

A Sampler from the New *Historical Atlas of Maine.*

Religion in Maine

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This article offers an example of work-in-progress on a significant project to develop an historical atlas of Maine. Although an article depicting religious settlement in Maine may seem far removed from the policy analyses typically featured in the journal, religious participation is a fundamental aspect of civic engagement in the United States. Thus, we feature here a glimpse of Maine's religious heritage. Proudly, we also present MPR's first full-color pullout, which is intended to give readers a visual as well as textual portrait of religious settlement in the Kennebec Valley and Portland through the first half of the nineteenth century.

For the past three years, a group of researchers centered at the University of Maine but extending throughout the state has been at work developing a new *Historical Atlas of Maine*. This atlas will combine text, maps, statistical tables, and graphics to create a series of approximately one hundred two-page plates, each of which will define a key development in Maine's history.

A single such plate can encode information that would require many pages of text; and the impact of the charts, graphs, maps, and illustrations can bring forward a moment in history or a long-term historical trend with a vividness that text alone cannot achieve. In May 1999, the Maine Legislature voted funds to initiate this project, and the University of Maine System also committed funds. Serving as research directors are Richard Judd, professor of History at the University of Maine, and Stephen Hornsby, professor of geography and director of the Canadian-American Center at the University of Maine. The planning group includes three other historians: professors Jacques Ferland, Martha McNamara, and Marli Weiner. The group also includes a natural scientist with expertise in paleoecology and environmental history, Professor George Jacobson, and a literary scholar with a strong interest in human ecology, Professor Burton Hatlen. The University of Maine Press will publish the completed *Historical Atlas of Maine*, and Michael Alpert, director of the press, serves as a consultant to the project. A group of secondary school teachers has also been recruited to advise the planning committee.

The planning group is seeking to develop an historical atlas that will reveal the cultural, environmental, economic, and social interactions that have shaped the history of the state from deglaciation (14,000 years ago) to the present. The planning group has defined four themes that it will trace through the history of Maine. These broad themes include: 1) the interaction of human beings and the natural environment; 2) the ways in which diverse cultures have come together to delimit and reshape one another; 3) the opposing pulls of inward-looking insularity and outward-looking cosmopolitanism; and 4) the symbiotic relationships between urban and rural, developed and less-developed regions.

By emphasizing these universal themes as they play out in the history of Maine, the planning group is seeking to create an atlas that will be of interest and value not only to the people of Maine but to a broader audience throughout the United States and in other countries as well.

From spring 1999 through fall 2000, the planning group hosted a series of meetings at various sites throughout Maine, drawing together historians and other researchers to discuss the contents of the one hundred plates that will compose the atlas. In May 2000, Michael Hermann, a cartographer educated at Pennsylvania State University, joined the project to provide full-time technical and design support and overall coordination. Many of the plates require significant new research, often including the cooperative efforts of several scholars. But as of fall 2001, about forty plates are fully or partially completed. (For purposes of comparison, it might be worth noting that the three-volume *Historical Atlas of Canada* required more than twenty years to complete.) The planning group has set a target date of June 2004 for completion of the *Historical Atlas of Maine*.

As examples of this work-in-progress, we offer here brief descriptions of three atlas plates that will be devoted to the religious history of Maine. It should be emphasized that these three plates are still in a formative stage; revisions may well continue to the time when the atlas is published. However, we are hoping that this sampler will serve to elicit interest in this project among potential readers and/or contributors.



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Section III of the *Historical Atlas of Maine* will be titled “Shaping Maine (1783 to the Mid-19th Century).” One plate in Section III will be devoted to “Maine’s Changing Religious Identities.” The draft text for this plate reads as follows:

In the years before the Civil War, American social and cultural life centered almost entirely upon churches, so that even individuals who questioned traditional Christian doctrines did not feel free to live wholly secular lives, but instead sought to create alternative churches. The southwestern area of Maine saw rapid population growth in the years after the American Revolution, as agricultural settlements spread along the coast and inland along river valleys. Administratively, these areas remained part of Massachusetts until 1820, and they inherited the Massachusetts tradition of state-supported Congregational churches. However, beginning in the last decades of the eighteenth century, itinerant Methodist and Baptist evangelists challenged the dominance of the Congregational Church. These evangelists brought a new religious style to Maine, centered not on disputes over fine points of Calvinist doctrine but rather on the emotional experience of being “born again.” At the same time, many Congregational churches were themselves pulled in contrary directions. Some churches remained loyal to traditional Calvinist doctrines that saw a group of the “elect” as predestined by God to salvation, while the mass of humankind was predestined to damnation. But other churches moved toward the “New Light” revivalism brought to America by George Whitefield during the Great Awakening (1735-1750) and, by the early nineteenth century, Congregational evangelists were competing in the countryside with Baptist and Methodist evangelists. At the same time, however, still other Congregationalists, especially in larger cities and commercial centers, moved further into rationalism, as some Congregational parishes adopted en bloc a Unitarian theology, while others split between traditional Calvinist and Unitarian groups.

Congregationalists, Methodists, and traditional Calvinist Baptists all retained or quickly acquired an aura of social respectability: even their revival meetings were relatively decorous. These Protestant churches also affirmed a set of traditional doctrines centered on the

divinity of Jesus and the redemption of sinners through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and they required their members to affirm a belief in these doctrines. But more radical religious groups also appeared in Maine during the post-Revolutionary period. The Freewill Baptists shocked the orthodox by rejecting Calvinist doctrine entirely and proclaiming that salvation was open to all who would give themselves to the transformation of the New Birth, as symbolized by the baptism of the newborn believer. Universalists inherited a Baptist emotional fervor, but they went beyond even Freewill Baptists in affirming not only that salvation is available to all who choose it, but that in fact all human beings WILL ultimately be saved. Quakers, who emphasized the authority of the Inner Light over codified doctrines, also maintained several meetings in Maine; and an extreme group of Quakers, the Shakers (originally “Shaking Quakers”), established a community at Sabbathday Lake in New Gloucester. Shakers combined a liberal interpretation of Christian doctrines with ecstatic religious practices shaped by the revivalist tradition. The Shakers required their members to live communally (and celibately) in Shaker settlements, and significant numbers of Mainers joined the community at Sabbathday Lake. Later, William Miller, a Vermont-based prophet who calculated that the Second Coming of Jesus would occur on October 22, 1844, won a number of Maine followers. Many Millerites sold or gave away all their property in expectation of their ascent to God’s Kingdom; after the disappointment of their expectations, some Millerites regrouped to form the Advent Christian and the Seventh Day Adventist churches.

Dissident Protestants—Methodists and Calvinist Baptists as well as Freewill Baptists, Universalists, and Shakers—established a strong presence especially in the upriver and upland towns, where rebellious settlers regarded with suspicion all forms of the “Establishment,” whether political (in the form of the Federalist politicians), economic (in the form of the Great Proprietors that claimed legal title to large areas of Maine), or religious (in the form of a tax-supported Congregational clergy). While evangelical Protestantism and its various offshoots dominated the religious life of early Maine, other varieties of religious

belief and experience also maintained or established a presence in the state. The Native Peoples maintained their own indigenous forms of spirituality, often intermingled with Christian beliefs and practices. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Catholic priests served Indian missions in what is now Maine, and the early decades of the nineteenth century also saw the establishment of Catholic parishes serving the Acadian settlers of the upper St. John Valley and a group of Irish settlers in the Damariscotta-Whitefield area. Isolated groups of Episcopalians, often of Tory sympathies, also managed to survive in Maine. The struggle of dissident religious groups against the Congregational Establishment climaxed in 1820, when the new Maine State Constitution broke with the Massachusetts Constitution in establishing total religious freedom. In subsequent decades all religious groups competed for the allegiance of Maine people, although outbreaks of anti-Catholic agitation began in the 1840s and continued into the twentieth century.

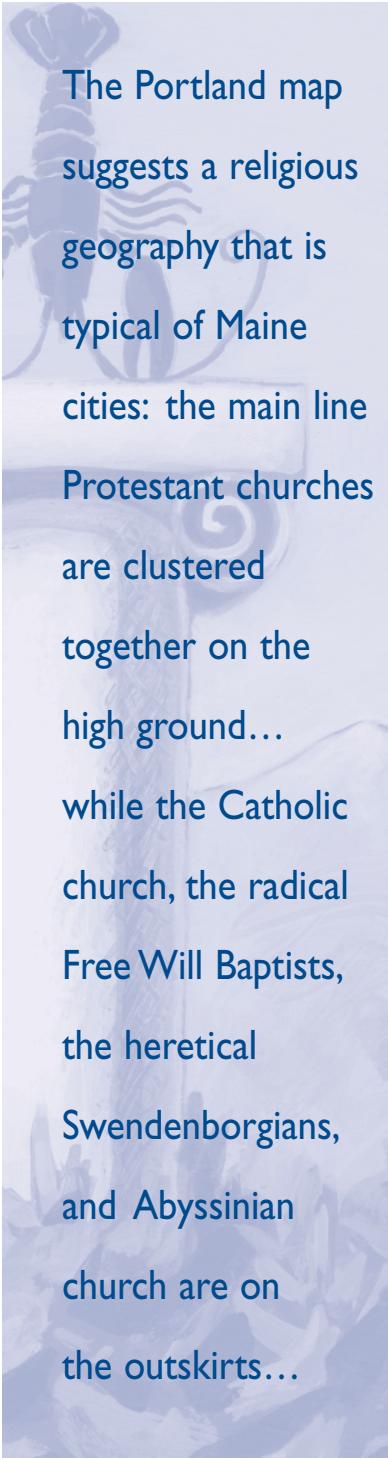
In addition to the text here quoted, the atlas plate on early nineteenth century religious life will include a sequence of maps tracing the establishment of churches in the Kennebec Valley during the early national period. Preliminary versions of these maps are included with this article, as Plates I, II, and III. Plate I shows the location and denomination of Kennebec Valley churches as of 1800. The map shows sixteen Congregational churches, fourteen Calvinist Baptist churches and seven Freewill Baptist churches, nine Methodist churches, four Friends meetings, and two “other” churches. On this map, the “other” churches are an Episcopal church in Gardiner and a Lutheran church established by a group of German settlers in Waldoboro. It should be noted that the Congregational churches shown on this map not only outnumber all others but are significantly older—the Brunswick Congregational Church was established in 1719 and the Woolwich church in 1765. In almost all towns showing both a Congregational church and one or more other churches, the Congregational church precedes the other

churches by anywhere from seven to thirty-two years. The only exception is Bath, where a Baptist church was established in 1794 followed by a Congregational church in 1795. By 1800, however, the Baptists, with their first churches established in 1788, and to a lesser degree the Methodists, beginning in 1794, were beginning to mount a strong challenge to Congregational dominance.

Plate II carries the story of religious life in the Kennebec Valley forward to 1825. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the number of Congregational churches in the Kennebec Valley grew from sixteen to twenty-eight. Congregationalism remained the dominant denomination in coastal communities, but Congregational missionaries also moved upriver and into the back country, to found new churches in communities such as Albion, Industry, New Sharon, Mercer, and Anson. However, the Baptist and Methodist churches were gaining ground on Congregationalism, with forty-four Calvinist

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Baptist churches, twenty-eight Freewill Baptist churches, and thirty-one Methodist churches by 1825. The number of Baptist churches now significantly exceeded the number of Congregational churches, with the Methodist and Congregational churches now roughly equal. The Society of Friends also expanded, from four meetings in 1800 to ten in 1825. New



The Portland map suggests a religious geography that is typical of Maine cities: the main line Protestant churches are clustered together on the high ground... while the Catholic church, the radical Free Will Baptists, the heretical Swendenborgians, and Abyssinian church are on the outskirts...

denominations also appeared, with four Universalist and three Christian churches in the Kennebec Valley by 1825,¹ while the first Unitarian church in the region was established in Hallowell in 1823. The first Catholic churches were founded by Irish immigrants at Newcastle in 1801, Whitefield in 1822, and Nobleboro shortly thereafter.

As Plate III shows, these same patterns continued into the next quarter-century. By 1852, the number of Congregational churches in the Kennebec Valley had reached forty. But in this second quarter-century, the number of Methodist churches had grown to thirty-three; the number of Calvinist Baptist churches increased to forty-eight, while the number of Freewill Baptist churches leveled off at twenty-six. The second quarter-century saw a dramatic increase in the number of Universalist churches from three to eleven, while by 1852 Unitarian churches had been founded in Augusta and Bath in addition to the older Hallowell church. Indeed, Bath had by this date achieved a striking religious diversity, with Catholic, Episcopal, and Swedenborgian churches also joining the evangelical Protestant denominations.

In portraying patterns of religious development during the early national period, we elected to focus on the Kennebec Valley in part

because Alan Taylor's superb *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820* offers a preliminary survey of the religious geography of this region. We have supplemented Taylor's data by consulting histories of various religious denominations, along with town and county histories for the region. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the annual *Maine Register* sometimes published information on religious bodies. The registers from 1820 to 1830 included such information, and the registers once again began publishing this information in 1852. The 1825 and the 1852 maps have been checked against the registers for those years. We have, however, supplemented this information in one respect: the registers suggest that by 1852 most of the Friends meetings shown on the 1825 map had disappeared; but an essay by Rufus Jones in the *Illustrated History of Kennebec County*, published in 1892, shows a continuing, vital presence of Friends meetings in this area throughout the century. We speculate that when the registers resumed listing churches in 1852, they relied on lists of clergymen in each town; Friends meetings, having no regular clergy, would obviously be missing from such lists.

We focused on the Kennebec Valley because it is both geographically central and relatively typical of the state as a whole. Furthermore, ratios of various religious bodies within Kennebec County are fairly typical for the state as a whole. The 1850 United States Census provides aggregate counts of the numbers of churches in Maine, as follows: 326 Baptist churches (the census does not distinguish between Calvinist and Freewill Baptist churches), 199 Methodist churches, 180 Congregational churches, sixty Universalist churches, twenty-six Friends meetings, fifteen Unitarian churches, twelve Roman Catholic churches, twelve Christian churches, nine Episcopal churches, seven Presbyterian churches, and two Swedenborgian churches. The census also lists seventy-three Union churches and twenty-two "Free" churches (we have been unable to determine the meaning of this latter term). These ratios seem close to the figures for the Kennebec Valley, except that in the Kennebec region the Congregational church seems to have remained somewhat stronger than in the state as a whole.

To counterbalance the broad regional scope of our survey of the Kennebec Valley, our atlas plate on the religious life of early nineteenth century Maine will also focus on two specific communities, Portland and New Gloucester. Plate IV of the illustrations accompanying this article reproduces an 1847 map that shows the principal churches in Portland, with one notable exception—the map omits the Roman Catholic church founded in 1824, for reasons about which we can only speculate. In reproducing this map, we have added numbers showing the sites of the churches; and in the legend we have included the dates at which the churches on the map were founded, when we were able to determine these dates. As our 1847 map shows, Portland, as a center of commerce, early offered a diverse array of religious possibilities. The map shows four “parish” churches, listed on the map as the First, Second, and Third Parish and the High Street meeting houses. These all began as Congregational churches. However, the oldest and most socially prestigious of these churches, the First Parish church, had become effectively Unitarian in 1809, when it called an avowed Unitarian, Ichabod Nichols, to serve as pastor; in 1831 the church renamed itself as Unitarian. The Third Parish meeting house, only two blocks from the First Parish church, apparently developed in some measure as an alternative to the increasing liberalism of the First Parish church. The church met for a time after its founding in 1807, but then suspended operations; only after 1825 did the Third Parish church assume a distinct identity, as a robust Trinitarian alternative to the Unitarian First Parish church.

Both the Baptist and the Methodist churches had established a presence in the city by the 1840s, with two Methodist churches, on Chestnut Street and Pleasant Street respectively, and with two Baptist churches, on Federal Street and Free Street. Also, the Freewill Baptists had come to town, with a church on Casco Street. One of the first Episcopal churches in the state, originally named St. Paul’s, had formed a parish in 1764 and built a church a year later; Irish immigrants established a Catholic parish in 1827 and built a church in 1830; and the only African-American church in the state, the Abyssinian Religious Society, began meeting on Munjoy Hill in 1828. The Universalists,

the Society of Friends, the Christians, and the Swedenborgians also had established regular meetings in Portland by 1847. The Portland map suggests a religious geography that is typical of Maine cities: the main line Protestant churches are clustered together on the high ground around the conjunction of Congress and Federal streets, while the Catholic church, the radical Free Will Baptists, the heretical Swendenborgians, and Abyssinian church are on the outskirts, near the waterfront or out toward Munjoy Hill. There are exceptions, however—in particular, the relatively radical Universalists, at this stage of their history very different in their emotional fervor from the more rationalistic Unitarians, found a home near the center of the city.

Although not shown on Plate IV, the rural township of New Gloucester, only a few miles inland from Portland, offers a very different religious pattern. Episcopalians, Catholics, Abyssinians, and Swedenborgians are all notably absent from the religious geography of New Gloucester. The Congregational Church arrived early in New Gloucester, in 1770. But in this rural community, as Stephen Marini has shown, a cluster of more radical religious groups quickly challenged the hegemony of the Congregational Church. Indeed, beginning in 1780, Baptist preachers were active in the town, soon organizing rival Freewill and Calvinist Baptist groups. In 1783 Joseph Pearce came from Gloucester, Massachusetts, where he had been a member of the first Universalist Church in America, and in New Gloucester Pearce established the first Universalist Church in Maine. In 1793, Jesse Lee, the most famous Methodist evangelist to “itinerate” in Maine, preached in New Gloucester. Most dramatically, in the 1780s Shakerism arrived in Maine, and Sabbathday Lake quickly became a gathering place for converts to this new, “enthusiastic” strain of Quakerism. Adherents of these more radical religious movements had effectively disestablished the Congregational Church in New Gloucester before the end of the eighteenth century. And while the Congregational Church fought back by bringing in young and vigorous ministers, the more enthusiastic varieties of Christianity clearly dominated religious life in the town.

In addition to the plate on early national religious

life described above, the *Historical Atlas of Maine* will include two other plates on the religious history of the state. In this brief sampler of atlas materials, we are unable to provide maps from these later plates, but we here offer brief outlines of the contents of the plates. The second religious history plate will be included in Section IV of the atlas, covering the period from the Civil War through the early twentieth century. The draft text of this plate reads as follows:

For established mainstream Protestant denominations, including the Congregational, Methodist, and Baptist churches, the last half of the nineteenth century was a period of consolidation. All these denominations remained strong, and the rivalry in the early part of the century between Calvinist and Freewill Baptists faded, with the two eventually joining to form the United Baptist Church. These Protestant churches were all influenced by the Social Gospel movement. They played a leading role in the Abolitionist movement during the years before the Civil War, and they campaigned for abolition of capital punishment, prohibition of alcoholic beverages, and other social reforms in the later decades of the century.

Universalists competed with Baptists in rural areas and won a significant following, with membership peaking in the 1850s. After the Civil War, the Universalists converged with the Unitarians—who had fewer churches but who maintained a strong presence in the urban centers—to form a liberal alternative within Maine Protestantism. The number of Episcopal churches increased significantly in the last half of the century, as this church competed with Congregationalists and Unitarians to become the church of choice among the urban business and professional elite. In coastal communities, Episcopal churches also served the steadily increasing numbers of wealthy summer residents.

The founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, had links to Maine, as did her mentor P. P. Quimby, and the movement early won a significant number of adherents in the state. After the Great Disappointment of 1844, the Millerite movement regrouped, and in the later decades of the century the Advent Christian Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church both established strong presences

in Maine. Ellen White, who became the principal prophet of the Seventh Day Adventist movement, was born in Gorham and grew up in Portland. Maine also became a favorite site for Spiritualist camps, some of which attracted large groups of summer residents.

In the later decades of the nineteenth century, immigrant Jews primarily from Eastern Europe settled in Maine in significant numbers, and by the end of the century they had established synagogues in most of the major cities of the state.

However, a dramatic increase in the number of Roman Catholics represents the single most striking development in Maine's religious life during the last half of the nineteenth century. A trickle of Irish immigrants into Maine during the years before 1840 became a flood with the potato famine of 1845–49, and by 1850 there were large Irish neighborhoods in Portland and Bangor, with smaller such neighborhoods in several other towns and cities. As the textile industry established itself in Lewiston and Biddeford, and later the paper industry in Waterville, Old Town, and other cities, large numbers of Canadian Catholics also came to Maine to work in the mills, sometimes—as in Lewiston—mingling with a continuing influx of Irish immigrants. By 1900, Maine was over 40% Catholic, a dramatic change from the less than 5% Catholic population of 1840.

The immigrant Catholic Church, in Maine as elsewhere in the United States, attempted to create and maintain a total social and religious environment for its members. Each parish sought, as soon as practicable, not only to build a church but to establish a Catholic school, with nuns as teachers. Catholic hospitals, also staffed by nuns, were founded in the major cities. Organizations such as the Knights of Columbus and the Daughters of Isabella sought to provide a full social life for Catholics. In predominantly French parishes, Catholic separatism was reinforced by linguistic difference.

However, there also were tensions within the Catholic Church of Maine, especially between the large body of French-speaking Catholics, many of whom retained personal or institutional links to the Catholic Church of Canada, and the English-speaking church hierarchy headquartered in Portland. In the nineteenth century, the bishops of the Portland Diocese were

without exception Irish, had strong connections with the vibrant Irish Catholic cultures of Boston and Worcester, and pursued a policy of linguistic assimilation, often actively resisted by French-speaking parishioners. The tendency toward cultural separation among Catholics also produced an anti-Catholic reaction, which came to a head in the 1920s.

The third plate on the history of religion in Maine will focus on the period from around World War I to the present. We are still collecting data on the religious history of Maine in the twentieth century; this process has not proved easy. The United States Census stopped asking citizens about their religious affiliation early in the twentieth century, so we are dependent on the churches themselves for information on the numbers of members. The Maine Council of Churches publishes periodic reports on the numbers of active churches in the state, but these reports also are based on information provided by churches, who measure their numbers of members in many different ways. While we are not at this time ready to commit ourselves to a text for this third religion plate, we will hazard some general observations, as follows:

The religious life of Maine in the twentieth century has been defined primarily by three significant developments. First, the Roman Catholic Church, which has continued to be the spiritual home of nearly half the citizens of the state, entered a period of crisis in the years after World War II. In the 1920s, the church had come under increasing attack from outside, as the Ku Klux Klan became a significant social and political influence in the state, primarily as an anti-Catholic organization. In 1924 the Klan claimed more than fifty thousand members in Maine, and Klan support helped to elect Ralph Owen Brewster as governor of the state in that year (See Judd et al., *Maine: The Pine Tree State from Prehistory to the Present*, pp. 443, 512). Brewster was himself accused of being a Klan member, although the accusation remains unconfirmed. But despite such external threats, the Roman Catholic Church remained a powerful and resilient force in the lives of its members, and through the World War II years it continued to provide its parishioners a total cultural and social environment, encompassing a school system extending

from the elementary grades through high school, a network of social organizations for both men and women, and hospitals in several Maine cities. By the 1950s and 1960s, however, the church found it increasingly difficult to meet the costs of its school system, and by 1970 this once-extensive system had largely disappeared, except for a few elementary and secondary schools in Portland, Lewiston, Waterville, Bangor, and some towns in the St. John Valley. The decline of the Catholic school system was in part caused by and in part a consequence of the decline of the French language in the state. The pressure to assimilate proved much stronger in Maine than across the border in Canada; and while the fading of linguistic differences helped to heal some breaches within the Catholic community, the loss of the French language also diminished the sense among French Catholics that they were a community unto themselves, distinctively

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different from their Protestant and English-speaking neighbors. Because the United States Census no longer asks Americans to indicate their religious affiliation, it has become difficult to find reliable statistics on the numbers of Catholics today, but it seems probable that in the final decades of the twentieth century, something approaching half the citizens of Maine continue to identify themselves as Catholic. For increasing numbers of Maine Catholics, however, religious affiliation has become not the primary marker of their identity, but rather one among many other equally important such markers.

The middle decades of the twentieth century saw continued strength among the traditional Protestant churches of Maine. Anyone traveling the backroads of

Maine will come upon an abandoned Congregational, Methodist, or Baptist church from time to time, but such losses to these denominations have been more than offset by the establishment of new churches in growth areas of the state. It is difficult to estimate active membership in the “mainline” Protestant churches, as no organization has assumed responsibility for monitoring such statistics, but most observers sense a steady shrinkage in numbers of worshippers. The Episcopal Church, long attractive to relatively well-educated urbanites, has grown in correlation with the steady increase in the number of college-educated professionals within the state. In-migration and a return to cultural roots also have inspired a steady growth in the number and size of synagogues in Maine.

However, the most important single development in the religious life of Maine since World War II has been the rapid growth of Fundamentalist and Pentecostal churches. Some of the Fundamentalist churches have a Baptist affiliation, but other Baptist churches remain more traditional: it is virtually impossible to determine the theological temper of a given

somewhat over twenty Pentecostal churches. Before World War II the Fundamentalist and Pentecostal movements were essentially unknown in Maine, and thus these figures suggest a massive shift in the religious complexion of the state. Furthermore, it is clear that while some of these churches are small, several have become very large, dwarfing in size the numbers of parishioners that remain faithful to the more traditional Protestant churches. Like the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, furthermore, the new Fundamentalist and Pentecostal churches have tried to create a total life-environment for their members, with kindergarten through twelfth grade Christian schools now operating in many Maine cities.

No historian has as yet studied the scope of these religious movements in Maine or their social impact on the state, and therefore some basic data collection will be necessary before we can move forward with this third plate. We are planning to conduct a survey of churches in the Bangor area, in the attempt to learn the theological tempers of these churches, the numbers of active members, and other pertinent information. The results of this survey will provide the basis of the third religion plate in the new *Historical Atlas of Maine*.

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Baptist church except by attending services. In addition, many “independent,” “non-denominational,” or otherwise designated Fundamentalist churches have been established in Maine, some of them starting as small storefront meetings and ending with large church/school complexes on the outskirts of Maine cities. In addition, the Pentecostal movement, originating in the South and the West of the United States, has become a major force within Maine. For example, a preliminary classification of the churches in the Bangor area shows about twenty-five traditional Protestant churches, somewhat over thirty Fundamentalist churches, and

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ENDNOTE

- I. The "Christian" Church, sometimes known as the "Christian Connection," was a radically egalitarian movement that recognized no authority except the New Testament and insisted on the right of each individual to interpret the New Testament as he or she saw fit. The movement eventually evolved into the Disciples of Christ. For more information, see Paul Conkin's *American Originals: Homemade Varieties of Christianity*.

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