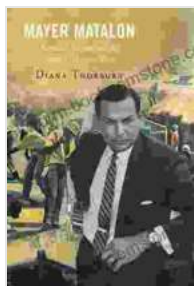


# The Intertwined Histories of Business, Politics, and the Jewish Jamaican Elite

Jamaica, a Caribbean island nation, has a rich and complex history. Its population is a diverse mix of ethnicities and cultures, including a significant Jewish community. The Jewish community in Jamaica has played an important role in the island's history, particularly in the areas of business and politics.

In this article, we will explore the intertwined histories of business, politics, and the Jewish Jamaican elite. We will examine the arrival of Jews in Jamaica, their early involvement in the island's economy, and their rise to prominence in both business and politics.



## Mayer Matalon: Business, Politics and the Jewish-Jamaican Elite by Richard Wagamese

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 1724 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 154 pages



## The Arrival of Jews in Jamaica

The first Jews arrived in Jamaica in the 16th century, fleeing persecution in Spain and Portugal. These early Jewish immigrants settled in the port city

of Kingston and quickly established themselves as merchants and traders.

In the 17th century, a larger wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in Jamaica from England and the Netherlands. These immigrants brought with them skills in commerce and finance, and they quickly became involved in the island's sugar industry.

By the 18th century, the Jewish community in Jamaica was well-established and prosperous. Jews owned and operated sugar plantations, businesses, and banks. They also played a significant role in the island's political life.

### **The Jewish Jamaican Elite**

In the 19th century, a small group of Jewish families emerged as the elite of Jamaican society. These families, including the Henriques, De Cordozas, and Abendanas, controlled a significant portion of the island's wealth and power.

The Jewish Jamaican elite were involved in a wide range of businesses, including sugar, banking, and shipping. They also played a leading role in the island's political life. Many Jewish Jamaicans served in the House of Assembly, the island's legislature, and several even served as mayor of Kingston.

The Jewish Jamaican elite were known for their philanthropy and support of education and culture. They founded schools, hospitals, and synagogues, and they played a major role in the development of Jamaican society.

### **The Decline of the Jewish Jamaican Elite**

The Jewish Jamaican elite began to decline in the early 20th century. The rise of nationalism and the decline of the sugar industry led to a decrease in their wealth and power.

In the 1930s, the rise of the fascist movement in Europe led to increased anti-Semitism in Jamaica. Jewish businesses were boycotted, and Jewish leaders were threatened with violence.

After World War II, many Jewish Jamaicans emigrated to the United States and Canada. Those who remained in Jamaica faced continued discrimination and prejudice.

## **The Legacy of the Jewish Jamaican Elite**

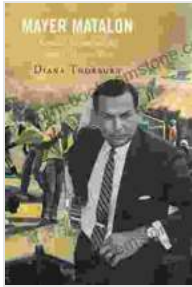
The Jewish Jamaican elite played a significant role in the history of Jamaica. They were instrumental in the development of the island's economy and political system. Their philanthropy and support of education and culture helped to shape Jamaican society.

The legacy of the Jewish Jamaican elite is still felt in Jamaica today. Many of the businesses and institutions that they founded continue to operate, and their contributions to Jamaican society are still remembered.

The intertwined histories of business, politics, and the Jewish Jamaican elite are a fascinating and complex story. The Jewish Jamaican elite played a significant role in the development of Jamaica, and their legacy continues to be felt today.

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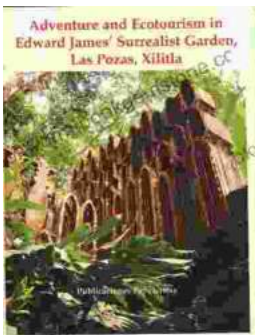


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