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We Exist Series 3: Quotes

We Exist Series 3: The Black Church, Maine's  
Black Residents and the Wider Community

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## Family Tradition

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# Family Traditions

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## **The Black Church, Maine's Black Residents and the Wider Community**

### **Ms. Beverly Bowens**



"Well, like any New England family, for Christmas we'll have a turkey, went to church. I don't think it was any different than anyone else in Maine."

Ms. Beverly Bowens (born in Maine; age 67; left at 21 years old for about 35 to 40 years and then returned to Maine)

**Full Length Interview:** [Home is Where I Make It: Bowens, Beverly](#)

### **Mr. James Mathews**



"I believe that for my parents the big tradition at the time was getting together on Fourth of July, and going up to Sebago Lake. And we would all meet. At one time we would all meet at the church I belong to, Green Memorial AME Zion Church on Munjoy Hill. And when I first started going as a child, the church would rent a bus and we would go up there, to Sebago Lake, and all picnic together. And everybody came from far away; Washington, D.C., and other parts of our family would all come together. And that used to be the big day where everybody would get together and it was quite a 'to do.' And then as people either moved away or things started getting crowded at the lake or whatever, for me personally, the tradition kind of went by the way side. We wouldn't go to the lake, but we may see everybody up on Munjoy Hill where the Fisher family lived. We would all congregate up there and then we'd go up for the fireworks that they had on the promenade and like that."

"As far as the services in church go, just attending the service and attending. Christmas Eve. We used to attend church on Christmas Eve; not any longer. But that's one of the things that we used to do on the day before Christmas. Take the kids along. But so much has changed since the kids have left and on their own that we don't have these things any longer. That's why I'm trying to remember what it was we used to do with them. But we used to gather together and go as a group, you know. Even back in the New York City days. It was a larger group because it was my parents had four of us. There was six of us that went to all these things: Christmas, Easter services in church. I'm still talking about church."

Mr. James Mathews (age 59; born 1941 in Portland Maine; married with five children; lived in Maine all his life – lived in South Portland for over 26 years)

**Full Length Interview:** [Home is Where I Make It: Mathews, James](#)

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## **The Black Church, Maine's Black Residents and the Wider Community**

### **Mrs. June McKenzie**



"Oh, yes we do, and they're really big. My sister in Connecticut has, what, seven children, and my sister in the islands has three, and my other sister has one. And all our families and our grandchildren and everything, we all get together on Fourth of July and have a picnic at Sebago Lake, which started out as a big church thing. Our church did it every year, and we've just kept up the tradition."

Mrs. June McKenzie (age 72; born 1929 in Portland Maine; fifth-generation Mainer; lived in Maine all her life)

**Full Length Interview:** [Home is Where I Make It: McKenzie, June](#)