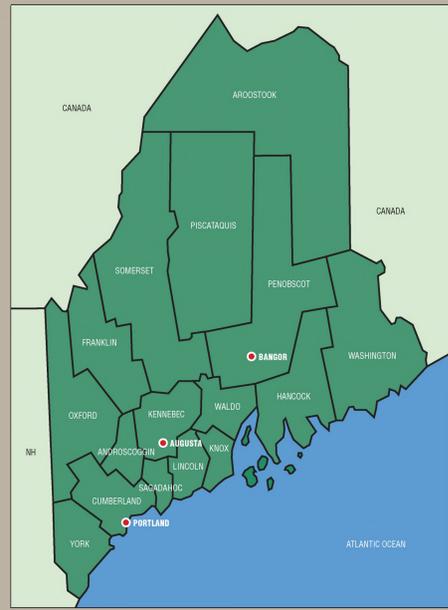


GEOGRAPHY

Jewish geography is a game sometimes played when we learn that seeming strangers in the room are, in fact, our third cousins – or, at any rate, went to school with our third cousins. Because of the statistical minority of American Jews, such coincidences are striking, and especially so when they happen in more remote parts of Maine.

Two aspects of Maine's Jewish geography are of interest here: the places that Maine Jews have settled, and the qualities of this beautiful but sometimes harsh New England state that have attracted pioneering settlers, permanent residents, ardent summer visitors, and others inspired by its landscape and lifestyles.



State of Maine

At one time or another, Jews have resided in nearly all of Maine's sixteen counties, in towns from York in the South to Fort Kent in the North, from Rumford in the West to Eastport in the opposite direction. They have lived in cities, in stark or verdant rural zones, along the coast, and on the border of Canada. They have lived in communities large enough to support multiple synagogues or as the single Jew in a town.



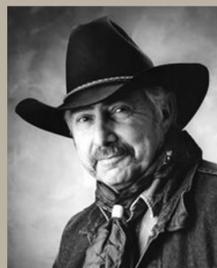
The car declares where Manuel Plavin grew up



The Unobskys (without an "e") of Lubec



The Sterns of Portland



Mike Levinthal, Jewish cowboy from Rockland



The Isaacsons of Auburn



The Cohen brothers of Biddeford

Taking full advantage of the state's abundant natural beauty and prolific shoreline, lakes and rivers, Maine has hosted dozens of Jewish summer camps (not always advertised as such). In towns like Casco, Denmark, Oxford, Readfield, and No. Sebago, they have had names like Ardeh, Cedar Crest, Manitou, Tapawingo, and Winnebago.

Among the most popular have been Camp Lown in Oakland, Center Day Camp in North Windham, Camp Micah in Bridgton, and Camp Modin, founded in Belgrade in 1922. Combining "the" environment with a nurturing Jewish one, such camps provide a special bonding experience that sociologists believe helps to ensure future religious affiliation.



Boys at Camp Modin, one of the country's first overnight camps



Girls at Camp Lown, 1948



Campers and counselor at Center Day Camp, 1951

Maine's Jewish residents have taken advantage of precious summer weather in other ways, too.



Tarr family and friends in Lewiston-Auburn park



Robbinston roadside picnic



Future sailors near the New Brunswick border



Tillie Gordon fishing Down East

Numerous Jewish visitors from out-of-state have made Maine their summer home. Alongside full-time residents, these seasonal Mainers have pitched tents, rented rustic cabins, or taken rooms at grand hotels. At such establishments, cultural, recreational and sporting opportunities, infused with Jewish customs and ethics, foster deep and long-lasting Maine Jewish memories.



Daily calisthenics were offered at the Lafayette, one of Old Orchard Beach's kosher hotels



In 1904 Jewish guests were welcome at Summit Springs while not at Poland Springs across the lake



Shore Path Cottage, a bed-and-breakfast serving kosher fare in Bar Harbor for 30 years