

<http://www.isjl.org/history/archive/ms/laurel.htm> has [Jewish Community history and photos](#) . [January 2009] "The Jewish community in Laurel peaked in the 1930s, and thereafter declined along with the fortunes of the town. An explosion of railroad tank cars in 1969 damaged the small synagogue, and the dwindling congregation decided it was futile to rebuild it. The building materials were donated to two black churches. The remaining Laurel Jews used their remaining funds to create the Knesseth Israel Charitable and Educational Trust Fund which donates money to twenty-five worthy causes. ...

One of the Torahs found a place in the basement of the local art museum, and was available to view, but only if you already knew it was there. Currently, the Torah is on permanent loan to the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, where it is on display and is used for religious services held in the Museum's sanctuary. Today, the last vestige of Jewish life in Laurel is a vacant lot in the tony residential area where the synagogue once stood and a cemetery with an optimistic 130 vacant plots."

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~msjones/> has general Jones County information. [August 2005]

**Congregation Knesseth Israel** was organized in 1906. A synagogue was built in 1932 at 802 Fifth Avenue in a residential section near the Lauren Rogers Art Museum. The congregation was originally Orthodox but joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform) in 1940. A B'nai B'rith Lodge was organized in Laurel in 1910. The synagogue probably closed in the 1980's; the building later was demolished.

**Hickory Grove - Lake Park Cemetery:** Jewish Section, Old Bay Springs Road between 12th and 15th streets. The Jewish Section of the Hickory Grove-Lake Park Cemetery is located near a small lake and is well maintained. There are a few unmarked graves. The earliest grave marker is 1916. Source: Julian H. Preisler, [jhp1963@ya](mailto:jhp1963@ya)

[hoo.com](#)

active November 1940; [See Turitz book]