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Florida Jewish Demography

Volume 8
 Edited by Ira M. Sheskin, Ph.D.

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 Special Issue in Cooperation with the Greater Miami Jewish Federation*

Greater Miami Jewish Federation Demographic Study Results Have Important Local and National Implications

The Greater Miami Jewish Federation is pleased to send you this issue of *Florida Jewish Demography*, edited by Dr. Ira Sheskin of the University of Miami, who recently completed a comprehensive demographic study of the Dade County Jewish community. This study was commissioned by Federation as a service to the entire Jewish community. This issue presents some results of this study and paints a portrait of our community. As a contributor to the Federation/UJA campaign and a leader of Miami's Jewish community, the Federation is providing you with these data to be used as a valuable resource for your involvement in local Jewish organizations, synagogues, and Federation beneficiary agencies.

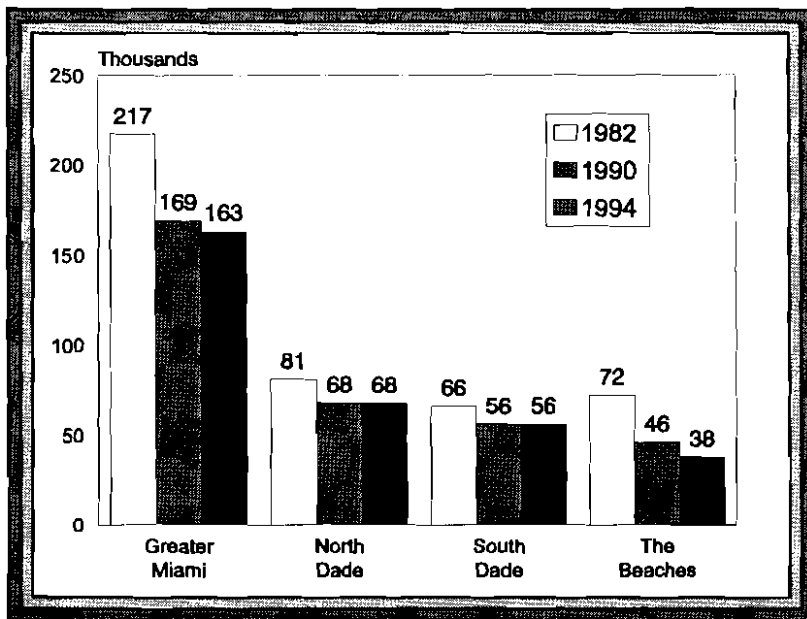
Miami's Jewish community is a community in transition—a Jewish community emerging from a traditional retirement center into a younger, increasingly stable and firmly rooted center of Jewish life. 163,000 persons live in Jewish households in Dade County. While this figure has declined by 25% since 1982, the decline during the 1990s is only about 3%, and is limited to The Beaches. The Jewish population of North Dade and South Dade, despite Hurricane Andrew, has remained constant in the first years of this decade. The Jewish community, including persons in nursing homes and students in dormitories, numbers 166,000.

As we advance toward the 21st century, the Greater Miami Jewish Federation is confident that these data will be instrumental in helping all Jewish institutions work together to touch Jewish lives and build Jewish community here in Miami, in Israel, and around the world.

The Greater Miami Jewish Federation

✎ Miami is among the largest Jewish communities in the United States. The tri-county South Florida area's 650,000 Jews make it the 2nd largest concentration of Jews, after New York (1,450,000).

✎ The population shows significant geographic concentration, with half of Jewish households in one of five zip codes (60, 79, 80, 40, and 39). Jewish households in South Dade are more dispersed than in North Dade or The Beaches.



Population in Jewish Households

Dade County, while older than most Jewish communities, is no longer just a retirement community.

The median age of the Dade County Jewish community has declined from 54 years in 1982 to 48 years in 1994. This reflects a decline of 26,000 persons age 65 and over. The number of persons age 75 and over only declined by 7,000 during this period and the number of persons age 85 and over increased from 3,000 to 7,000, a result with significant implications for elderly care.

☞ Only 6% of households are part-year residents, but the median age in these households (70) is well above that for full-year residents (47).

☞ The median age in North Dade is 55 years, down from 57 years in 1982. The median age on The Beaches is 53, a significant decline since 1982, when the median was 67. The median age in South Dade has *increased* from 34 in 1982 to 39 in 1994.

☞ The percentage of the population age 60 and over (37%) compares with 19% for Jews nationwide. On the other hand, more than 70% of Jews in Palm Beach County and 55% of Jews in South Broward are age 60 and over.

☞ In Dade County, 22% of households contain children, versus 14% in South Broward and 11% in West Palm Beach.

☞ In 1982, 5% of all households were single parent families, versus only 2% in 1994.

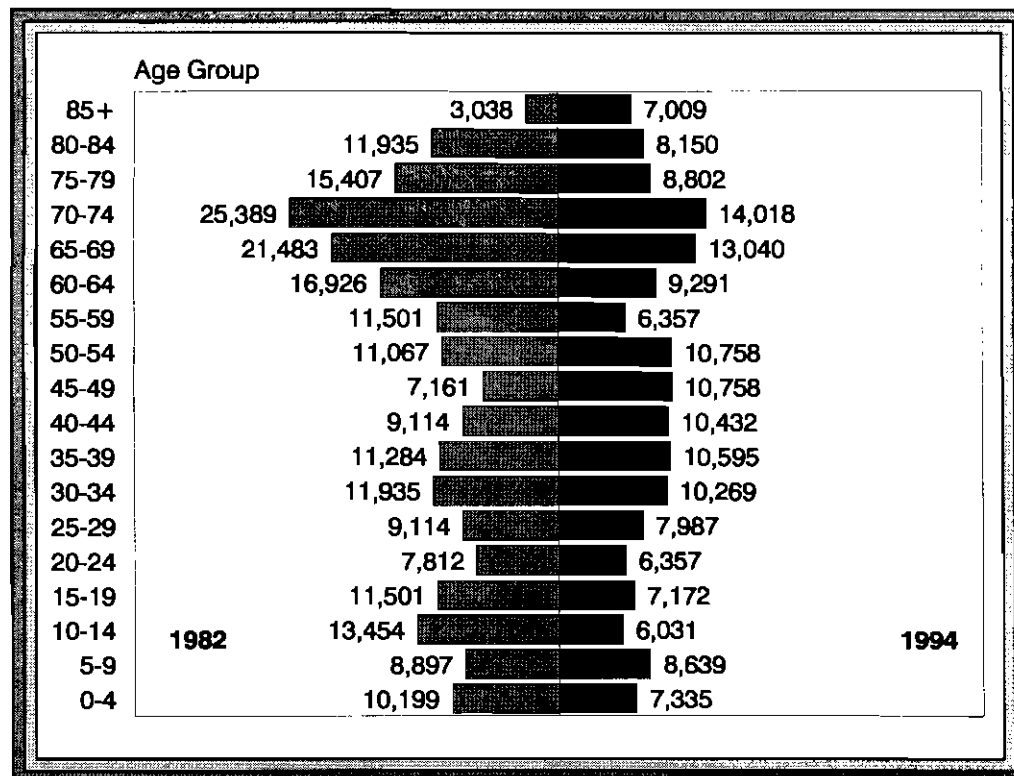
☞ 31% of households contain a single person living alone. Two-thirds of these households are age 65 and over.

☞ 7% of households contain adult children.

☞ 34% of adults are currently single (46,000 persons). 13% are widowed and 6% are divorced.

☞ 30% of adults have a high school degree or less, 18% have some college. 52% have a 4-year college degree, including 21% with a graduate degree.

☞ In 1982, 52% of households in South Dade contained children. In 1994, only 33% of households in South Dade contain children. Thus, while the number of households has stabilized, the composition of the population has changed.



Changes in the Age Distribution 1982 - 1994.

Jews are still moving into Dade County (from Broward, Palm Beach and elsewhere) and Dade has one of the highest percentages in residence for 20 years or more of any American Jewish community. Yet, the migration out of Dade County to Broward and Palm Beach Counties has been significant, and the survey shows that this trend will continue.

The large percentage of households in residence for 20 years or more (55% or 40,700 households) compares with 29% for all American Jews, 16% in South Broward, and 8% in West Palm Beach. The long lengths of residence partially explain the vitality of this community and its institutions. More than 85% of households indicate no plans to move out of Dade County in the next three years.

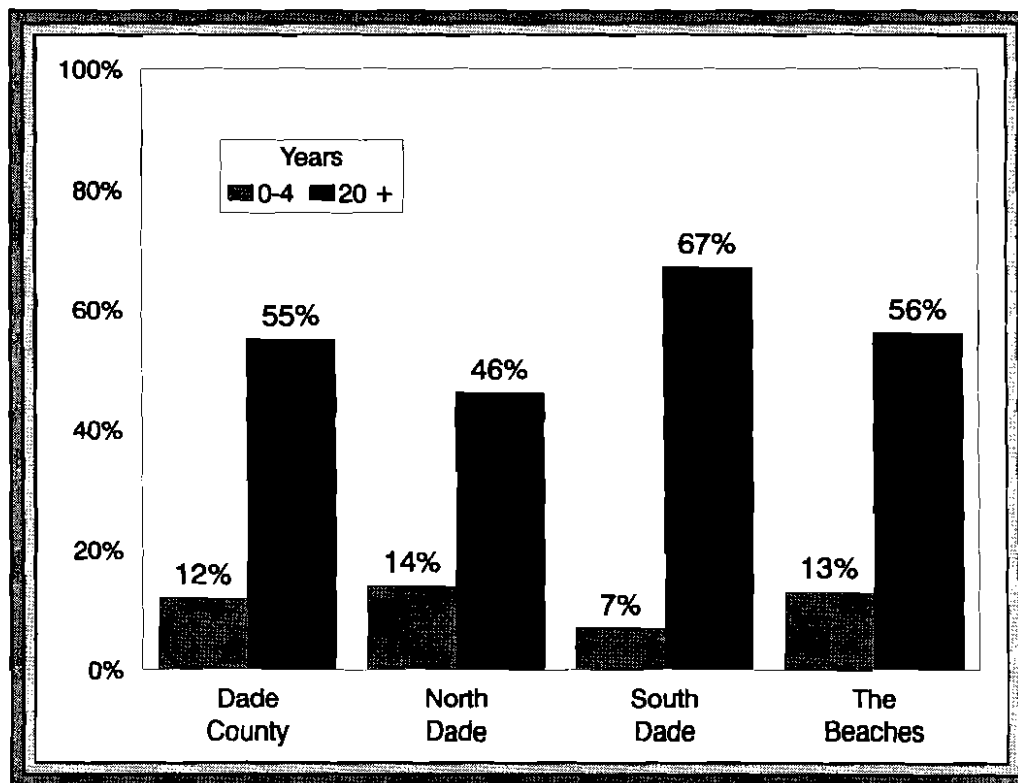
☞ That 67% are in residence in South Dade for 20 years or more (including 45% in residence for 30 years or more) provides a partial explanation of the fact that the Jewish population of South Dade has not declined in the 1990s, despite Hurricane Andrew. To many residents of South Dade, South Dade is their home, the place where they were raised and the place where they have been raising their children. Two-thirds live in a single family home and 83% own their own home. The South Dade Jewish community has roots.

☞ In the past five years, about 4,600 households have moved into North Dade; 1,500 into South Dade; and 2,400 into The Beaches.

☞ While about 7% of households indicate some probability that they will move to Broward or Palm Beach Counties in the next three years, the results also show that 2,000 Jewish households have moved into Dade from Broward or Palm Beach Counties, including about 600 households who have done so in the past five years.

☞ 47% of persons were born in the Northeast, including 31% in New York and 6% in Pennsylvania. 22% were born in Dade County. 19% of persons are foreign born.

☞ 4.2% (6,800) of all persons consider themselves Israelis; 6.3% (10,000) Sephardic; and 5.6% (9,000) Hispanic. 1.6% (1,200) of households come from the former Soviet Union.



Length of Residence

Miami has a much more positive picture with respect to Jewish continuity, than is the case nationwide. While, among young adults, intermarriage is higher, and giving to Jewish charities is lower, the results show that on most measures of religiosity and "Jewishness," younger Jews show a more positive Jewish profile than is the case for older Jews.

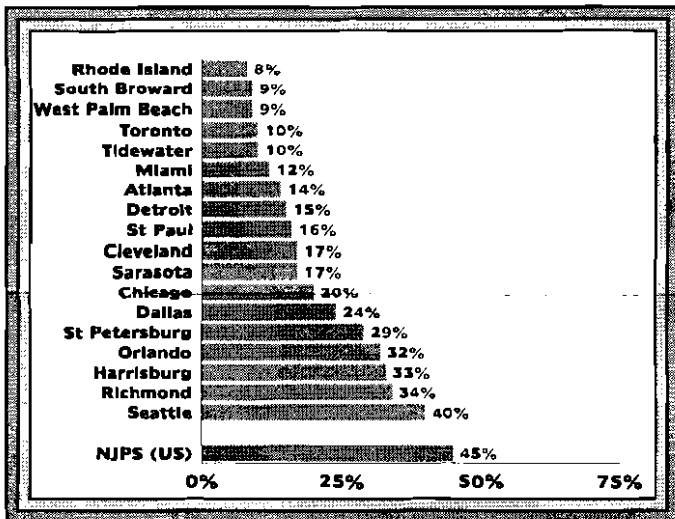
The community contains a large number of younger Jews who are committed to a Jewish future in Greater Miami.

Intermarriage in the Dade County Jewish community is almost one-fourth the national rate, with only 12% of couples being intermarried, compared with about 45% nationwide.

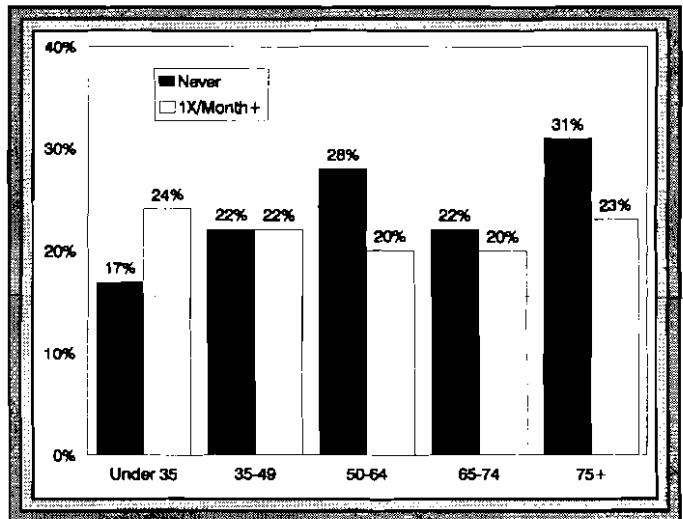
65% of the children of intermarriages are being raised Jewish, in comparison to 28% nationwide.

Younger Jews are as likely, or more likely, than older Jews to have a mezuzah on the front door, always to attend a Passover Seder, always to light Chanukah candles, and to keep a kosher home.

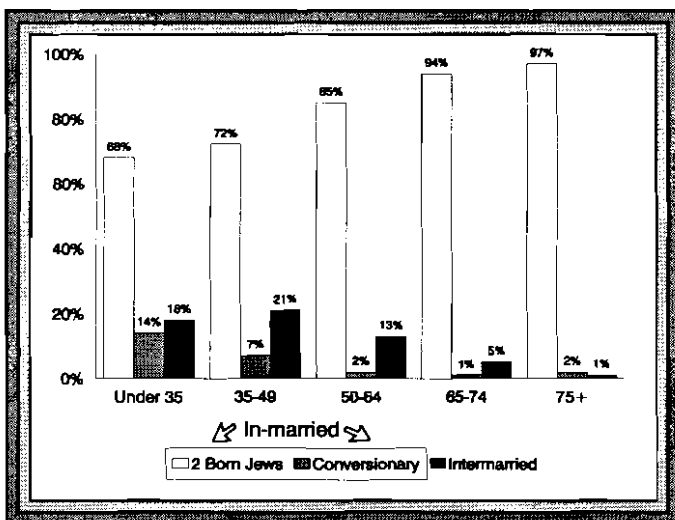
Synagogue membership is 41% for those under age 50, versus about 33% for those age 50 and over.



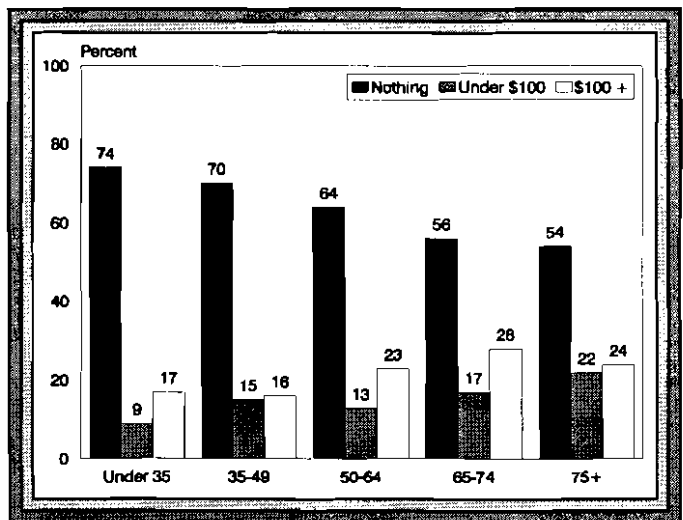
Percentage of Intermarried Couples



Attendance at Services by Age



Intermarriage by Age



Donations to Federation by Age

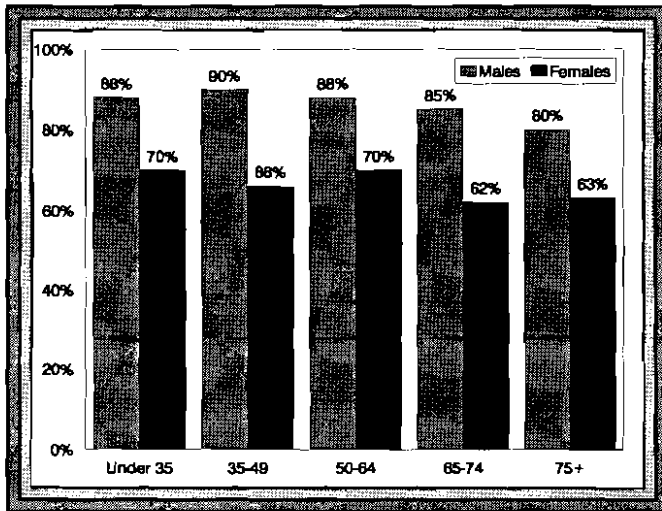
Younger adult Jews had more Jewish educational experiences, both formal and informal, than did older adult Jews.

About 75% of all Jewish adults have had some Jewish education as children, up from 66% in 1982. The figure is 81% in South Dade, 74% in The Beaches, and 72% in North Dade. Women of all ages are less likely to have received some Jewish education than men. Increasing numbers of younger adults have attended day school, Jewish camps, youth groups, and Hillel at the college level. All of these experiences are shown by the study to be correlated with current expressions of Jewish identity.

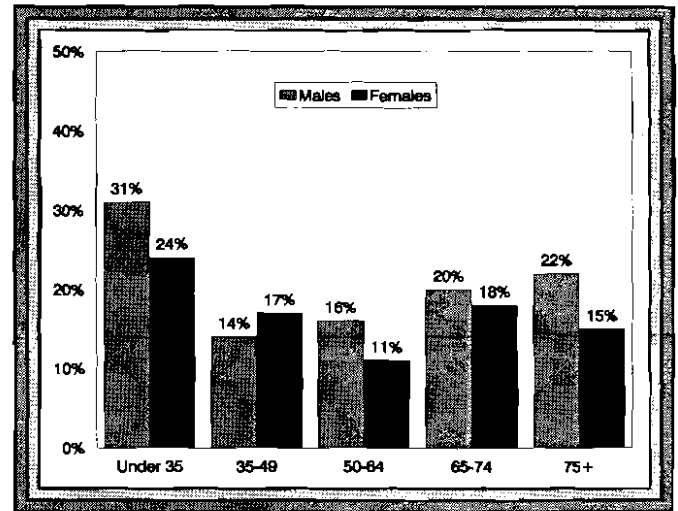
☛ For Jewish children age 6-17, 65% are in public school, 11% are in non-Jewish private school, and 24% are in Jewish day school.

☛ 51% of Jewish children age 6-12 are currently enrolled in Jewish education, as are 24% of those age 13-17. 88% of all Jewish children do receive some Jewish education.

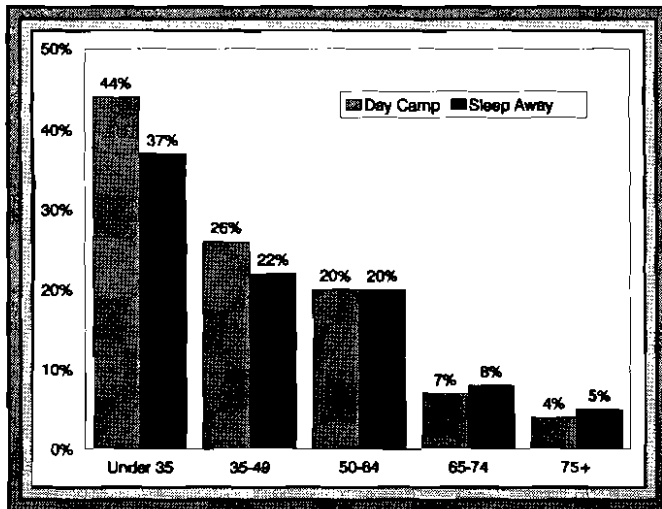
☛ Half the children currently receiving a Jewish education are in a Jewish day school.



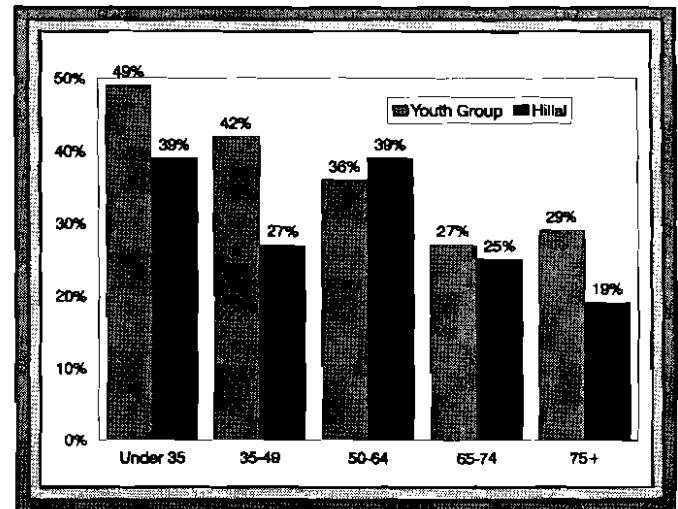
Percentage of Adults with a Jewish Education



Percentage of Adults with a Jewish Education Who Attended a Day School



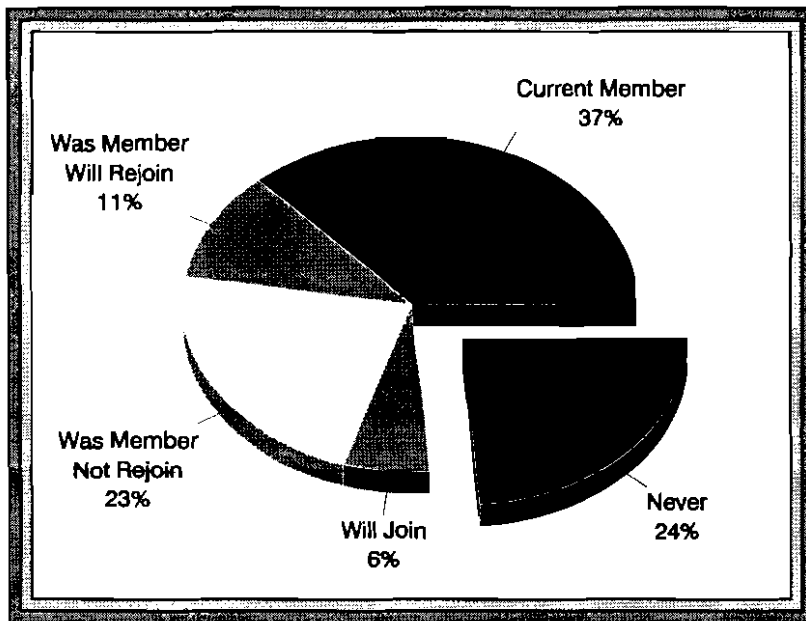
Attended Jewish Camps



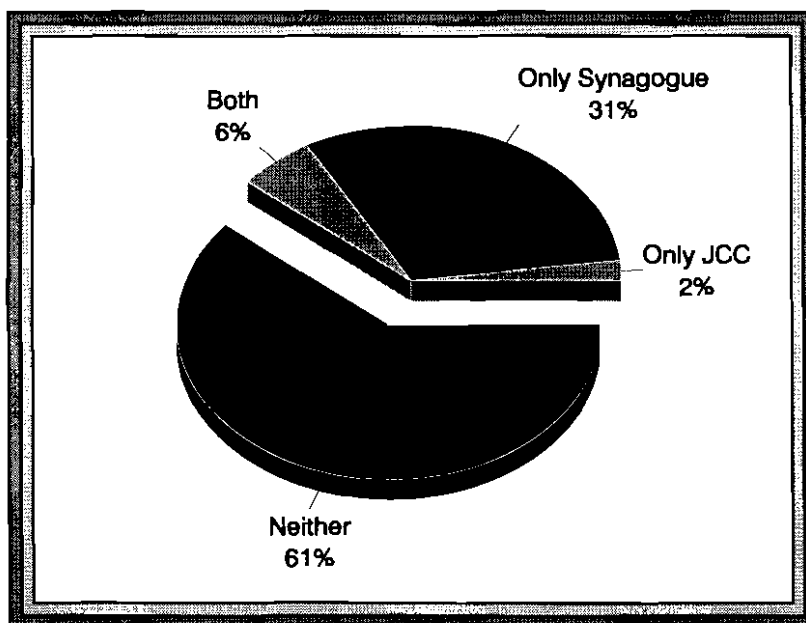
Attended Jewish Youth Groups and Hillel (if went to college)

**Most Jews join a synagogue at some point in their adult lives.
Synagogues and JCCs are complementary and not competing organizations.**

About 76% of Jewish households in Dade County join a synagogue at some point in their adult lives, although only 37% claim current membership, either in Dade County or elsewhere. 55% of households with children claim current synagogue membership. 49% of in-married couples are synagogue members, versus 22% of intermarried couples. 70% of JCC members are current synagogue members. 15% of synagogue members belong to a JCC. 53% of the Jewish community currently belongs to a synagogue and/or a JCC and/or a Jewish organization. 93% of households currently belong to an organized Jewish group and/or donate to a Jewish charity and/or always or usually practice one or more Jewish rituals.



Synagogue Membership While an Adult



Membership Overlaps

☞ While 32% of respondents *claimed* membership in a local synagogue, reports from local synagogues suggest that only about 18% actually belong.

☞ 54% said that the *quality of the rabbi* was very important in their decision concerning whether to join a synagogue. Only 45% responded very important for *friendliness of a congregation*; 38% for *your own personal religious convictions*; 36% for the *need to send children to religious school*; 36% for *your own need to identify with the Jewish community*; 26% for *distance from your home*; and 25% for *cost*. Only 32% said that cost was not at all important in this decision.

☞ 38% of households belong to a Jewish organization.

☞ 49% of respondents indicated that the reason that they have not joined the JCC is that they have *no need for the services offered*. 14% answered *cost*; 11%, *distance from home*, and 7%, *no time*.

☞ 24% of households participated in some JCC activity in the past year (21% in North Dade and The Beaches and 30% in South Dade).

Other Important Findings

- ☞ 46% of Jewish households live in high rises.
- ☞ The median housing value is \$110,900 (\$87,100 in North Dade; \$139,700 in South Dade, and \$128,500 in The Beaches).
- ☞ While the median income is a relatively high \$45,900, 8,400 households earn less than \$10,000.
- ☞ 88% of adults are registered to vote.
- ☞ 9% of households describe themselves as Orthodox, 34% are Conservative, 26% are Reform, and 32% are Just Jewish. These percentages have not changed since 1982.
- ☞ 76% of households have a mezuzah on their front door. 67% always attend a Seder, 65% always light Chanukah candles, 22% always light Sabbath candles, 12% are kosher in and out of their homes, 8% are kosher only in their homes, and 7% refrain from the use of electricity on the Sabbath.
- ☞ For Jewish children age 1-5, 44% are not in pre-school, 45% are in a Jewish pre-school, and 11% are in a non-Jewish pre-school.
- ☞ 29% are *very familiar* with the Federation, 24%, with the JCC; 20%, with Douglas Gardens; 19%, with Jewish Family Services; 9%, with Jewish Vocational Service; and 7%, with the Central Agency for Jewish Education.
- ☞ 85%-90% of respondents rated the Federation and its agencies as *excellent* or *good*.
- ☞ If faced with a family problem, 33% of respondents indicate they would *very much prefer* Jewish-sponsored counseling (25% would *somewhat prefer*, 31% would have *no preference*, and 11% would *rather not* use Jewish services).
- ☞ 54% of those who go to college go to a South Florida school. 19% go to a school in Florida, but outside South Florida. 26% go out of state. This compares with 29%, 20% and 51%, respectively, in 1982.
- ☞ 15% of households contain someone who has some type of limiting physical or mental health condition, including 7% who need assistance on a daily basis.
- ☞ 9% of households needed counseling in 1993, 4% needed help finding a job, and 1% needed help with alcohol or drug abuse. 9% of elderly households needed elderly transportation services and 2% needed meals on wheels. 10% of households with singles needed singles programs.
- ☞ 55% of households have had at least one household member go to Israel, almost half of these on a trip sponsored by a Jewish group. The 55% is the highest of any American Jewish community. 32% of those age 13-17 have been to Israel, as have 39% of those age 18-24.
- ☞ 32% say they are definitely interested in visiting Israel in the next three years (27% probably; 22% probably not; 19% definitely not).
- ☞ 20% are extremely attached to Israel (22% very attached; 39% somewhat attached; 19% not attached).
- ☞ 64% have experienced anti-Semitism in their lifetime and 14% experienced anti-Semitism in Dade County in 1993.
- ☞ 30% perceive *a great deal* of anti-Semitism in Dade County (43%, *a moderate amount*; 24% *a little*; and 3%, *none at all*). 50% see an increase in anti-Semitism in Dade County in the past 5-10 years (5% see a decrease and 45% see no change).
- ☞ While Dade County, compared to other Jewish communities, has a very low rate of reported personal experience with anti-Semitism, it has the highest rate among American Jewish communities of persons perceiving *a great deal* of anti-Semitism.
- ☞ 2,300 persons are Holocaust survivors and 5,500 persons are children of survivors.
- ☞ 71% claim to have contributed to Jewish charities, and 65% to non-Jewish charities, in 1993. 37% claim to have contributed to the Jewish Federation. 18% give only to Jewish charities, 13% give only to non-Jewish charities. 53% give to both Jewish and non-Jewish charities, and 17% give to neither.
- ☞ 51% of the community was not asked for a donation to Federation in 1993. 24% of those asked declined to give (57% turned down a mail appeal and 41%, a telephone call). Only 1% declined to give at an event or an in-person solicitation.
- ☞ 22% have increased their Jewish charitable giving in the past three years (11% have decreased and 67% have not changed their giving). Changes in income and increased awareness of need are the major reasons for these changes. The recent Middle East peace process has caused 15% to increase their giving and only 2% to decrease their giving.
- ☞ 39% believe that more Federation money should be spent locally (13% to *Israel and overseas*; 34%, *about equal*; 14%, *whatever Federation thinks best*.)

Other Florida Demographic Studies

The Jewish Federation of Pinellas County completed a demographic study in 1994. Copies of the Summary Report (\$5) and the Main Report (\$25) are available from the Federation (13191 Starkey Road North, Crownpointe, Suite 8, Largo, FL 34643) (Phone 813-530-3223) (Fax 813-531-0221).

The South Palm Beach County Jewish Federation will release the results of their 1995 demographic study in December, 1995. Copies of the Summary Report (\$5) and the Main Report (\$25) will be available from the Federation (9901 Donna Klein Blvd, Boca Raton FL 33428) (Phone 407-852-3100) (Fax 407-852-3150).

Both studies were completed by Dr. Ira M. Sheskin of the University of Miami and will be reported upon in forthcoming issues of *Florida Jewish Demography*.

National Jewish Population Survey

The Council of Jewish Federations is currently planning the year 2000 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) as a follow-up to the 1990 NJPS. The National Technical Advisory Committee (on which Florida is represented by Ira Sheskin) continues to meet twice a year to examine various technical issues related to surveying Jews.

This Newsletter presents some of the more important results of the 1994 Jewish demographic study of Dade County. Copies of a 58-page *Summary Report* (\$5) and a 482-page *Main Report* (\$25) are available from the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, 4200 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, FL 33137.

Phone (305) 576-4000 (ext. 344).
Fax (305) 573-8115.

This is the ninth issue of *Florida Jewish Demography*, published since 1988. It is sponsored and published by the Judaic Studies Program, University of Miami, to inform an interdisciplinary community of scholars, educators, and Jewish professionals in the areas of Jewish demography and geography. Address all correspondence to: Dr. Ira M. Sheskin, Editor, *Florida Jewish Demography*, Box 248067, Coral Gables, FL 33124. FAX: 305-435-5566. A subscription to all future issues is \$25, payable to UM Judaic Studies Program. (A \$50 donation entitles you to all eight back issues and a subscription to all future issues.)

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