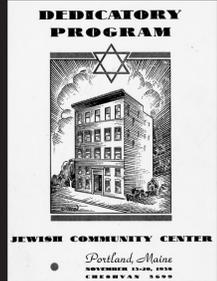


COMMUNITY

For Jews in Maine and elsewhere, “community” can mean those with whom we break bread – or matzah – at a holiday gathering. It may mean those with whom we exchange ideas, on whom we rely in a crisis, or with whom we worship, celebrate or grieve. Communities may be groups that struggle to accomplish a goal, build a new institution, or commemorate history. “Community” can extend to all with whom we share values and hopes for the future.



Dedication of the JCC in Portland, 1958



Torah dedication, Beth Israel in Bangor, 1929

Jewish citizens of Maine have been active in countless communal, social service and cultural organizations. As founders, contributors or dedicated workers, they have benefited their religious brethren and served others locally, regionally and around the world. They have assisted Holocaust survivors and refugee populations, raised funds for the State of Israel, campaigned for social justice, worked as community organizers and literacy advocates, organized Jewish film festivals, and endowed libraries, archives and JCCs.



A member of Junior Hadassah



Beth El building committee, Portland, 1948



Organizational logo

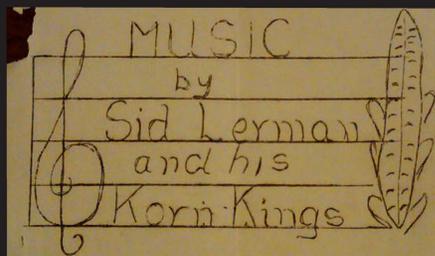
Social and recreational activities – sports, clubs, parties and theatrical productions – bring Maine’s Jewish communities together, too.



YMHA basketball team, Lewiston, 1912



Mother-daughter dinner, Temple Beth El Sisterhood, 1950s



This band frequently performed at Portland JCC, sorority and fraternity dances

The focal institution of the Jewish community, outside of the home, is the synagogue. In Maine, despite its modest Jewish population and the great distances that divide neighbors and families, communities have built and sustained houses of worship and often the schools that go with them. Three different Hebrew names for synagogue – *Beit Tefila* (House of Prayer), *Beit Hamidrash* (House of Study) and *Beit Haknesset* (House of Assembly) – suggest the multiple roles that synagogues play within Jewish communities.



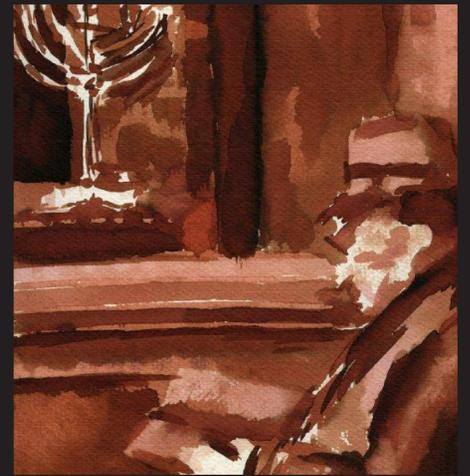
Augusta's Temple Beth El (watercolor by Lenora Leibowitz)



Window, Congregation Beth Israel, Old Orchard Beach



Ledger of contributions, Etz Chaim Synagogue, Portland



Etz Chaim congregant (ink wash by Abraham Schechter)

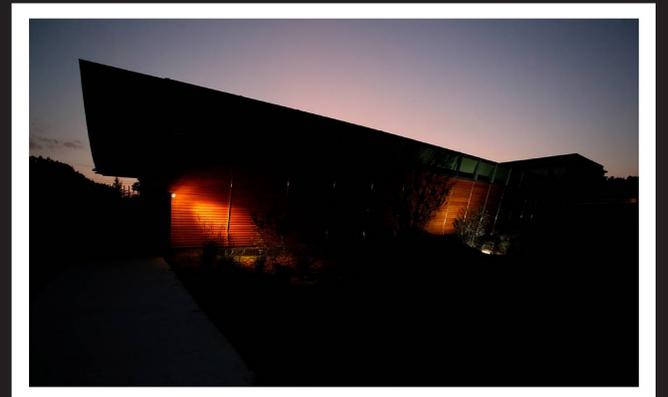
Sometimes congregations have met in private homes, storefront spaces or above retail establishments, like Green's Department Store in Presque Isle. Maine Jews have purchased and converted former church buildings, like Adas Yosurun in Rockland, and they have raised the funds needed to create inspiring buildings from the ground up.



Interior, Adas Yosurun



Aroostock Hebrew Community Center



Congregation Bet Ha'am, South Portland, 2009

Through the years some once thriving synagogues, like those in Old Town and Rumford, were subject to out-migration and dwindling membership and were forced to close. Compensating for such losses have been milestones that unify and inspire communities, such as the events shown here.



Dedication of the JCC at Congregation Chaim Josef in Calais, 1937



Beth El (Portland) confirmation, 1955

A young class "graduates" from Portland's JCC, 1968



Rosalyn Bernstein and sopher (scribe) complete a Torah at Bet Ha'am, 2008

Bella Waterman and clergy at Torah dedication, Shaaray Tphiloh, Portland, 1955