

Jewish Philanthropic Activities in Waterville, circa 1958

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This report contains statistical data obtained from internal documents of the Beth Israel Synagogue, the Beth Israel Sisterhood, the Waterville Chapter of B'nai B'rith, and the Waterville Chapter of Hadassah, on deposit in Colby College Special Collections. Access to these documents were provided by Beth Israel and by the Levine (Miller) family.

All statistical data were derived from handwritten financial documents dating from 1956 to 1962. Exact amounts of charitable contributions were not recorded out of respect for the privacy of the donors.

Table 1 – Charitable involvement of Jewish families¹ (84) in Waterville², circa 1958

Actively involved in charitable work	94.0%
Donated to building the new Beth Israel Synagogue ³	77.4%
Donated to the Hadassah ⁴	65.5%
Donated to B'nai B'rith ⁵	54.8%
Dues-Paying Member of Hadassah ⁶	54.8%
Dues-Paying Member of Sisterhood ⁷	45.2%
Purchased trees through Hadassah ⁸	42.9%
Donated to the Sisterhood ⁹	35.7%
Donated to Youth Aliyah ¹⁰	27.4%
Member of Beth Israel board 1958 ³	19.0%

1. Identified on the basis of a January 1958 Beth Israel mailing list
2. Defined as the greater Waterville area, including Skowhegan
3. Data taken from March 1958 Beth Israel Synagogue Dedication booklet
4. Data taken from Hadassah donor list, 1957-1958
5. Data taken from B'nai B'rith financial records (from the Levine Collection), 1961-1962 (data not available for 1958)
6. Data taken from Hadassah membership dues records, 1958-1959
7. Data taken from Sisterhood Ledger #1, 1958
8. Data taken from Hadassah records of Tree Certificate mailings 1957-1958 (financial records, scattered)
9. Data taken from Sisterhood Ledger #1, 1958
10. Data taken from Hadassah financial records, 1958-1959

Table 2 – Charitable involvement of the active¹¹ (79) Jewish families in Waterville

Donated to building the new Beth Israel Synagogue	82.3%
Donated to Hadassah	69.6%
Donated to B’nai B’rith	58.2%
Dues-Paying Member of Hadassah	58.2%
Dues-Paying Member of Sisterhood	48.1%
Purchased trees through Hadassah	45.6%
Donated to the Sisterhood	38.0%
Donated to Youth Aliyah	29.1%
Member of Beth Israel board 1958	20.3%

^{11.} Defined as “actively involved in charitable work” per previous table. It’s likely that the 5 inactive residents/families have either moved out of town or passed away.

Table 3 – Donation patterns¹²

Donated to domestic causes through Waterville Jewish organizations ¹³	90.5%
Donated to at least one of Hadassah, B’nai B’rith or Sisterhood	72.6%
Donated to Israeli causes through Waterville Jewish organizations ¹⁴	73.8%
Beth Israel board members whose wife is a member of Sisterhood	75.0%
Only donated to the new Beth Israel Synagogue	13.1%

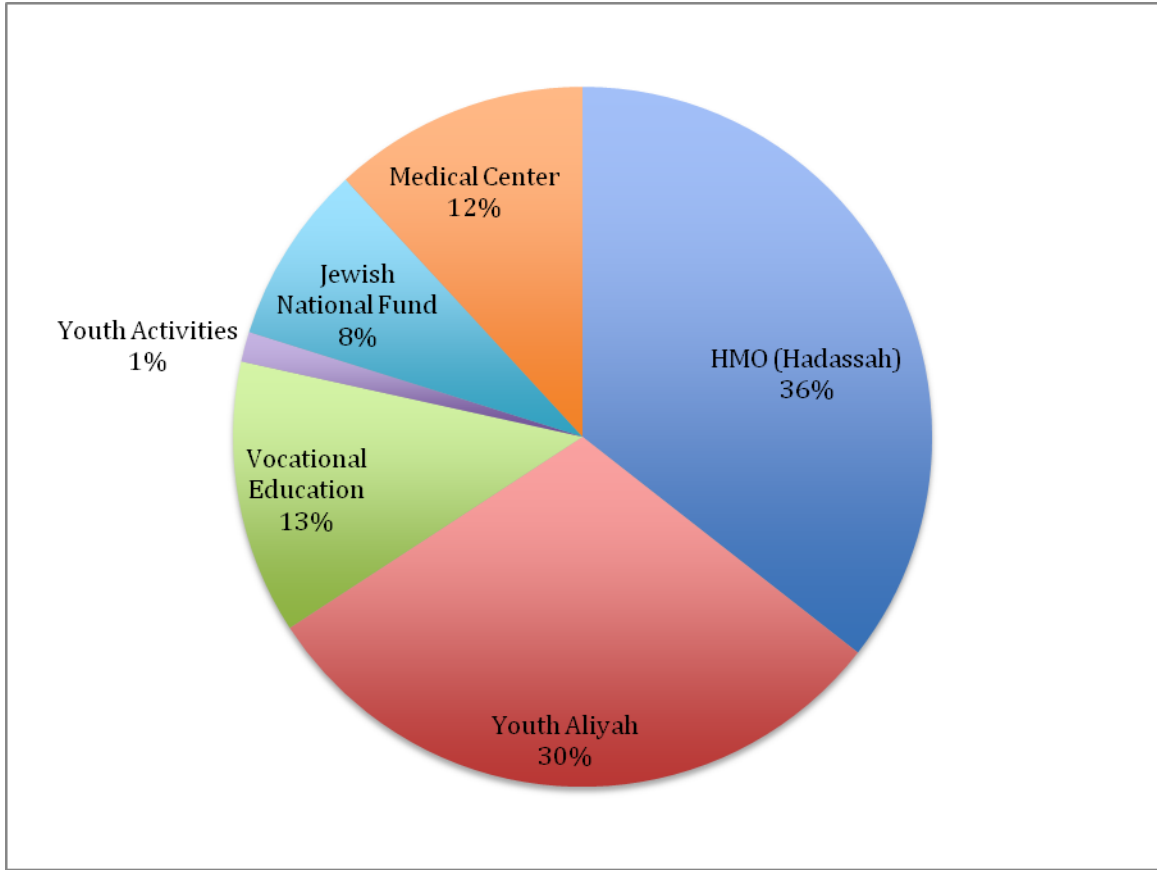
^{12.} Based on all 84 Jewish families identified in Waterville

^{13.} Defined as actively donated to either Sisterhood, B’nai B’rith or Beth Israel, or is a member of board of Beth Israel or a member of the Sisterhood

^{14.} Defined as actively donated to either Hadassah or Youth Aliyah, or funded a tree planting in Israel

Hadassah collection quotas

<i>Time</i>	<i>HMO (Hadassah Medical Organization)</i>	<i>Youth Aliyah</i>	<i>Vocational Education</i>	<i>Youth Activities</i>	<i>Jewish National Fund</i>	<i>Medical Center Building Fund</i>	Total
1956-1957	892.5	765	320	35	210	300	2522.5
1957-1958	900	765	320	35	210	300	2530
1958-1959	900	765	320	35	210	300	2530



* All collection quotas were filled.
 ** Data was collected from Hadassah financial records

Major Donors to the new Beth Israel Synagogue building, 1958

Special Gifts	Donor, as identified in 1958 Dedication Booklet	1956 Cost Estimate
Sanctuary	Mr. and Mrs. Harold Alfond	\$10,000
Pulpit	Mrs. Bessie Sterns	\$7,500
Chapel	Ludy and Pacy Levine	\$5,000
<i>Ner Tomid</i> (Eternal Light)	Mr. and Mrs. Meyer Kirstein	\$5,000
Kitchen	Mr. and Mrs. Harold Alfond	\$5,000
Foyer	Ann Wolff, Frieda Miller, Betty Kaplan	\$5,000
Rabbi's Study		\$5,000
Center Rows (8 seats each)		\$1500 each
Retiring Room	Mrs. Hyman Rosenthal	\$1,000
Retiring Room	Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Levine, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Levine	\$1,000
Coat room		\$1,000
Ten Windows		\$750 each
28 Rows of seats (4 seats per row)		\$750 each
Pulpit Furniture	Mr. Sacks	\$500 x 4
One Pew	Mrs. Celia Shiro	
One Pew	Lewis L. Levine	
One Pew	Rose and Edward Saperstein	
One Pew	Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Wolman	
Torah Stand	Mrs. Sarah Barron and Family	
Torah Stand	Children of William and Paulie Seltzer	
Candelabrum	Mr. and Mrs. George Chesner	

Other observations

From Hadassah financial records:

- Blue Boxes – there were no specific records indicating which families these donations came from, but each collection totals \$300 for the community.
- Hadassah collected for Youth Aliyah at least 4 times from 1956 to 1960.

From Beth Israel records:

- According to a letter found in the Beth Israel records, August 19 1957, there existed a Waterville Jewish Federation. It collected \$300 annually starting in May 1949 for a “Waterville Jewish Community Center Fund.” The fund was turned over to the Beth Israel Congregation in the letter “to be applied to the cost of the Synagogue – Center Building now in progress.” The Federation donated an estimated \$2400 towards the construction of the new Beth Israel synagogue.
- Another letter from the Waterville Jewish Federation to the Beth Israel Congregation on August 19, 1957, shows that \$1500 from the “Waterville Jewish Community Center Fund” was temporarily invested in Israeli bonds.
- Mrs. Florence Sterns donated \$1500 in memory of Mr. George Sterns to be used for improving the front of the synagogue for “protection from the elements.”