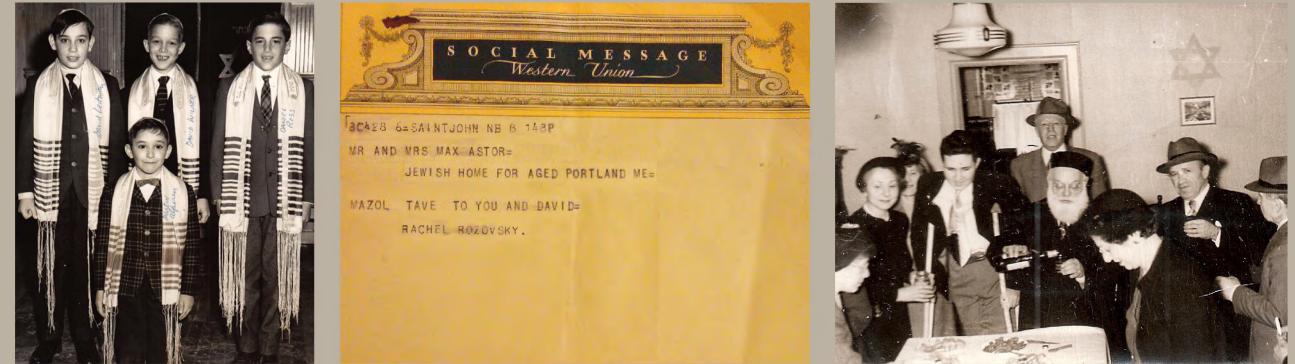
Mount Sinai Cemetery, Portland



ituals come in many forms. They may be associated with holidays or the life cycle, may fulfill the 613 mitzvot (commandments) or make everyday events special. Whether they follow halacha (Jewish law) or are newly minted, they provide means to connect with Jewish spirituality and heritage in Maine.



aine Jewish parents, like Jewish parents everywhere, seek to educate their children by sending them to Sunday schools, Hebrew schools and Jewish day schools, and they *shep nachas* (are filled with happiness and pride) at each step in their children's progression toward B'nai Mitzvah and Jewish adulthood.





Society in Portland

Beth Jacob (Lewiston) boys become Jewish men, 1964

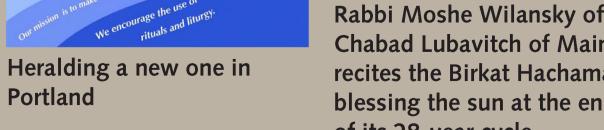
RSVP to David Astor's Bar Mitzvah, Portland, 1932

Sidney Unobskey, Bar Mitzvah in Calais, 1945

A former mikvah at Beth Abraham in Auburn



Portland



Chabad Lubavitch of Maine recites the Birkat Hachamah, blessing the sun at the end of its 28-year cycle

INSTITUTIONAL SOURCES FOR EXHIBITION IMAGES

Arcadia Publishing - Images of America: Maine's Jewish Heritage (2007) by Abraham J. Peck and Jean M. Peck; American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati; Bangor Public Library; Bates College/ Muskie Archives; Beth Abraham Synagogue, Bangor; Camp Modin, Belgrade Lakes; The Cedars; Congregation Beth Israel, Old Orchard Beach; Cultivating Community; Documenting Maine Jewry; Halpert, Phyllis Graber Jensen, Steve Joachim, Craig Lapine, Lenora Leibowitz, Karen Kornetsky Maine Historical Society (Maine Memory Network, David Astor Collection, Pat Davidson Reef Collection, Harriet and Arthur Waterman Collection); Maine Jewish Film Festival; McArthur Library; Mikvat Shalom; Portland Jewish Community Alliance; Portland Public Library / Portland Press Herald Collection; Sampson Center for Diversity, University of Southern Maine; Temple Beth El, Augusta

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