List of Incidents Involving Jewish Institutions in MA

Fall River, Massachusetts, March 19, 2019 (The Providence Journal): After canvassing the Hebrew cemetery on McMahon Street, police said Wednesday 59 gravestones were defaced with anti-Semitic language and swastikas, more than double the number initially believed. The Fall River Police Department continues to investigate the anti-Semitic writings as a hate crime. Investigators found additional defaced headstones during a row-by-row sweep of the cemetery Tuesday.

Brookline, Massachusetts, November 28, 2018 (New England Cable News): Police are investigating after a menorah was vandalized and stolen from a Brookline, Massachusetts synagogue. Authorities believe multiple thieves ripped a 6-foot-tall, 300-pound menorah out of the ground at Temple Emeth, vandalized it and then ditched it in West Roxbury where police later discovered it.

Reading, Massachusetts, November 6, 2018 (Reading Patch): Once again, anti-Semitic graffiti was found at Reading Memorial High School. A student discovered the vandalism and reported it to school officials. This most recent act of vandalism marks the sixth time in less than a month that anti-Semitic graffiti was found at Reading Memorial High School. Responding to the latest incident, School Superintendent Dr. John Doherty stated, “Hate is the antithesis of everything community is about. While everyone has a right to their opinion, nobody has the right to make people, particularly children, feel unsafe.”

Cambridge, Massachusetts, November 4, 2018 (JTA/Boston Globe): A man faces hate crime charges after he allegedly attacked a senior citizen woman while shouting anti-Semitic statements. Jarrett Harris, 62, was arrested and charged with assault and battery on someone age 60 or older, and assault and battery with intent to intimidate, a hate crimes charge.

North Shore, Massachusetts, August 12, 2018 (The Salem News): The Anti-Defamation League has launched an interactive H.E.A.T. map detailing instances of extremist hate and anti-Semitism across the United States. H.E.A.T stands for Hate, Extremism, Anti-Semitism, Terrorism, and the online map tracks incidents throughout the United States. It details six categories of incidents: extremist murders, terrorist plots and attacks, extremist/police shootouts, white supremacist events, white supremacist propaganda, and anti-Semitic incidents. “With nearly 300 anti-Semitic and white supremacist incidents taking place in New England in 2017-2018, ADL’s H.E.A.T. map is proof that New England is not immune to the explosion of anti-Semitism, racism and hate that our country is battling,” said Robert Trestan, ADL New England Regional Director. The map shows Marblehead had the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents from 2016 to 2018.

Westfield, Massachusetts, May 14, 2018 (The College Fix): Responding to a spate of reported hate crimes, Westfield State University installed 400 security cameras. Afterwards, the weekly rate of people reporting bias and hate crimes there dropped by 93 percent. During an 11-week period during the fall 2017 semester there were 23 incidents reported. Since the cameras were installed, there have been only three complaints.
Wilmington, Massachusetts, March 28, 2018 (DoJ, US Attorney’s Office, District of Massachusetts): A Wilmington man was sentenced to five years in prison and five years of supervised release for making threats over Facebook to burn a local mosque and for unlawfully possessing dozens of firearms and ammunition. Patrick Keogan, 46, posted threatening images on the Facebook page of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, a Roxbury-based cultural center that offers a mosque and educational, spiritual, and social services to the New England Muslim community. Keogan posted an image depicting a mosque in flames with superimposed lettering that stated, “BURN YOUR LOCAL MOSQUE.” Keogan also posted the same threatening image on the Facebook page of the Islamic Society of Northeastern University. Keogan’s Facebook account also showed that he had been buying, selling, trading, building, modifying, possessing, and shooting firearms and ammunition, despite his prohibition from doing so as a convicted felon. On May 1, 2016, Keogan purchased two boxes of 8mm rifle ammunition and two bags of loose 8mm rifle ammunition at a gun store in New Hampshire. Upon Keogan’s arrest in July 2016, authorities searched his residence and found light machine guns, assault rifles, and sniper rifles, and thousands of rounds of ammunition.

Chicopee, Massachusetts, March 26, 2918 (22 News WWLP): Anti-Semitic graffiti was found by the Connecticut River in Chicopee. The anti-Semitic symbols include a swastika and the letters KKK. The graffiti was spray painted on the water treatment facility and under a nearby bridge.

Amherst, Massachusetts, March 23, 2018 (US News & World Report/AP): Hampshire College has launched a criminal investigation into what the school's administration calls "an act of blatant and deplorable anti-Semitism." Hampshire College President Jonathan Lash said in a message to the campus community that the act occurred in a residential area. He called all incidents "acts of cowardice intended to intimidate and hurt all of us." A spokesman for the school in Amherst says no additional information is being released because it's an ongoing investigation by campus police.

Massachusetts, March 2, 2018 (The Daily Free Press): Massachusetts’ increase in anti-Semitic hate crimes are among the highest in the nation. The Anti-Defamation League released an audit showing a 42 percent rise in reported anti-Semitic incidents in Massachusetts from 2016 to 2017.

Andover, Massachusetts, December 13, 2017 (WHDH – 7 News Boston): Police and school officials are investigating after three swastikas were found drawn on school desks at Andover High School just hours before the start of Hanukkah. Officials said three drawings were found in a Jewish teacher’s classroom on Tuesday afternoon, escalating the incident to a hate crime. “This was something that was being repeated and something that we had to confront,” Superintendent Sheldon Berman said. “We’re taking this extraordinarily seriously.” The person who committed the act could face felony hate crime charges, according to police. The incident marks the third time in recent months that swastikas were found inside the high school.

Waltham, Massachusetts, September 29, 2017 (JTA): Several swastikas were found drawn on message boards outside two dormitory rooms in the same residence hall at Brandeis University. Officials at the University issued a letter addressed to “Members of the Brandeis community,” which stated that, “These incidents remind us that Brandeis is not immune to the expressions of hate we see around the country and on other campuses.” “We take such incidents seriously and these are being investigated…” A bomb threat was emailed to Brandeis in late August.
Waltham, Massachusetts, August 24, 2017 (JTA): Brandeis University received an email bomb threat, prompting the school to close the campus until police deemed it safe to reopen. People on campus were moved to a secure facility and anyone not on campus was told not to enter. After law enforcement surveyed the campus and declared it safe, the university reopened in the afternoon. A statement from the university said the source of the threat is still under investigation. The University was founded in 1948 as a nonsectarian Jewish school.

Marblehead, Massachusetts, August 8, 2017 (Itemlive.com/The Daily Item): Police are investigating another anti-Semitic incident in town. A swastika, the emblem of the Nazi party, was found drawn in the dirt of the softball field at Marblehead High School. The swastika was found a little over a month after town residents and officials rallied at Riverhead Beach to protest a rash of anti-Semitic graffiti discovered on a harbor causeway wall. According to the ADL, anti-Semitic incidences are occurrences all over New England, and it is not a unique situation to Marblehead.

Melrose, Massachusetts, July 31, 2017 (JTA/AP): Vandals toppled six headstones at the third-oldest Jewish cemetery in Massachusetts, which contains about 475 graves and was established in 1859 by Dutch Jews living in the Boston area. Melrose Mayor Robert Dolan reported on his blog, “I am deeply saddened and outraged by this vandalism and potential hate crime … Cemeteries are sacred grounds. Any malicious destruction is deeply saddening and must be given the full attention of law enforcement.”

Watertown, Massachusetts, July 19, 2017 (Watertown.wickedlocal.com): Police were notified by Watertown High School’s administration about a threatening email which they had received. The email had been sent to the school department’s email and threatened the town’s public schools as well as the Jewish Community Day School.

Boston, Massachusetts, July 13, 2017 (JTA): Two Holocaust survivors joined Gov. Charlie Baker and Mayor Marty Walsh at the New England Holocaust Memorial to unveil a replacement glass panel; the large panel was shattered by a large rock. Religious leaders and other city and state officials also were on hand. The memorial opened in 1995 in the heart of Boston and is open to the public 24 hours a day. It includes six glass towers representing the 6 million Jews killed during the Holocaust, as well as the six major death camps. The towers resemble chimneys built with 132 panes of glass etched with numbers that had been tattooed on the arms of Jews during the Holocaust.

Boston, Massachusetts, July 9, 2017 (AP): Massachusetts' governor plans to join Holocaust survivors and two Jewish organizations at a rededication ceremony for the repaired New England Holocaust Memorial. Prosecutors say the Boston man smashed the roughly 9-foot-tall (2.7-meter) panel in the early morning hours of June 28.

Marblehead, Massachusetts, July 3, 2017 (JTA): Anti-Semitic graffiti was spray-painted on a wall near the harbor in a Boston-area coastal town. The graffiti included a Star of David in a circle with a line drawn through it and the letters IDF in a circle with a line through it, a derogatory phrase referring to Bernie Sanders, “End the Jew.” Police are investigating the graffiti incident, as well as another incident in a section of Seaside Park, where they said “similarly offensive graffiti was discovered.” It is not known if the same vandals are responsible for both incidents.
Concord, Massachusetts, May 8, 2017 (Concord/Journal Patch): A swastika was found on a bathroom wall at Concord-Carlisle Regional High School. Security tapes are being reviewed and investigators are interviewing students, faculty, and staff who may have additional information. Late last year, racist and anti-Semitic graffiti was found on three separate occasions at Concord Middle School.

New Bedford, Massachusetts, May 2, 2017 (South Coast Today): Vandals spray-painted anti-Semitic graffiti on a sidewalk and building wall in downtown New Bedford.

Norwell, Massachusetts, April 10, 2017 (The Patriot Ledger): Police in Norwell are investigating anti-Semitic graffiti and vandalism along the town’s “pathwalks.”

Springfield, Massachusetts, March 5, 2017 (JTA): The Springfield Jewish Community Center in Massachusetts was evacuated after a bomb threat was found written on the wall of the men’s locker room. The city’s arson and bomb squads, police, and firefighters searched the building but did not find anything, according to reports. JCC officials decided to keep the facility closed for the rest of the day following the incident.

Westwood, Massachusetts, February 15, 2017 (WFXT Fox 25): A swastika was found scrawled inside a classroom at Westwood High School and the principal has reached out to the local synagogue for help. The high school principal immediately emailed parents and also reached out to a local synagogue just down the street to get them involved in the discussion.

Nationwide, January 26, 2017 (JTA/Stanford Daily/NBC/The Tennessean): Printers on the campuses of three universities — Stanford, Vanderbilt and California, Berkeley — produced anti-Semitic fliers in a suspected hacking attempt over the past two weeks. At Stanford, anti-Semitic fliers were sent to printers in offices around campus, the Stanford Daily reported. The FBI has joined the investigation there. Fliers with swastikas appeared on printers at the University of California, Berkeley, according to NBC. Printers at Vanderbilt, in Nashville, started spewing anti-Semitic fliers, according to The Tennessean. Last year, similar attacks on printers occurred at a half dozen college campuses in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, as well as others across the country, including Princeton. They were hacked with an anti-Semitic and racist flier.

Hyannis, Massachusetts, January 15, 2017 (FOX 25): Unidentified perpetrators spray painted the words “kill Jews” and a white supremacist slogan on headstones at a cemetery in Cape Cod. Police in Barnstable are treating the investigation as a hate crime. Several headstones were also knocked over. One headstone was defaced with the number 666, a number association with satanic groups. Another featured the numbers “4.20,” ostensibly a reference to Adolf Hitler’s birthday.

Springfield, Massachusetts, January 10, 2017 (WWLP 22 News): The Jewish Community Center in Springfield received a threatening note. Police conducted an investigation and determined there was no threat. JCC Executive Director Michael Paysnick told 22News that the JCC takes any threat extremely seriously and has enhanced security since the note was found.