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The Story of the Jews  
in  
Lewiston and Auburn

by

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## INTRODUCTION

With the founding of the Jewish religion, not only was a religion founded, but a nation as well, in fact it is the only great religion that has given rise to a nation. For a thousands years, in the perpetuation of the faith that was given the Jews by Moses and the prophets, they have endured horrible and untold persecutions, inflicted upon them by their enemies, in an effort to loosen their belief in the religion that they guarded so jealously.

As a result of the persecutions the Jews were driven to every corner of the world in the search for religious freedom and today there is hardly a civilized country in the face of that globe that doesn't contain representatives of the race. Finding religious tolerance most generous in America, large numbers began to flock to this country from the earliest Colonial period, at first from Spain and England, later from Germany and in most recent times, from Russia and Southeastern Europe. And of the estimated 12,000,000 Jews in the world, approximately 4,000,000 are now residing in the United States. With this as a world background, the story of the Jews of Lewiston and Auburn may be told.

In collecting the data for this survey the writers encountered many difficulties. Statistics relating to their subject were lacking in almost every field. It was necessary to compile a complete list in detail of the total Jewish population, and from that extract the information desired either by interviewing prominent residents or by drawing on personal experience.

Because of the nature of the survey, since it covers such a broad field, it has been necessary to generalize the study in some respects. If an injustice has been done to any particular group or individual either because of omission or inclusion of some information, the writers apologize. There is opportunity for further work since this is the first survey ever attempted in regard to the Jews of Lewiston and Auburn, and the writers find themselves encountering a pioneer's difficulties. There is much opportunity for further elaboration of the survey and for more detailed study in the specific fields. It is unquestioned but that such detailed studies would be beneficial to the race in this community. Carefully kept vital statistics would also be highly helpful and serve as a measuring stick of the progress and physical condition of the group.

Many interviews were held in connection with the survey to establish the accuracy of the information as set down here. The interviews and help that was so readily granted are deeply appreciated by the writers, who realize that this work would have been impossible without the information thus received. We are deeply indebted to Rev. Gray of Lewiston for the time and effort he spent in supplying information. We acknowledge our gratitude to Miss Barr of the Lewiston Public Library, to the police heads of the two cities, and to the heads of the health and school departments. Many helpful suggestions were received from Mrs. Rubinoff and much information was received from the secretaries of the various organizations in the two cities for which we are deeply grateful.

## JEWISH BACKGROUND

Since the Jewish population is almost entirely of Russian origin, Rumania and Germany supplying a negligible number, it would be well to regard for a moment the social and economic positions held by the Jews in this country, for it has an important bearing upon the Jews of America.

The most striking fact in the economic life of Russia is that it is overwhelmingly agricultural. What a contrast to the industrially and commercially developed countries, like the United States! The industrial stage of Russian economy began with the emancipation of the serfs by Alexander II, about the middle of the nineteenth century. Capitalism has made rapid, if uneven, progress since then.

Class distinction divided Russian society into a hierarchy of five classes--the nobles, the clergy, the merchants, the townsmen, and the peasants--each with separate legal status, rights and obligations. The Russian church dominated the Russian mind. The Russian regarded the Orthodox church as the only true Russian, all others were foreign. The one great political fact of Russia has been the autocracy, with unopposed control by the Czar.

The economic and social life of the Jews in Eastern Europe has moved along the familiar channels of commerce, industry and urban life. A review of the occupations of the Jews in the Russian Empire shows that those engaged in the mechanical and manufacturing pursuits constituted 39% of the total Jewish population gainfully employed. Commerce engaged 32%. Together, the two classes comprised seven-tenths of all Jews engaged in gainful occupations. Only 3% were employed in agricultural pursuits.

The great majority of Jews engaged in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits were artisans. The most important industry was the manufacture of clothing and wearing apparel. They were also predominant in the preparation of food products, in building trades, in metal, wood and tobacco industries. A great many were merchants, at least half of this number were dealers in agricultural products. In the development of large scale industry the Jews took a relatively small part due to legal, technical and social restrictions. Yet in 1898, in the fifteen provinces of the Pale more than one-third of the factories were in Jewish hands, and the Jewish workers were estimated at one-fifth of the factory population.

The cultural standing of the Jews may be partly measured by the relative literacy of the Jews and of the total population. According to the census of 1897, in the Jewish population ten years of age or over there were relatively one and one-half times as many literates as in the total population of the corresponding group. The fact that the Jews dwelled chiefly in the towns had considerably to do with their educational standing. The participation of the Jew in the liberal professions which implies the possession of a higher education is also very large, even with the great obstacles that had been placed in the way of the entrance of the Jews into the Universities, into the liberal professions and the state services. Seven times as many Jews as Russians were found in the liberal professions.

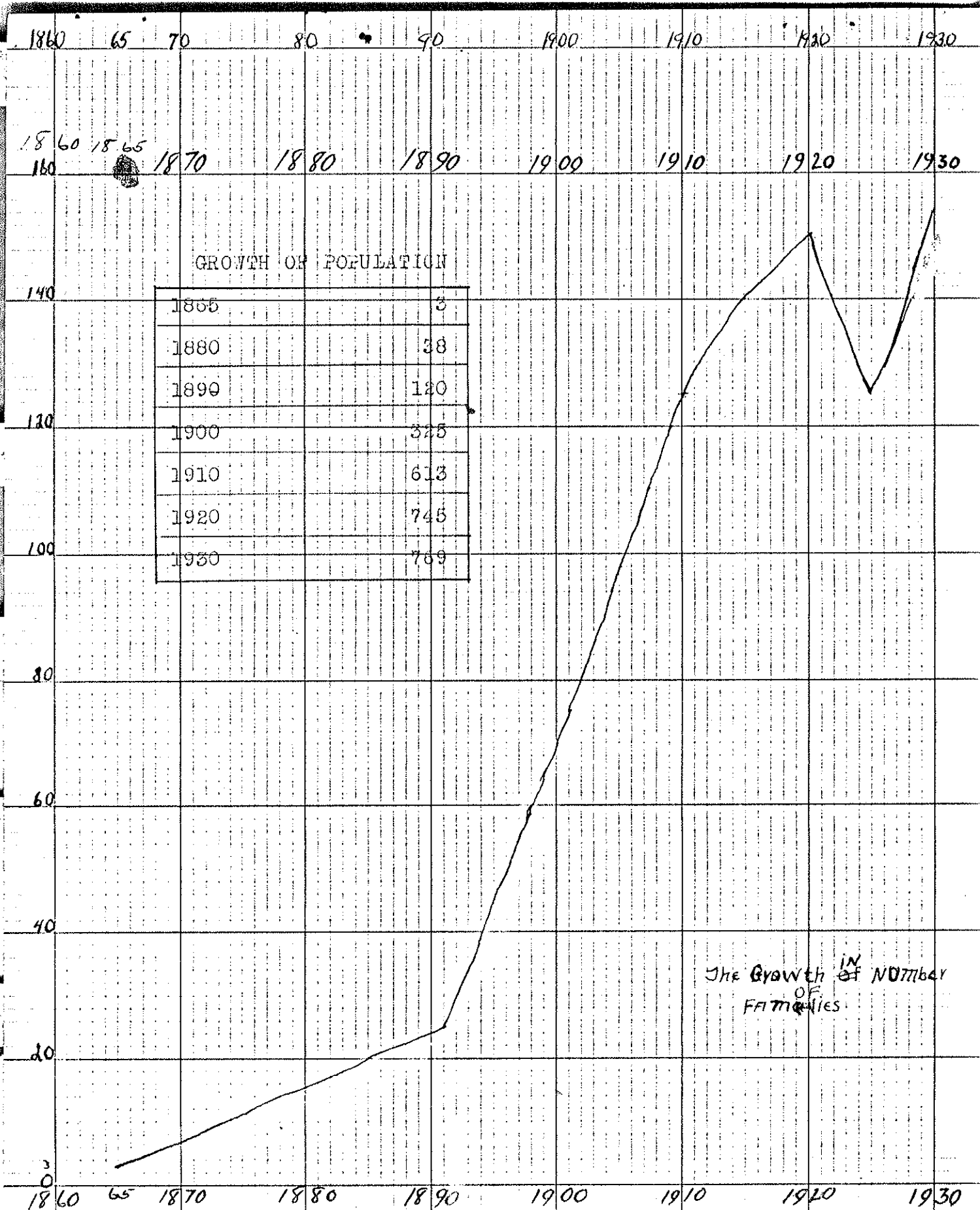
The forces behind the emigration of the Jews at the opening of the twentieth century now became clear. The industrial and commercial development of these decades brought about changes in themselves unfavorable to the economic activities of the Jews. The improvements in communication and transportation through the extension of railroads, the building of roads and the creation of credit facilities especially for the peasantry served partly to displace the Jews, whose economic position had been based upon the services they rendered in a relatively backward industrial and commercial civilization. The rise of a middle class among the Christian population, chiefly engaged in industry added an element of competition not before seen. Not the least important was the increasing poverty of the peasantry, which seriously affected the Jews, as the principal buyers of their produce and sellers of finished

products. Agricultural crises, so frequent in Russia often involved the Jews in financial ruin.

The economic antisemitism now arose partly from the competition of the middle classes of both populations. This competitive jealousy awakened racial and religious prejudices, finding an active expression in economic boycotts and co-operative agencies created to fasten the growth of Christian artisans and merchants. Economic and social hostility was furthered by the feudal ruling classes whose antagonism to the Jews was deep seated and many sided.

Poland, wherein most of the Jews were congregated, was under the reign of the Russian Czar and the district as a whole was oppressed. The right to own land was prohibited to the Jews. They were crowded into ghettos. Living conditions being poor and crowded, there was a tendency for the younger and more energetic people to seek a way to better their conditions and looked to America as their means. Compulsory military training plus the incoming of the Japanese War also served to drive many young men to America. The people absolutely refused to fight for a country which offered them no protection and no equality of rights.

Governmental oppression was the chief source in unsettling the economic and social position of the Jew. The governmental pressure which began to be applied in the eighties became equivalent to an expuls<sup>ve</sup> force, whose only outlet was emigration. The freedom, security and comparative wealth of the Jews in Western Europe and the United States appreciably lured the Russian Jews to its borders.



## EARLY HISTORY IN LEWISTON AND AUBURN

The influx of the Jewish people to Lewiston and Auburn took place in three distinct periods. The Jewish pioneers were here as early as 1865, but the first period during which there was an appreciable increase was about the years 1887-1895. The second period of growth took place from the year 1900-10. The third and most recent period during which there was an appreciable increase of Jewish residents took place in the years 1912 to 1920 and can be directly attributed to the prosperity brought to the cities because of the war. The Russian background explains the first two migrations to this country. Why they were attracted to Lewiston will be revealed in a future paragraph.

Three Jewish men came to these cities between the years 1865 and 1868. They were Messrs. Ehrenfried, Greenberg, and Isaacson. This trio of settlers became very prominent citizens and business men. The first was the founder of the present Ehrenfried's Department Store. The second member was also a prominent business man and was in possession of some of the outstanding real estate holdings upon retirement. Mr. Isaacson, the third in this group, was destined to become more prominent. Not only was he an outstanding merchant having founded one of the outstanding clothing stores, but he was also a prominent member of the Lewiston Board of Trade, serving on one of its important committees. He played a leading role in politics, having been a representative to the state legislature, a member of the city council and was also a candidate for sheriff.

The first great influx took place between the years 1887-1895. The Jews of this period didn't come here directly from their homelands. Their first view of the United States was from New York City. The economic depression in Russia at this time was the main cause for leaving the land of their birth. Upon arrival into this country, being without funds they were employed by their countrymen, in many instances, as laborers in the sweatshops. Upon accumulation of some funds, they set out as independent peddlers into the rural districts, radiating in every direction from New York. In this way a large number found their way into Maine and into Lewiston. At this time the city was well developed. Shops and mills were busy and the Jewish peddlers found trading among the laborers to be very profitable. This condition served to attract some twenty-five families during this period.

The nature of the business with which they were engaged required the individual to be free from marriage bonds, since he was traveling from town to town. Therefore it is due to this requirement that the men of the early migration outnumbered the women at the ratio of three to one. Many married men had left their wives in Europe, but becoming established here, sent for them to join them.

The greatest influx took place between the years 1900-10. The Russo-Japanese war took place during the early part of this period. Many of the people refused to serve in the Russian army because of the bitterness felt toward the government, and escaped to this country. It was at this period too that the Russian government enforced its policy of economic discrimination, unfavorable to the Jew, and social segregation. These factors encouraged emigration to America.

The group that came to Lewiston did not stop in New York, but came directly to Lewiston and Auburn, increasing the total number of families to one hundred twenty-five. They were attracted to these cities because of friends and relatives that were already residing here and also because of the favorable economic conditions of the cities, this news being furnished them by Jewish immigrant associations who aided them in arriving here.

The last influx was that of the years 1912-20, during the World War period. The people entering during this period did not, for the most part, come from Europe, but rather from the surrounding states and were attracted by the favorable industrial conditions. This last influx raised the total number of families to approximately one hundred fifty-eight, the highest number yet reached.

The Jews first settled in the general vicinity of Lincoln St. This location served as the transient area of Lewiston, for not only were the Jews closely grouped

here, but it was also the original settlement for the Irish, French-Canadians and other foreign nationalities. It was here that the Jews were first segregated and lived as one large family. In the home of one or the other were held the few social gatherings; and religious services, two and three times daily.

Their aggressiveness soon won for them better residences. The next major move was into New Auburn, so called. This area may be designated as the "Deutschland" of the local Jews, and was inhabited by the laborers of the mills and factories. This area later turned out to be the second circle of expansion for the various foreign elements in the two cities.

As the population increased, the practice of holding the religious services in private homes had to be abandoned. In 1885 a hall was hired on Chestnut St., Lewiston, which served as the social and religious center. Primarily designed for prayer, the synagogue served also as a common meeting place of the Jews.

With the increase in number and diversity of earning a living, various changes took place. Many moved back to Lewiston to be near their businesses, while others scattered to various parts of the cities to improve their living conditions. This exodus from the third zone of habitation called for a division of the Synagogue, not because of diversity of thought but to make it more convenient to attend the services. In the year 1891 the residents of Auburn purchased a building on Second St. that served as their first synagogue, and in 1897 the Lewiston residents hired a large hall on Lisbon St. which served for a synagogue. The present synagogue in Auburn was built in 1921. The Lewiston synagogue was erected in 1925, having outgrown their previous quarters. To these two edifices the Jews of the cities point with pride as monuments in recognition of many years of patient strife and steady growth. The synagogues also have played important roles in cementing greater unity among the individuals.

As previously stated, most of the Jews made their debut into these cities as peddlers of dry goods, novelties, etc. In this manner they built up a large trade, a following that led to the establishment of permanent places of business.

The Jewish settlers of the period 1890 and on, also set out to peddle but along different lines. Instead of selling merchandize from house to house, they turned to buying. This was along the junk lines.

The men spent their time in peddling and trying to make a living, and much of their success was due to the wives that they brought with them, who kept boarders and opened small restaurants to help increase the income of the family. The growth in the junk business was similar to that of the other trades.

Business having increased and having acquired a good following, among a group of customers, it was necessary to procure large storehouses wherein to accumulate and grade the junk. Due to this and their growing trade with the mills from which they purchased the scrap iron and waste, there evolved the wholesale junk houses.

These wholesale houses were the means used by a later immigration to become established in the community. They advanced money to the new arrivals who set out to peddle, and in the evening upon depositing the accumulations with the junk shops, were able to repay the loan. With this aid, the new arrivals were able to adjust themselves quickly and by their assiduity and economy became economically independent of outside aid.

The junk business has so expanded that today it has become an item of international trade. The business includes the buying and selling of mill wastes, scrap machinery, iron and metals from local mills and also mills of the surrounding towns. The buying of scrap machinery has developed into a new field known as salvaging. The old machines are bought, renovated and resold. A thriving trade has thus developed.

Not only is business being done with the cotton and woollen mills but the paper mills throughout the state sell their old machines, metals, felts and paper to local dealers. It was by dealing with the paper mills that the international trade developed.

As time went on, many were progressing rapidly along economic lines. Having accumulated some money, many entered into various other lines of endeavor. The retail clothing and shoe business engaged the attention of a large number, and soon there were opened men's and ladies' clothing stores, that progressed with the progress of the city. About 1900 was the year that most of the existing stores were opened. From a negligible number, new retail stores were established on firm foundations, that catered to the customers that were made during the time of canvassing. Due to the nature of their business and the growing popularity of clothing on credit, the Jewish merchants virtually monopolized the credit clothing business of the city, as time developed.

Since real estate proved to be a productive investment, money that was accumulated in the course of their business, was turned into the purchase of business property. During the World War, real estate in the two cities had a tremendous boom and since Jews were in possession of a large number of business blocks and residences, they were soon, in a large number of instances, made independently wealthy. Old houses and business blocks were remodeled and new business concerns were brought in to occupy them, thereby aiding the city decidedly. The prosperity brought on by the war also affected the merchants and increased materially their economic status.

Another type of business which had its beginnings in peddling was the wholesale fruit business. From small beginnings a clientele was gathered and a few men turned to this field of economic endeavor.

In recent times their ways of earning a living have become widely diversified. The diversity is very extensive, spread over a wide field, but a goodly number of the individuals thus engaged had their early beginnings as peddlers. Loan Brokers are common among the Jews in whatever land they may reside. Lewiston has been no exception and especially within recent years has their numbers been swelled. They have also entered into manufacturing fields, making carbonated beverages, and shoe and heel manufacturing has recently engaged the interest of other individuals. The retail furniture business has been entered into. Wholesale and retail jewelers have become well established and have had their beginnings in repairing of watches and jewelry. Meat markets and grocery stores had their origins many years ago; at first catering to their own peoples but the variety of trade urged expansion. With the advent of the automobile a new field was opened to them, in the trading of new and used cars, and also tires and accessories. Custom tailors served their apprenticeship in Europe and upon arrival in Lewiston, opened tailor shops and dyeing and cleaning establishments.

In very recent years, the second generation has entered into the professional fields. With the education of the children, many entered law and medical schools, finally settling here to practice and they constitute a group of able men who merit the titles they bear. Not only have they furnished men for their own local community but have sent a number into larger cities to take up their practice. In the legal profession one of the lawyers climbed a notch above his brethren by being elected to the Judge's bench.

Teaching is the most recent profession that the Jewish young men and women have accepted as their life work. Although there were isolated representatives of the race in this profession as long ago as ten or fifteen years, it is only within recent time that male and female students upon graduation from college and normal school have entered into this profession, in large numbers.

A detailed study of the occupations will be made in a later section of the survey, their early history is thus brought up to date.



POPULATION

The total population on January 1, 1930 of the Jews in Lewiston and Auburn was seven hundred sixty-nine people. Although they constitute but 14% of the total population of the two cities, they comprise an important element in the business and professional population of the two cities. The following table is the result of a careful check of each individual family within the scope of the writer's reach. Because of the lack of previous statistics bearing on this item, there may be slight errors in the aggregate.

Jewish Population of Lewiston and Auburn

	Male	Female	Adults	Minors	Total Population
Lewiston	206	183	266	123	389
Auburn	202	178	267	113	380
Both Cities	408	361	533	236	769

By a study of the above diagram, it may be seen that the number of males exceeds the number of females by about 12%. There are at present in the city 408 males and 361 females. No theory can be advanced to account for the present disproportionate excess of one sex over the other because of the lack of adequate birth statistics. It may also be seen from the table that there are 533 adults and 236 minors, that serve to make up the total population. In arriving at these figures the writers drew the dividing line between the adults and minors at the age of high school graduation. Those attending higher institutions and those who graduated from high school and are now engaged in some occupation are included among the adults. The minor class is composed of children ranging from infancy through high school age. The minors compose 30.8% of the total Jewish population.

Between 1918 and 1925 the Jewish population in the two cities was on a decline. Following the World War local mills and factories entered into a period of depression, and readjustment to peace time activities. This threw a great many laborers out of work. Jewish trade, being dependent to a great extent upon these workers, quickly felt the effects of the depression. Then followed an exodus that included those people who had entered the city during the war time and had had no opportunity to become established as well as those people who had been here for a number of years and who had had no opportunity to establish economic ties that would hold them to these cities. Therefore there was a gradual but slow decrease in the Jewish population that didn't close until the recovery of the local mills and factories. The return to normalcy checked the depletion of the Jewish population and later attracted a few new families. But the numbers were being repleted, not from immigration alone, but gradually by births within the Jewish group.

## PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS OF JEWS IN LEWISTON AND AUBURN

	Auburn		Lewiston		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Automobile Dealers	6		2		8
Bakers	2		2		4
Bookkeepers and Stenographers		20		12	32
Clerks	9	2	9		20
Confectioners, wholesale and retail	5	1	3		9
Clergymen	1		1		2
Commission Merchants	10		3		13
Cotton and Wool Waste, Scrap Iron	13		2		15
Custom Tailors, Cleaners and Dyers	2		5		7
Furriers			4		4
Fruit Peddlers	7				7
Illustrators				1	1
Insurance and Real Estate	1		2		3
Jewelers	1		3		4
Journalists	2	1			3
Junk Peddlers	15		1		16
Laborers, skilled	5		6	1	12
Laborers, unskilled	3	1		1	5
Lawyers and Judges			5		5
Loan Brokers	1		4		5
Manufacturers, shoe, heel, soda	4		2		6
Painters	3		1		4
Painters, Commercial Signs			1		1
Physicians, Surgeons, Dentists			4		4
Public Accountants	1				1
Realtors			12		12
Retail Merchants	15	2	28	1	46
Salesmen			8		8
Transportation, Bus and Taxi	2				2
Teachers	3	9		1	13
Trained Nurses		2			2

In compiling the above table some difficulties were encountered in relegating individuals to the different groups. In very many cases it was discovered that certain individuals were associated in two and in many cases three different fields of endeavor. The greatest overlapping field was that of real estate holdings. Retail merchants had by far the largest amount of real estate. Often it was discovered that one was engaged not only in the sale of clothing, but was also a money lender, or a jeweler, or a shoe manufacturer, or was engaged in some other combination of occupation equally heterogeneous. But in the above table the occupation that seemed to be paramount in engaging the attention of the individual was listed as his occupation.

Among the realtors however, are listed only those whose sole duty it is to care for their property holdings without having some other activity claim their time. They constitute the second largest group in Lewiston, with twelve credited to their number.

By far the greatest number are listed as merchants with 46 as their total number. This number includes as its greatest component men's and ladies' clothiers, but also has a large number of shoe merchants, furniture merchants, and grocers. Bookkeeping and stenography employing 30, engage the attention of the girls of the second generation, especially those who do not continue into college from high schools. In the same way the clerks numbering 20 are composed of boys who did not continue into college from high school, but at once entered business houses or retail stores as clerks.

The junk peddler and fruit peddler with 16 and 9 respectively to their credit is made up of Jews of the first generation who, upon coming to these cities, took up peddling and have been engaged in it since. Commission merchants have, in many cases, been the outgrowth of peddling. The list of 13 includes those engaged as middle men, in buying and selling of vegetables, fruits, poultry, cattle, and hides. Cotton and wool waste and scrap iron holds the interest of fifteen people, some being engaged in international trade along this line. This number includes the men who are associated with the mills and factories throughout the state, buying up the waste products and selling on carload bases.

Skilled laborers include such trades as metal workers, shoe, tire and cornice workers. The furriers and painters, although listed separately may perhaps be included in this category. The unskilled laborers are composed for the most part of shoe workers who have learned no trade and also here and there a man employed in the junk yards. With the advent of the automobile a new field was opened in such occupations as mechanics, tire and car salerooms and filling stations.

The entrance of the Jews of these cities with the professional fields is a comparatively recent development. Except for the two clergymen, one rabbi in Lewiston, and one in Auburn, the professional fields are monopolized by the second generation. There are a total of 13 teachers most of whom have graduated from college or normal school within the last three years and are employed in the grammar and high schools, not only of these two cities, but throughout the state and also in Massachusetts. A scattering few who have taken up their residences elsewhere and are teaching are not included in this number. In the medical field there is one dentist, one bacteriologist, two physicians who are surgeons, and two trained nurses.

There are four Jewish lawyers, and one probate judge in these cities, one of whom is among the foremost attorneys of the communities, the other three being not far behind.

Among the Jewish students in the colleges and universities at the present time, there are a large number of potential candidates for the professional fields, giving promise to an increase in their numbers within the next few years.

## INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The number of institutions and organizations among the Jewish people of Lewiston and Auburn are few, and each one of these organizations with the exception of two or three, may be compared to a spoke of a wheel with the synagogue acting as the hub around which the others play.

The outstanding institution is the synagogue whose history has been related in previous paragraphs. At present our interest is centered on the role that this institution plays in the social life of the Jews of the two cities. The synagogue is the center of practically all social activities and is above all the binding force of the Jews. It is not only the house of prayer, but acts as a community house. All lodge and club meetings of the Jews are called to order under its roofs, and is the site of the Hebrew Schools where children from the ages of 6-14 go for their religious training. Both synagogues were under heavy debt and because of this factor practically all of the local Jews were set on effacing this debt.

In 1896 the first Jewish organization was founded and its main purpose was insurance.

The funds of the organization was used to help out any of its members in case of illness or need. Its other purpose was the promotion of social activities among the early group. However, with the forward advance of insurance companies, this organization soon dissolved.

The most important organization and one that also found its beginning during the early history of the Jews is the Undertakers Association. Because of the burial custom of the Jewish people, this is a very important organization. It has a total membership of 50 men and women and its purpose is to take care of the burial of the dead. They have charge of the upkeep of the cemetery, and also keep a record of the number of deaths. The money which is accumulated during the course of a year is used to defray expenses and the remainder then goes towards the upkeep of the synagogue.

This organization was at first a divided affair, each city having its own organization. The Jews of Lewiston brought their cemetery in 1895, and in 1898 the Auburn Jews bought theirs, adjacent to that of Lewiston. The two organizations were finally incorporated into one and it is functioning very smoothly.

The women were not to be outdone by the men. They were the founders of the Lewiston and Auburn Charity Association, the purpose of which may be surmized from the title. This organization is not in existence today, this due to the fact that the economic status of the Jews has advanced to such a degree that the organization degenerated because of disuse. However, this organization was the embryo for the present Beth Abraham Sisterhood and the Beth Jacob Auxiliary.

The Beth Abraham Sisterhood came into existence when the present synagogue, in Auburn, was built, and set the reduction of the debt of the synagogue as its goal. The same is true with the Beth Jacob Auxiliary, coming into existence on the completion of the synagogue, and having for its goal the payment of its debt.

Both organizations have made wonderful headway in attaining their respective goals. The reduction of the debts to their present status is largely due to the aggressive and energetic work of the Jewish women of the two cities. The membership of the Beth Abraham Sisterhood totals 67 while that of the Beth Jacob Auxiliary is 73.

The Lewiston and Auburn Aid Society is also composed totally of women with a membership of 65. The purpose of the organization is to aid poor travelers that come to the cities. Lodging is furnished for the night and money for transportation is provided. At the end of the year the organization turns over a goodly sum towards reducing the debt of the synagogue.

The most recent women organization of Lewiston and Auburn is the Hadassah. This is a chapter of the National Organization and has a membership of 75. This is run in

accordance with the national program whose sole purpose is to raise money for rebuilding the national homeland of Palestine.

The only men's organization in existence today is the Workman Circle with a membership of 55. This is a beneficial and fraternal order. It provides aid to any of its members in case of illness or need. Being a branch of the National organization, its members have access to one of the largest sanitoriums in the country which is sponsored by the organization and located in Liberty, New York. This branch also has a lodge doctor for its members.

Included also among the institutions are the Hebrew Schools of the two cities, each city sponsoring its own school. The student body is composed of boys and girls from 6-14 years of age under the tutelage of one man in each school. The students come to class immediately after the Public School session and spend between one and two hours daily in learning to read and write Hebrew-Yiddish, and to acquaint themselves with the bible and history of their people. There is today an aggregate of 67 students in both cities.

The Lewiston and Auburn Free Loan Association is made up of prominent Jews of the two cities, and its purpose is to loan money free of charge to any individual, irrespective of creed or nationality, who is in need of temporary aid. This organization is in its first stage, but has proven to be a solution to many people, whose names are not disclosed.

Up to very recently, there have been both a Y.M. and a Y.W.H.A. in these communities, whose purpose was to foster social activities, religious training, and a health program among the young generation. Their non-existence is due to gradual dropping off of membership because of marriage and employment obtained by its members in other cities. There is an opportunity to rebuild these organizations and much work can be accomplished since each organization has left funds for reestablishment.

In spite of the sudden relapse of the above organization, there is a renewal of the grouping tendency among the younger generation. This is brought about by the recent formation of a sorority composed of girls of both cities and which gives promise of making itself prominent among the Jewish organizations of the two communities. As for the boys, the same tendency is apparent by the continual but short lived formation of clubs and fraternities.

A good organizer would readily capitalize these tendencies and help these boys toward group organization, and group discussions which would prove helpful to them in the future.

## THE JEW IN POLITICS

The Jews in Lewiston and Auburn have played a minor role in politics up to recent years. This was due primarily to their lack of number and second, by their lack of interest, their interest being centered on making a living.

What prominence they did show in this field during the early period was not due to the group functioning as a whole but to individual initiative.

The most prominent figure in the political field of this early period was Mr. Isaacson. He was a member of the Lewiston city council, a candidate for sheriff of the Androscoggin county, and later was sent to the state legislature. The next Jew to gain prominence in politics was Mr. Samuel Epstein. He was elected to the board of health which was then an elective office.

In 1925, Dr. Henry Sprince was appointed city health officer; this was the first political appointment awarded to the Jews of the two cities. From this time on we find the Jews taking a more active part in politics.

In 1924 Benjamin Berman was elected county attorney of Androscoggin. His efficiency in this field resulted in his being elected for a second term. Following this he was a candidate for the Mayor's office, of the city of Lewiston, on the Republican ticket and put up the strongest opposition that the present mayor has ever faced. In 1928 he was elected Judge of Probate and is still serving in that capacity.

In Mr. Harris M. Isaacson, the Jewish people of Lewiston have a representative on the school board. He has served in this office for two terms. In 1928 he was a candidate for the state legislature.

The Jews of Lewiston and Auburn are residents of wards four and five respectively and due to their segregation they have become a vital factor in vote casting. This manifests itself particularly in ward five of Auburn, where, in recent elections, the vote of the Jewish people has been the direct cause of placing men in office. The Jews of Lewiston are not so influential in vote casting, yet they help a great deal in that the group as a whole votes one way. Their lack of influence is due to their lack of residential centralization, many of them living outside of ward four.

The Jewish people as a rule, are not adherents of one definite party, but vote as seems best to them at the occasion. However, their tendency within the last few years has been toward the Republican party.

In 1927 Mrs. Harry Rubinoff was a candidate for the Auburn School board. She was the first woman to seek a political office.

In summing up the political phase of the local Jews it may be said that the interest of the group as a whole has shown a marked increase, and gives promise of keener participation with the evolution of the younger generation.

EDUCATION

An unlimited cultural education is enthusiastically endorsed by the Jews of the two cities. The children are encouraged to attend the public schools and upon graduation from high school are sent to higher institutions of learning, if it is economically possible.

Jewish Children at Schools

	Male	Female
Grade Schools	57	59
High Schools	30	21
Business and Normal Schools	2	8
Cultural Colleges	22	13
Law, Technology, and Medical Schools	6	
Art Schools		2

As evidenced by the above table there are 116 children attending the grade schools. Invariably upon completion of their studies here they are sent into the high schools, with a possible exception of one or two annually being sent to a preparatory school, after two or three years at high school. At present there are 51 children of the Jewish race attending the high schools. They are prominent in extra curricula activities. The boys take leading roles in the fields of sport. Debating, music and dramatics are also endeavors in which they are prominent. The girls are prominent, not only in debating, music and sports, but in literary and dramatic clubs as well.

As a rule every Jewish child graduates from high school. Only an isolated few leave school before graduation, perhaps one or two annually.

Colleges and higher institutions claim a goodly number of high school graduates. Taking for example, the total number of graduates in the year 1929, all but one are now attending some college or finishing school. Previous years do not show such remarkable records but the variance is not great.

In recent years the girls have shown a tendency toward the Normal Schools. Whereas, seven or eight years ago only one or two were found attending these schools. Today there are eight girls in the Normal Schools, either in this state, in Massachusetts, or New York. And, in interviewing the girls who are still in high school it was found that a good percentage were entertaining expectations of continuing into normal or academic schools, with a view to teaching as their careers. Encouragement is given them by their parents who are very enthusiastic supporters of education.

The Cultural colleges claim by far the largest number of high school graduates of Lewiston and Auburn. To some extent this may be due to the influence that Bates College exerts on them, being right in their midst. Nevertheless, a goodly number are attending colleges in and around Boston with a scattering in New Hampshire and New York. There are 35 students attending the Cultural colleges. Two students are studying law, two are in medical schools, and two are studying engineering. There

are two students attending Business Schools, and two girls are engaged in studying art. Isolated cases of those studying dramatics, vocal expression and music have been listed under the head of Cultural Colleges.

Remarkable success has attended the Jewish children in their educational progress. In the two high schools almost invariably they have a gratifying representation on the honor rolls upon graduation, the remaining Jewish children being not far behind. In the same way, also, in the colleges their race has a goodly number at the head of the scholastic list. And upon graduation, though the time is still young, there have been indications of outstanding success in the achievements of the local Jewish graduates.

Interest in education has been manifested by the Jewish parents, not only in the educational process of their children, but also in an attempt to improve their own meagre education. The year 1927 included the largest number of Jews attending night school. In Auburn, of the 60 pupils enrolled, 20 of these, or one-third were Jews. This number was entirely made up of women, because the men, through their business associations, had succeeded in learning to read and write. There has been a decided decrease in the enrollment of Jews in the night schools since, due to the fact that the same elementary courses in reading, writing, and spelling have been continued, and their former students find no more need for such schooling. Vocational courses in the City of Auburn would doubtless show a keen interest manifested by the Jewish people as well as other nationalities.

The City of Lewiston has instituted vocational courses in their night schools along with elementary courses. The elementary courses contain no Jews but, on the other hand, the vocational courses given at the high schools are well attended by the Jewish women who are anxious to improve their own status along cultural lines.



CRIME

Criminality among the Jews in these two cities endorses the fact that they are a law abiding group. In Lewiston a careful check-up revealed that most of the arrests were due to traffic violations and other minor enfracctions.

An investigation of the daily police records of the year 1929 reveals but ten arrests. Eight of these were due to enfracction of the traffic regulations for which the accused were either released or received a nominal fine. One person was arrested for gambling and the other person was apprehended for selling liquor, but was released because of insufficient evidence.

The year 1928 showed a slightly more serious crime record. During the year, there were twelve arrests. Five arrests were due to traffic violations. Three persons were apprehended for gambling or being present where gambling was going on. One was a trespass case and another arrested for buying goods without a license. There was also one arrest for using obscene language.

The number of convictions for the above cases were not available. Arrests of Jewish individuals who do not reside in the two cities are not included among the above, although the number is almost negligible.

For the year 1926 when there were complete tabulated reports available in Lewiston it was revealed that there were a total of 1,873 arrests. Of this total 26 Jews were arrested. It must be remembered that this number includes out of town residents also. This year appears to be an exception as evidenced by the detailed investigation conducted for the years 1928-1929. The reason for the large number of arrests in 1926 could not be investigated because the daily records for that year were not available.

In Auburn the situation is different. For many years Auburn has been known as the most law abiding city in the state. This characterizes its citizens as a whole irregardless of nationality.

The records indicate that the average arrests for the past few years among the Jews of Auburn have been about two per year. These were due particularly to enfracctions of the traffic laws.

Chief of Police, Harry Rowe, declared that the Jewish people of Auburn have an excellent record as law abiding citizens.

HEALTH

In working on the health problem of the Jewish people of Lewiston and Auburn the writers have been greatly handicapped, as previously, because of lack of statistics, with respect to the different nationalities. However, the following statements have been obtained from the Health Officers of the two cities.

Doctor Leathers, Health Officer of the City of Auburn, has this statement to make with regard to the Jews of his city, "During my experience as a doctor and as far back as I can remember, the health record of the Jewish people of Auburn has been excellent. Contagious and communicable diseases of any sort have been and are very low among them."

Miss Shirley Davis, Municipal Nurse, states, "We have hardly any trouble at all with the Jewish people of Auburn. The health records of the Jewish school children are very good."

In an interview with the Health Officer of the City of Lewiston this statement was made with regard to the Jewish people of Lewiston.

"The Jewish people are very much in accord with the promotion of health and sanitation. Contagious and communicable diseases are very rare among them. This is due to the fact that when their attention is called to any illness in their families, immediate care is given so that the case doesn't become serious. This in turn helps to prevent the spreading of the disease to anyone else."

"The same is true with sanitation. The Jewish people live up to the standards set by the department and fulfill the requirements. If their attention is called to any defect, immediate means are taken for improving the case."

In concluding his statement with regard to the Auburn Jews, Dr. Leathers particularly emphasized the fact that the infant mortality rate among them was exceedingly low. The same is true with the City of Lewiston. The record for the past five years among the Jews of both communities has been marred by only one death at birth.

The Jews of Lewiston and Auburn present a clear sheet with regard to insanity and feeble-mindedness.

The death rate of the Jewish people of Lewiston and Auburn for the past five years average about three per one thousand population annually. The greatest number of deaths for one year occurred in 1918 numbering twelve. These deaths were caused by the ravages of influenza. But since then the death rate has been very low.

The birth rate of the Jewish people averages about four per one thousand population, annually. This birth rate is a decided decrease over the period preceding the war. At that time the rate was, as near as can be estimated, approximately 6.5 per one thousand population. But in recent years the tendency has been to control the birth rate, in accord with the movement throughout the country.

## THE MORES

In relating the mores of the group only the outstanding ones shall be mentioned since it would require many volumes if one wanted to go into detail with them.

The mores of the Jews may be classed under two divisions. First those mores that have been passed on from generation to generation from the early Hebrews. Second, those promulgated within the group itself.

The ritual of the Sabbath, circumcision, inter-marriage and the dietary laws are the mores passed on from generation to generation and are first heard of in the Bible. To the Orthodox Jew, Sabbath means the ceasing of all form of labor and business pursuits. From Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, he participates in no manual activity whatever. The observance of Saturday as a holiday has been the outstanding ritual of the Jews in connection with his religion.

Every Jewish male child upon attaining the seventh day of his birth is introduced to his first principal ritual by being circumcised. This custom is mentioned in the Bible as a covenant between God and Abraham and has been strictly adhered to throughout the ages. This custom is so engrained in the minds of the Jewish people that it gives promise of being perpetuated whether all the rest are continued or not, in the future.

Throughout this entire history the Jews have had an aversion towards inter-marriage. The early Jewish leaders forbade this, and this feeling has become permanent. The Jews of today particularly of the older generation, still observe this tradition, and consider a violator of this custom an outcast.

The dietary laws are the last of this group. They deal, for the most part with the kinds of food the people may eat and how to prepare them. The importance of these laws and their effect upon the group assimilation will be brought out in another paragraph.

The predominant custom of the second division is the aid extended, one to the other. Money, medical aid, etc. is given an individual when in need, so that he may not be dependant upon outside groups, and in this trait the people take much pride. This is evidenced by the fact that early organizations have been founded with this purpose incorporated in their constitutions.

Close touch is also kept with affairs concerning Palestine. A sentimental feeling is held toward it as the cradle of their nation and the disseminating point of their religion. Therefore, every Jew gives moral and monetary support toward the Zionist movement.

## AMALGAMATION AND ASSIMILATION

The Jew in Lewiston and Auburn did not wait until the second generation to assimilate himself with the Gentiles, at the expense of his own traditions and beliefs. The outstanding manifestations of biological assimilation has been the alarming rate at which the number of inter-marriages have increased, year by year. During this last year, 1929, there have been more than twice the number of marriages outside the group than within it. Though this ratio is widely regarded as being excessive of the natural tendency of assimilation, either through inter-marriage or miscegenation, nevertheless the number of inter-marriages are increasing yearly. This is evidenced by the fact that there are at present approximately a dozen Jews who have been married outside of their group, in spite of the short time that the group has resided in the city and the intense antipathy with which the Jew regards inter-marriage.

The Sabbath day has been a giant problem facing the Jew in the process of assimilation. Specifically stated in the Bible as a day to be kept holy and free from economic pursuit he has through the ages observed this day with the proper ritual, as an outstanding manifestation to the outside world of the tenacity with which the Jew was clinging to his faith. Upon coming to this country the group encountered a social order that made the strict observance of the Sabbath difficult. This has been especially evident in Lewiston and Auburn, where Saturday has become the shopping day of the week, and since the Jews are engaged in the businesses that cater to these shoppers, it has meant the final overcoming of the ritual observance of Sabbath to the Orthodox Jew and finally to his children. This is an outstanding factor in the closer assimilation of the Jew with the Gentile. However, even though many Jews don't attend the synsgogue on this day and violate many things held sacred to this day, nevertheless, in his home the Sabbath is kept holy and serves to keep somewhere in his breast, the realization that this day is holy and devoted solely to the worship of his God.

Another evidence of the merging of the Jewish group with the Gentile is the widening disregard of the food and dietary laws of their fathers. Like the Sabbath the dietary laws are slighted but not without a twinge of conscience on the part of the offender. Even though this ritual is flouted in public, it is still strongly adhered to in almost every Jewish home, where food of an alien nature is not allowed on the table.

Outside organizations have done more in the process of the social assimilation of the Jews than any other factor. The public schools of course, are primary factors in the merging of the Jewish personality of the child with that of the other races. Various organizations that grow out of the school have served to tighten this band. The Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. has attracted the Jewish child and has served as an important assimilatory link in these two cities.

Among the older group the outside organizations have also played an important role in the process of assimilation. Such fraternal orders as the Odd Fellows, the Masons, and Elks have large number of Jews included in their ranks. Other minor organizations in the two cities include Jewish members, though not to such a large extent. Through association with their fellow memvers the Jews have made valuable acquaintances that have helped them greatly to adjust themselves to the social and economic orders of these cities.

## PROBLEMS OF THE SECOND GENERATION

The outstanding need of the second generation Jews in Lewiston and Auburn is that of organization. There is no club or organization in the two cities that caters to the Jewish child exclusively in an attempt to organize them and promote the feeling of fraternity, and develop the common bond held by them. In the past there have existed several clubs in the nature of a Y.M. and Y.W.H.A. besides fraternal organizations of various kinds. But these have broken up for various reasons, primarily because of lack of interest and especially because of lack of efficient leadership.

However, the outstanding problem facing the Jew in these cities in regard to the second generation is the utter disregard of religious observance and decided drift of the younger generation of Jews from all that was held holy by their fathers for thousands of years. The Hebrew school fills an important need in the community in the teaching of the Hebrew language, and gives the child a fundamental training in the history of the Jews. But, beyond the school the child is not encouraged to improve his moral personality or his religious outlook that is furnished him at the synagogue. There is a decided drift from religion in this respect, but no doubt this bids fair to be improved as evidenced by the widespread mutterings heard on all sides against this condition. Religious observance long strictly adhered to by the Jews in the past has become liberalized and drifted to the other extreme, but, no doubt will return to a middle path in the future.

What are considered as problems by the orthodox Jew, but looked upon as inevitable by the liberalized and younger generation may be briefly considered here.

The violations of the dietary laws are regarded as inevitable because of the society they are in. Disregard of the Sabbath is widely lamented, but there seems to be no means of overcoming this because of the conflicting social order. However, it is a problem in that it encourages a drift from religion because the Bible specifically stresses the observance of this day.

Inter-marriage is still a problem for the second generation and the Jew, whether liberal or orthodox cannot reconcile himself to the acceptance of this practice.

Minor problems face the Jew in every walk of life, but these minor problems are in the field of self-adjustment. The outstanding problem may be mentioned again as being that of drifting from religious training that is so essential to an adolescent person.

## CONCLUSION

The progress made by the Jews of Lewiston and Auburn has been very gratifying for the short time that they have resided here. Advances have been rapid both economically and socially.

But during the course of the survey it has been evident that there are segregated fields of their culture that have been lagging, especially in regard to their religion and social activities. A constructive program could be profitably instituted, with the following suggestions incorporated within the program:

Among the primary needs of the community are adequate Sunday schools. This branch of religious training would fulfill the needs of those who, either because of age or other reason, don't or can't attend the regular Hebrew School classes. This would afford each individual a wider scope of knowledge with regard to his race history and religious leaders.

Attempts at this kind of work have been made, and for the time being have proved successful both under the supervision of Rev. Kurhan, and the Y.W.H.A. Because of the disorganization of the Y.W.H.A. the sponsors of this movement were withdrawn, and the Sunday School were short lived.

In connection with the above suggestions a more elaborate program for Friday night services seems advisable. Services which would attract the younger generation to the synagogue, and help promote the religious feelings which have always imbued the race.

Lewiston and Auburn are the only two cities of their size that are so inadequately supplied with young men's and young women's Jewish organizations. It seems that each group irregardless of nationality or creed ought and should have means wherein and by which the members of the group can get together and discuss the problems which are common to them, to help promote the welfare of the group, and to forward recreational and social programs among themselves. This would not only help to stimulate the necessary progress, but aid in the promotion of a greater pride in the group. A Y.M. and Y.W.H.A. would be the appropriate means with which to foster the above needs. Such organizations should include not only the young, but the older people who should take an active part in its organization and promotion.

These organizations could also be the means for advancement of Bible classes and lectures, which are of vital interest to the group, and which would help supplement the other suggestions.

Last, but not least, there is need for a good organizer in this community. A man who would devote his time solely for the social good of the community and for the upkeep of a proper community house. A man who has had actual experience along this field of work, and who shall be able to give to the people that which they have so vitally missed throughout the greater part of their residence in this community. With a man of this type at the helm plus the co-operation of the people, the group would go far toward the realization of those ends necessary for the progress of the group.