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Jews in Bath by Donald Povich

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The early history of Jews in Bath Maine is obscure. All that is available is a matter or rumor in the vague memories of some of the elder living or recently died residents. There was a Jew in Union Maine as early as the pre-revolutionary years. The early history of Portland and Bangor are well documented and there were among these Jews many peddlers and they no doubt came to Bath as it was a major port of those times. But as to the matter of actually living in the city any record of such residents has long been lost. According to an earlier account The first Jewish settler in Bath was one Isaac Mikelsky in the year--- his oldest daughter was known to have said that her father had told her that at one time there was a store operated by two Jewish men. They were said to have come from Lewiston and did not actually live in Bath.

All that is known about the arrival of Isaac Mikelsky in ---- is a tale of his having gone to Rockland by train with several of his children and that on his return trip one of his children, possibly his oldest daughter Sophia, became ill in Bath and he had stop for medicine and for her to have a chance to recuperate. It seems that the natives were good to him, a fact hard to imagine that this stranger probably not speaking the language well and very foreign to the Bathites, Nevertheless so the story goes and Isaac liking it so well decided to settle his family there.

The reception these early Jews received in Bath came through as somewhat amazing. Bath was a town that in the days of the No Nothing affairs (date) was extremely Anti Catholic. So much so that in the year (date) the local Protestants burned and sacked the Catholic church. Yet these same people seemed to welcome the early Jews without a qualm. There were some small anti semitic acts and slurs among the young boys but it seems no more than against any other minority as was the custom at that time. Jewish men from the very start seem to have been taken in to the lodges and orders some even came having already joined the Odd Fellows and the like and they joined at one of these societies in Bath. Abraham Gedijman came to Bath in 1908 already a member of the Odd fellows and Joe Selivich joined the Masens in (date)

Research has shown the W. A. Filene of Lynn Mass had a store in Bath in the 1870s. Filene was a Prussian Jew from Posen in Germany his name was In He had two stores in Lynn and one in Seale Mass as well as the one in Bath. He sent his son to manage the Bath store. It was later managed by Son Bertrand. It was however not a great success and in It did disappear from the scene.

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