

THE LEWISTON, MAINE JEWISH COMMUNITY

A PEOPLE IN TRANSITION

by

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Lewiston Public Library  
Lewiston, Maine

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Lewiston, Maine, now the second largest city in the state, was established on the eastern bank of the Androscoggin River, on land formerly inhabited by the Abenaki Indians.<sup>1</sup> These Indians called the river the Pejebscot, and the particular Indian group at the falls in the river were known, amongst themselves, as the Anasagunticooks.

In 1770, the first Caucasian settler arrived, one Paul Hildreth, who moved from his earlier settlement in New Gloucester to a site approximately one-half mile south of the falls.<sup>2</sup> He was joined, shortly thereafter, by Lawrence Harris. After some struggle, the tiny settlement survived and by 1788, there were seventy-six families in Lewiston. The town was incorporated in 1795, under the laws of Massachusetts, Maine then being a district of the Commonwealth.

For several decades the settlement remained Anglo-Saxon in its ethnic character. A few French Canadian names are to be found in a directory issued in 1860, indicated the forthcoming French Canadian immigration which would make Lewiston over eighty per cent French Canadian in a couple of generations. As the Industrial Revolution spread throughout New England, Lewiston became a rather typical mill town and most of the regular positions in the mills were filled by the incoming Quebecois.

The mills were generally cotton mills and Lewiston joined in the pre-eminence which the Northeast had in this form of manufacturing until the twentieth century. In the town of Auburn, directly across the river, a shoe plant opened in 1835,<sup>3</sup> the first indicated of the business which would do so much to make that city well-off and comfortable for years.

In any consideration of Lewiston, it is virtually impossible to separate it from Auburn, and people on either side of the Androscoggin are to be found

1. Stanwood Directory, 1860, p. 10

2. Ibid., p. 8

3. Ibid., p. 99

in the churches, clubs, businesses and so on of either community. Locally, the two cities are known as "The Twin Cities."

We are concerned, however, with the development of the Jewish Community in Lewiston, though we shall be travelling back and forth across the bridges connecting the two cities. First, however, it should be recalled that the Jewish population of the United States was quite limited prior to the so-called "New Immigration" period. The earliest of Jewish settlers were to be found in New York City and in Newport, Rhode Island [where the Touro Synagogue is now a National Historic Site]. The early Jewish immigrants were of the Sephardic group, a term indicating their descent from the Jewish Community which was expelled from the Iberian Peninsular during the Inquisition and which came to these shores via the Netherlands and, also, Brazil. These families bear such names as Seixas, de Sola Pool, Abravanel and Texeira. These early Jewish settlers were joined, slowly, by German Jews, many of whom were rather progressive in outlook and who gave to the American Jewish community such names as Guggenheim, Seligman, Lehman and Kahn. With the "New Immigration" would come the mass of ancestors of the current Jewish community in America, mainly from the Russian Empire and eastern Europe.

There were no Jews, at all, in Lewiston in 1860. This is clearly indicated by a study of a directory of the city issued that year and all other historical data of the American Jewish community. It is known that the first Jew in Maine was one Susman Abrams, of Hamburg, Germany, who settled in Waloborough in Revolutionary War days and was married to a Gentile woman.<sup>1</sup> An early Jewish settlement in Bangor led to the establishment of a congregation there in the 1850s, though the first synagogue structure in the state did not go up to the 1890s.<sup>2</sup> There

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica, p. 293

2. Ibid.

were enough Jewish people in Maine in 1884, to cause the State Legislature to pass a law which modified the Sunday closing laws in favour of Jewish merchants.

If Jewish people were settling in other parts of Maine before the Civil War, there still were none in Lewiston in 1864, when Stanwood & Co., issued another Lewiston and Auburn Directory. After a lapse of time, a further directory was issued by the firm, in 1872.

The tradition has been that the founders of the Jewish community arrived in Lewiston around 1865 and that they were the Ehrenfrieds, the Greenbergs and I. Isaacson. This writer has found no proof of this contention but the 1872 Directory does list three identifiable Jewish names:

Friedman, Faibel, dry and fancy goods, 17 Lisbon St., house, do.<sup>1</sup>

Friedman, Joseph (J. Friedman & Co.) dry goods, 17 Lisbon Street<sup>2</sup>

Ehrenfried, George, fancy goods, 20 Lisbon St., house do.<sup>3</sup>

A directory issued in 1876 by Greenough & Co., returns Isaac Greenberg and Nathan Greenberg as peddlars and resident respectively at 11 Lowell Street and 12 Franklin Street, and one J. Greenburg at 2 Lincoln Block.<sup>4</sup>

The 1883 Stanwood Directory notes the Ehrenfried name, now at 38 Lisbon Street, with residence at 28 Middle; the Friedmans at 39 Lisbon Street, living on Brooks Street, and a widowed Helen Friedman at 345 Main Street. The same directory notes Isaac Greenberg at 280 Lisbon Street, Michael Greenberg at 234 Lisbon Street, Nathan at 33 Lisbon, and a T. Greenberg at the same address. Joseph Greenburg then was at 258 Lisbon Street.<sup>5</sup>

It is of interest to note that in 1880, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites claimed that there were sixty-five Jews in Lewiston,<sup>6</sup> a figure which appears to be too high.

1. Stanwood Directory, 1872, p. 48

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 44

4. Greenough Directory, 1876

5. Stanwood Directory, 1872, p. 25

6. Report of Board of Delegates

It is not really possible to trace the development of the Jewish Community in Lewiston during the 1870s and the 1880s. There appear to be no available records, a situation understandable under the circumstances. It is unlikely that the earliest families saw themselves in an historical setting or as "Forefathers," who would elicit much future interest. It is also too late to have first hand recollections of that era, and those of second-hand are frequently quite shaky. Ultimately, anyway, the earliest Jewish settlers dispersed, though I. Isaacson was elected to the Lewiston Board of Trade, to the City Council and, in 1920, to the State Legislature. There are no Jewish descendants of any of the early settlers of the Community in Lewiston or Auburn at the present day.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is evident that Jews continued to arrive in the community and that they pursued the usual shop trades familiar to many Jewish immigrant people of the time. As well as itinerant peddlars arriving and leaving Lewiston towards the end of the last century a number of permanent settlers finally arrived, among whom were H.I. Berman, Max Berman, J. Bronstein, Sam Epstein, H.M. Lempert and A. Singer.

In the early 1890s, one of the above men, H.I. Berman, arrived in the town with his wife Bella [Markson], of Portland. Originally, the Marksons were peddlars and Bella, recognising the need for some sort of Jewish existence among them opened her home as a kosher boarding house. Later, she and her husband established a restaurant of Main Street [opposite the now vacant site of the Hotel Littleton]. The first Jewish worship services in Lewiston were held in Bella Berman's living room on Lincoln Street, at the current site of a sub-station of the Fire Department.<sup>2</sup>

The Berman family would send its eldest son, Benjamin, to the local high school, he being the first Jewish graduate of that institution.

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1. The Ehrenfried Family still has non-Jewish descendants in Lewiston

2. Interview, C. Martin Berman

Other members of the family followed, as did college educations for some of them. Branches of the Berman family have remained in Lewiston [or Auburn] throughout the years. At the present time only one Berman family is now resident in the Community, and as there are only daughters in the latest generation, it would appear that the Berman name will finally disappear from the Community, as far as descendants of H.I. Berman are concerned.

Around 1895, according to the historian of Lewiston and Auburn churches, Ralph Skinner, a Jewish congregation was organised and worshiped on Chestnut Street [at the site of the Bates Mill Weave Shed].<sup>1</sup> There seem to be no other references available for this information. It is clear, however, that the Lewiston Jews later worshipped in rooms on the third floor of the Monroe Block [at the corner of Pine and Lisbon Streets], and later at Mystic Hall, in the Carrigan Block, on Lisbon Street.<sup>2</sup>

By 1894, moreover, the community had reached that development stage which made it necessary to obtain land for a cemetery, and land was obtained for this purpose at Rowe's Corner, in the outskirts of Auburn.<sup>3</sup> Later, the land was shared with the Auburn Jewish congregation. A tour of the cemetery reveals no tombstones clearly identifiable prior to 1900.<sup>4</sup> An unusual feature in the cemetery is a gravestone marking the site of the burial of Scrolls of the Law which had been desecrated during a fire.

In 1907, the Jewish community in Lewiston organised itself as Congregation Beth Jacob and it was formally incorporated under the laws of Maine in the summer of 1914.<sup>5</sup> Because of distances involved in walking on the Sabbath and on major religious holidays, a group of Jews resident in Auburn organised their own congregation, called Beth Abraham, as early as 1902.

1. Skinner, p. 137

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Personal Information

5. Personal Reading of the Charter of Incorporation

In need of a permanent and lasting home, the Lewiston Jewish community built itself a synagogue in 1925, at the corner of Sabattus Street and Shawmut Avenue. The brick edifice, in a style vaguely reminiscent of many eastern European synagogues [rather pseudo-Byzantine with slanted roofs to get rid of the snow], provided a house of worship on the main level, and, underneath, a vestry with kitchen, suitable for synagogue social functions, as well as for a Hebrew School. The vestry also was provided with an Ark of the Law when it was not desired to use the main house of worship. The vestry was also used for funeral services until early in 1952, when the more dignified main setting was first used for this sad purpose.<sup>1</sup> It should be remarked that to this day the casket is not brought into the synagogue during the funeral service, remaining outside in the hearse, and there is a further grave-side service of committal.

Though the Lewiston Jewish community considered itself quite Orthodox, it is to be noted that the synagogue provided, from the first, for mixed seating of men and women. The services were, however, traditional in nature and women were not called to the readings from the Torah. The Auburn community, by the way, built its current house of worship in 1934.<sup>2</sup>

An early organization of the earlier days of the community was the Lewiston and Auburn Hebrew Charity and Aid Association, set up on April 12, 1908, at a meeting in the old rooms housing the Hebrew School on Lisbon Street. Records of this group are in the archives of Congregation Beth Jacob, but there are none for any time after 1909. A perusal of the extant records indicate much infighting, a foretelling of what was in store for the community in the future.

1. At the funeral of Dr. Julius Gottlieb, 20 February, 1952

2. Skinner, p. 138



The Jewish Community of Lewiston, as well as that of Auburn, rather rapidly increased in the 1920s and the 1930s. Exact figures are not possible to obtain, other than those in a survey conducted by Israel Alpren and Hyman Bornstein in 1930, for a sociology paper at Bates College,; that survey indicates a total of 769 Jews in the Twin Cities on the first day of that year, of whom 389 lived in Lewiston and 380, in Auburn.<sup>1</sup> The survey does not, however, indicate synagogue and, hence, actual community affiliation. It was not and it is not unusual for residents in one city to belong to the synagogue across the river.

Gradually, the number of Jewish residents increased to an estimated 1100 in 1941, and, according to the master list compiled by the Jewish Community Center for August of 1977, that figure for the total Lewiston-Auburn Jewish community seems to have stabilized, though more Jews are now resident in Auburn than in Lewiston.<sup>2</sup>

Synagogue figures are not very accurate, either. The actual membership role of the Beth Jacob Synagogue is not available and the actual number of members is, essentially, an educated guess, ranging from eighty-five to eighty-seven, according to one official, to ninety-two, according to the Membership Chairman and even higher, according to the gentleman functioning as the shammus [a role comparable to that of a church sexton].<sup>3</sup> Why the figures are not accurate is a mystery this writer was unable to resolve.

The Beth Jacob Synagogue maintains a traditionalist service. Five rabbis have served it so far, Rabbis Sprince, Gray, Hershon, Berent and Jaye. Though Rabbi Sprince retired early from his rabbinical functions, he remained an active member of the Congregation for years. Rabbi Berent served longest and his distinguished service lasted from 1940 until 1974, when ill-health forced him to

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1. Alpren and Bornstein, p. 7

2. Jewish Community Center Master List, 1977

3. Private interviews: Plavin, Singer, Cohen

accept the position of Rabbi Emeritus and retire to Florida.

The synagogue used to be a major attraction for the community. It ran regular twice daily minyans, early Friday evening services, a full Friday night service, and Saturday morning services. At one point, it even had parallel "junior congregation" services. On the High Holydays the place was packed to overflowing [the actual seating capacity is 227, but seats were often added in the aisles]. The Kol Nidre Service, which this writer recalls occurring in a blaze of lights and with the Rabbi and Choir in white garments, lasted four hours, and the Yom Kippur day services went on from eight o'clock in the morning until sunset with but a one-hour break. Today, services are drastically curtailed on the High Holydays, almost non-existent on Friday evenings, and there is considerable difficulty in obtaining enough men for a single, let alone a twice daily, minyan.<sup>1</sup>

One of the attractions of the Services in the earlier days of Berent's Rabbinate was the presence of a mixed choir. Though as mentioned the Congregation was traditionalist [Conservative leaning toward Orthodox] the mixed choir on the bima was not a modernist concession but followed the pre-World War II practice of the United Synagogues, the organisation of British Jewish Orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, the choir was created by Rabbi Berent and its soloist was a woman, one of Maine's outstanding sopranos, Mrs. Jeanette Miller [Julius] Gottlieb. The choir did not survive her leaving Maine when she was widowed.<sup>3</sup>

The Synagogue functioned in the 1930s and 1940s not only as the focal point for the religious activities of the Community but also educationally

1. Private Interviews: Miller, Plavin, Singer, Berent

2. Private Interview: Berent

3. Personal Information

and socially. A fully functioning Hebrew School existed as did a Sunday School. Youngsters attended Hebrew classes three times a week, after regular public school hours, and Sunday School sessions lasted approximately two hours.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that very little effort was made to teach Hebrew as a spoken language, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel; Hebrew was taught for religious use. The curricula also included Jewish History Hebrew and Yiddish literature [in translation into English] and Bible study.

A Brotherhood and a Sisterhood organization functioned through the Synagogue, and still do; the synagogue was the frequent scene of social events for the Jewish community and the vestry witnessed many a lovely post-Bar Mitzvah dinner, served and also prepared by the Sisterhood. A small but good Library also functioned at the Synagogue.

Financially, the Congregation was well off, being able to burn the mortgage on January 9, 1944. Rabbi Berent's original salary of \$60.00 per week [plus moving expenses to Lewiston] was gradually raised to the figure of \$16,000 per annum.<sup>2</sup> His successor received a base salary of \$17,500, along with such extras as Social Security and a retirement fund payment.<sup>3</sup>

Though women were prominent in Synagogue affairs, it was not until 1945/46 that they were made eligible for membership of the Board of Directors. Only in more recent years has their directional role increased.

Major changes occurred in the Lewiston Jewish Community in the period after 1925. As newcomers arrived, often now at least culturally, if not actually, first generation Americans, they entered into more established businesses and professions than those of itinerant peddlars and shop-keepers.

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1. Personal information  
2. Ibid.  
3. Ibid.

Large businesses such as Ward Bros. Clothing Store and the Lewiston-Auburn Harward Company were firmly entrenched and the Jewish interest in the shoe industry grew by leaps and bounds. Two of the best known names in that area were those of Koss and of Lown. To be certain, there was an increase of Jewish ownership of small stores, at the same time.

A number of Jewish professionals entered the community and in the legal profession the Berman name was well established as was that of Isaacson.

The first Jewish physician on the staff of the Central Maine General Hospital was that of ~~Hyman~~ Sprince [son of the former rabbi] who was appointed to the staff in 1925.<sup>1</sup> Two years later he was joined by Julius Gottlieb, who headed and then substantially enlarged the pathology department of the hospital. During the 1930s other Jewish physicians joined the Staff and in the 1940s there were Jews also to be found on the staff of the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy hospital known under its French name of Hopital General de Ste.-Marie.

It ought to be remembered that the increase and noticeability of Jewish life in Lewiston [and Auburn] went on during a period of considerable anti-Jewish feeling in Maine. In the 1920s the Ku Klux Klan was active in the state and Klan burnings of the Cross were not unknown. The loveliest of Maine resorts, the Poland Spring House, did not welcome Jewish guests until the exigencies of World War II made it imperative for survival. Counter to this was the election of Benjamin Berman as a County Probate Judge in 1929. In 1940, Dr. Julius Gottlieb was appointed Medical Assistant Attorney General

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1. Annual Report, 1925, Central Maine General Hospital

for Maine, in 1940, and in 1945, he was the first Jew to receive an honorary degree from Colby College, Maine's second oldest college. <sup>1</sup>

In the 1930s and the 1940s, Jewish organizational life flourished in Lewiston with such groups as B'Nai B'Rith, Hadassah, Pioneer Women, a local chapter of the Zionist Organization of America, and even a Jewish Boy Scout Troop. From personal recollections, as well as from recent interviews, it is clear that social life centered within the Jewish community at that time. One entertained fellow Jews, associated with other Jews [there even existed an all-Jewish fraternity and an all-Jewish sorority at the high school level], and there was a strong tendency to frequent Jewish-owned stores.

Summer found the Jewish community again fairly consistent with its "tribal" attitudes. Many Jewish families vacationed at Tripp Lake, a body of water only fifteen miles from Lewiston, and re-created there their Bridge afternoons and evening gatherings. A few more venturesome souls went to Old Orchard Beach, a distance of about fifty miles.

During the Winter the Jews of Lewiston used to stay in town, braving the stern Maine Winters and enjoying themselves. It was very unusual for Jews to vacation in Florida, and as for the Islands or for a trip to Europe, that was nearly beyond comprehension.

Contact with Bates College was limited at the time, though it might be pointed out that Bates rarely invited the outside world to its campus. For years, there were no known Jews on the Faculty, though that situation has now altered. A few Jews taught in the public schools, but not so many that when a Jew became principal of the High School it was rather noteworthy news.

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1. Personal Information

In the arts the activity of Jews was limited, though Mrs. Julius Gottlieb served, at one point, as President of the Lewiston-Auburn Philharmonic Society and was a director of the Community Concerts Association. Mrs. Gottlieb was active in both Lewiston and in Maine musical circles which often had no Jewish connection [though she frequently reduced such audiences to tears with her splendid rendition of the Yiddish lament "Eli, Eli"]].

Though there was no formalized structure within the lay Jewish community, it would be fair to state that during the 1930s and the 1940s, the Synagogue president was generally Philip W. Lown, head of Lown Shoe Company and one of the wealthiest Jews in Maine. His views and his support were generally sought by the Community before any major undertaking and there was a tendency to defer to his judgments in matters affecting the community. In the late 1940s his influence began to wane and in the early 1950s he moved away to Massachusetts where he remained very active in Jewish affairs and was extremely philanthropic.

Another influence upon the Community in the same general period was that of Allen L. Goldfine, a New York woolens manufacturer who owned mills in Winthrop, Maine. A very flamboyant character, Mr. Goldfine was exceedingly generous to the Synagogue, to the Central Maine General Hospital, to Colby College and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> He was also helpful to needy students, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Unhappy personal publicity in the 1950s somewhat clouded the Goldfine name, but his interest in and association with the Jewish Community should not be forgotten.

The Lewiston Community [as well as that of Auburn] has been unusually supportive of philanthropy and has an unusually high rate of support for the annual United Jewish Appeal [Federation] drives. It is also generous

1. Personal Information and Records

in support of both hospitals in the community and of the United Fund drive.

Relations with the non-Jewish community have generally been good during the last thirty years, in large measure due to the popularity of Rabbi David Berent with his Christian colleagues. Frequently speaking to groups of Christian ministers and priests, as well as to church organizations, Rabbi Berent clarified, in the minds of many, Jewish attitudes and paved the way for much improved Jewish-Gentile relations in the community and in Maine as a whole.

Today, we find that the Chairman of the Central Maine Medical Center [successor to the Central Maine General Hospital] is a Jew, and the Jewish Community as a whole, though still socially introspective, feels at home and welcome in Lewiston [and Auburn].

In any consideration of the Jewish Community, attention must be paid to the changes in the dominant society about them, the French Canadian Community. An equally proud group, the French Canadians, though numerically in the majority, lived in a city controlled by a small Anglo-Saxon establishment which owned the banks and the cotton mills. Supported by their Church, the French Canadians maintained a fierce identity tie to their ethnic backgrounds, their language, and their own institutions. Lewiston once supported a French newspaper and radio broadcasts in French were [and still are] common. The parochial school system was as large, if not larger, than the public one and essentially conducted in French. Today, there is less emphasis on French as the first language and the processes of "Americanization" have affected the French Canadian community as they have the Jewish community.

In 1950, the Jewish Community Center opened its doors on College Street, at a site chosen after an earlier effort to have a structure had been ended.

Though there were some fears that the Center might detract from the Synagogue, and, indeed, certain functions did move to the Center, i.e., the Hebrew School, Rabbi Berent maintains that relations between the Synagogue and the Center are "extremely cordial"<sup>1</sup> and that no competition exists between the two.

The purpose of the Center was to house non-religious functions of the Community and to provide a focal point for Jewish activities. About sixty per cent of the Community are members of the Center and it is used by ninety per cent, according to the Director. The Center runs special programmes for children, has a series of programmes, mainly cultural, for adults, maintains a Hebrew School and provides a Nursery School serving both the Jewish and Gentile communities, with non-Jewish membership of that school being approximately sixty per cent of those attending.<sup>2</sup>

To a large degree the Center has served the Community well, though it appears to have its lean years, and its Hebrew School is in severe difficulty. Physically, to this observer, the Center could do with a refurbishing if it is to maintain itself as a Jewish center for the Community.

One of the more involved problems facing the Jewish communities of Lewiston and Auburn have been the relationships between the two congregations and those of their respective rabbis. Though officially all is serene, it is clear, even to a casual observer, that a certain coolness exists, and has always existed. The Auburn congregation has had a rather rapid turnover of rabbis in the past forty years, leaving Rabbi Berent, until his retirement, in a rather entrenched position as the religious leader of Twin City Jewry. At the moment of writing, the current rabbi in Auburn, a younger man with an appeal to many in both communities,

1. Private Interview, Rabbi Berent

2. Private Interview, Center Director and Secretary



is the only rabbi around. Congregation Beth Jacob has yet to choose a successor to Rabbi Jaye, who left the Community in August, 1977. Rabbi Geller, of Congregation Beth Abraham is a man who arouses a certain amount of controversy and there are those who would question or qualify Rabbi Geller's credentials, which has aroused much bitterness.

It is also clear that Rabbi Geller has been rather busy attracting adherents to Congregation Beth Abraham and his own Hebrew School has far outstripped the official joint Hebrew School at the Center [which once had one hundred and twenty one students and now has twelve]. Reasons for this are as varied as the people one interviews.

The problems between the two Congregations also became very clear when a recent attempt was made to merge the two and build a single new synagogue for both communities. A sum of six hundred thousand dollars had been bequeathed for that purpose, land for the structure was donated and an architect was hired to produce a plan for the edifice [which he did and which was beyond the money available and not in accord with needs, according to many].<sup>1</sup> The upshot of matter was to essentially drop the merger plan, and unhappy feelings between the two communities deepened.

Since 1950, there have been significant changes in the Lewiston Jewish Community. A number of the older families have left, especially as the shoe industry in Maine has undergone an eclipse. Though the general figures for the population have remained stable, that has been due to newer families coming into the community for varied business and professional reasons and for varied time periods.

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1. Private Interviews

The Community has little to offer its children on a permanent basis. After high school it is generally likely that the Jewish children of Lewiston will leave the area for college and very few will permanently return. Those who do stay on do so because there is a flourishing family business to join [i.e., New England Furniture Company] or one might do so because of marriage [i.e., Mrs. Elaine Goldman [Stuart] Cohen, or to continue a profession concern [i.e., C. Martin Berman]. However, it appears even more unlikely that the children of those who so far have stayed will themselves do so, which means that after the third generation the family has left the area.

The social cohesiveness of the Community has also altered. Summer settlements at Tripp Lake are now a thing of the past, and Old Orchard Beach is now virtually a solid French Canadian summer enclave in Maine. Now, for the Jewish Community, trips to Europe or to Israel are quite standard for many. It is not at all unusual to find Jewish Lewistonians, in large numbers, out of town all Winter. This writer noted that at the Florida funeral services for his own Mother in January, 1977, over thirty Lewistonians were present on twenty-four hours notice and the presiding rabbi was Rabbi Berent, from Lewiston.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, as the community has become settled, as it has gained financial security, and as it has become second and third generation American born, it has become heavily Americanized. Its activities parallel those of other American ethnic communities; its recreations are similar, and its attitudes are often much the same.

However, to a degree it remains a separate community. It is strongly Zionist and Jewish-minded. The results of a random survey taken among the Community indicate that ninety per cent of those Jews who settled in Lewiston prior to 1950 are strong supporters of Israel [the figure is slightly lower for those who

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1. Personal Information

came after 1950], that ninety five per cent of them belong to a Jewish organization, and that most object to inter-religious marriages. Most have noted improved relations with the Gentile community and almost half now associate regularly on a social level with non-Jews. In spite of the sharp drop-off in attendance at religious service, over ninety per cent of those polled and responding classified themselves as religiously Conservative.<sup>1</sup>

The Jewish Community of Lewiston, in the late 1970s, now more than one hundred years since its fragile beginnings, finds itself secure, has an assertive role to play in the overall community, and is behaving similarly in manner to other ethnic American communities.

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1. Private Poll

## APPENDIX A

### Results of the Random Survey of the Lewiston Jewish Community, 1977.

Ninety-five Jewish residents of Lewiston or members of the Lewiston Congregation [present or past] were asked to answer a series of questions relative to the Community [a copy of which forms Appendix B]. Thirty-five usable replies were received.

Subject	Pre-1950 Settlers	Post-1950 Settlers
Improved relations with Gentile Community	85% Yes	62% Yes
Regularly associate with Non-Jews	40% Yes	50% Yes
Object to intermarriage	65% Yes	62% Yes
Strongly pro-Israel	90% Yes	87.5% Yes
Belong to Jewish Organizations	95% Yes	50% Yes
Classify self as		
Orthodox	5%	--
Conservative	90%	87.5 %
Reform	5%	12.5 %

APPENDIX B

THE LEWISTON JEWISH COMMUNITY PROJECT

Questionnaire

(If you are an Auburn resident or if you once lived in Lewiston or Auburn and are or were a member of Congregation Beth Jacob, this questionnaire applies.)

1. Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where was your spouse born? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Circle current status: Married Single Widowed Divorced
4. Where did you live prior to coming to Lewiston? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why did you come to Lewiston? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why did your spouse come to Lewiston? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Did your children attend Lewiston Public Schools? \_\_\_\_\_
8. If answer to "7" is "No," where did they go? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Did your children attend college in Maine? \_\_\_\_\_
10. If not, where? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Have your children settled in Lewiston? \_\_\_\_\_
12. If so, why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. If they did not, why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and where? \_\_\_\_\_
14. When did you settle in Lewiston? \_\_\_\_\_  
or in Auburn? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Are you a synagogue member? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Which one or both? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Were you born a Jew or Jewess? \_\_\_\_\_
18. If not, have you formally converted? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Are you a member of the Jewish Community Center? \_\_\_\_\_
20. To what other Jewish organisations do you belong? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

21. To what non-Jewish organisations do you belong? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. Are your close friends predominately Jewish or non-Jewish? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. How frequently do you socially associate with non-Jews? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. Would you say Jewish-non-Jewish relations have improved in  
the community since your residence there? \_\_\_\_\_
25. Circle which one applies in regard to your interest in  
the continued existence of Israel: Strong Mild Don't care
26. Have you been to Israel? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_
27. Have you any objection to intermarriage and on what basis do  
you object, if you do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
28. Do you personally favour (circle one) Reform Conservative  
Orthodox synagogue services?
29. How frequently do you attend the synagogue? \_\_\_\_\_
30. An indication of your age would be useful: \_\_\_\_\_
31. What is your current occupation? \_\_\_\_\_  
Any previous one? \_\_\_\_\_

You own observations of the Community (optional):

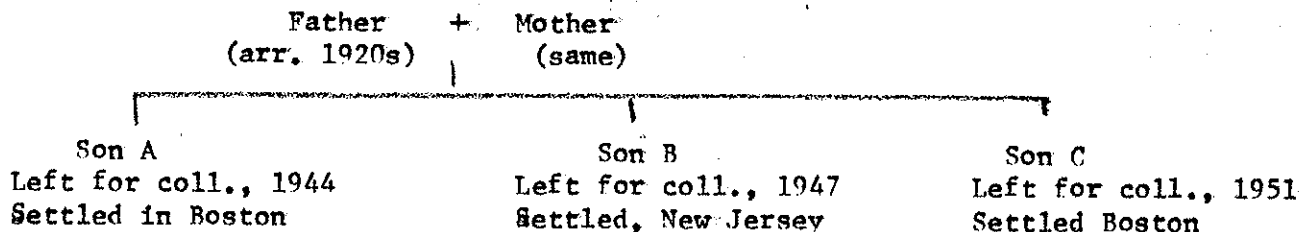
Name: (Optional)

Thank you  
*Paul H. Gottlieb*  
Paul H. Gottlieb, Ph.D.

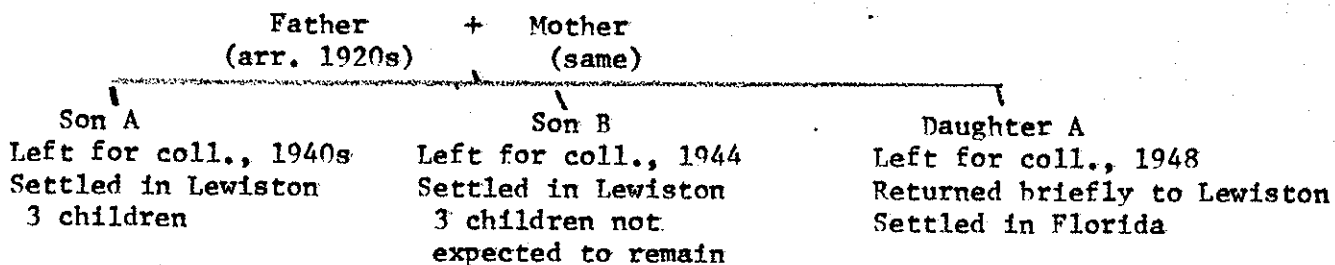
Appendix C

A series of geneological tables follows indicating dispersal of Lewiston Jewish families. These are based on actual existing families.

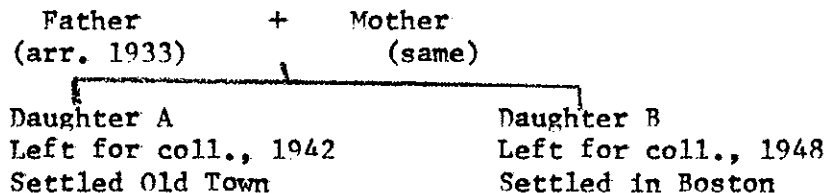
Family A



Family B



Family C



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Mr. C. Martin Berman  
Mrs. Barbara Hurwitz Cohen  
Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Cohen  
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel J. Miller  
Mr. Leonard Plavin  
Mr. D. Schwartz  
Judge Louis Scolnick  
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