

Zealously guarded Jewish memories:
Caucagua and Margarita Island
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This paper offers an autobiographical reflection on two Jewish communities in Venezuela that have profoundly shaped my identity — the first encountered during my childhood in Caucagua, and the second in adulthood on Margarita Island. Through these personal narratives, I seek to preserve and share the living memory of Jewish life in environments far from established Jewish infrastructure.

The work begins by exploring what it means to maintain a Jewish identity in a predominantly non-Jewish context — where daily life lacks synagogues, Jewish schools, kosher markets, and the communal support that sustains traditional observance. Within this framework, I describe the distinct characteristics of two communities: the small, little-known town of Caucagua, and the culturally rich, tradition-rooted region of Margarita Island.

While these communities were not hidden in the way Crypto-Jewish enclaves often were, they still reflect peripheral expressions of Jewish identity — practiced quietly, at times in isolation, yet zealously preserved. Both offer meaningful insights into the persistence of Jewish memory and belonging far from major Jewish centers. Finally, the paper considers the future trajectory of these communities and the role memory plays in sustaining them amid changing times.

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