



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Congregation Beth Emeth (Albany, N.Y.)
Records**

Manuscript Collection No. 429



Collection Summary

Title	Congregation Beth Emeth (Albany, N.Y.) Records
Dates	1843-1907
Collection Number	MS-429
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Congregation Beth Emeth (Albany, N.Y.) Congregation Beth El (Albany, N.Y.) Congregation Beth El Jacob (Albany, N.Y.)
Extent	0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)
Language of the Material	English, German, and Hebrew

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch A Jewish community emerged in Albany, New York in the 1830s; German-speaking Jews from Bavaria and Posen organized Congregation Beth El in 1838. By 1841, the congregation had bought a burial ground and purchased its first synagogue building. Divisions over language and ritual led to the founding of Beth El Jacob in 1841 by Jews of Polish origin. After acquiring property for a synagogue and separate burial grounds, the congregation built a new synagogue in 1847. Isaac Mayer Wise arrived in the United States from Bohemia and became Albany's first rabbi when he took over leadership of Beth El in 1846. He was the teacher at the congregation's Hebrew school, then one of only four in the United States. Wise's advocacy of changes in ritual split the congregation. By October 11, 1850, Wise and 77 supporters had organized Anshe Emeth, the fourth Reform congregation in the United States.

Assimilation and Americanization led to the merger of Beth El and Anshe Emeth in 1885 to form Beth Emeth, the only Reform congregation in Albany. Rabbi Wise returned to Albany in 1889 to dedicate the synagogue for the combined congregation. A new synagogue was again dedicated in 1957.

Recent immigrants, while Orthodox, did not feel comfortable in Beth El Jacob and formed a separate congregation, Sons of Abraham, in 1882. In 1902 another group of Russian Jews split off and established the United Brethren Society, as a separate congregation that followed a Hasidic prayer book, and the congregation incorporated in 1905. The passing of the immigrant generation, Americanization, and suburbanization led to a relocation and reorganization of the synagogues. The Orthodox synagogues merged with the United Brethren Society, joining Beth El Jacob in 1959, and Beth El Jacob merged with Sons of Abraham in 1974 to form Beth Abraham-Jacob. The combined congregation dedicated a new synagogue in 1991.

Information for the Institutional Sketch was taken from the "Albany" article in the Encyclopedia Judaica (see: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0001_0_00672.html).

Scope and Content Collection includes financial records and minute books (1843-1886) for Congregation Beth El and Congregation Beth El Jacob, listing of deaths and burials (1857-1886) for Congregation Beth El, articles of incorporation (1845) of Congregation Beth Jacob, and miscellaneous congregational records.

Terms of Access The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Congregation Beth Emeth (Albany, N.Y.) Records and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-429. Congregation Beth Emeth (Albany, N.Y.) Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance Received from Alvin S. Roth, Albany, N.Y., 1961.

Index Terms

Subjects	Jews -- New York (State) -- Albany / Synagogues -- New York (State) -- Albany
Corporate Names	Congregation Beth El (Albany, N.Y.) / Congregation Beth El Jacob (Albany, N.Y.) / Congregation Beth Emeth (Albany, N.Y.)
Media	Death registers / Minutes

Series A. General, 1843-1907

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Congregation Beth Jacob. Constitution, membership lists, 1845-1848

Box 1. Folder 2. Congregation Beth El. Record of deaths, 1857-1886

Box 1. Folder 3. Congregation Beth El. Minutes, 1843-1855

Box 1. Folder 4. Unidentified synagogue/group. Minutes, 1850-1877

Box 1. Folder 5. Congregation Beth El and Beth Emeth. Minutes, 1855-1886

Box 1. Folder 6. Congregation Beth El Jacob. Minutes, 1857-1883

Box 1. Folder 7. Congregation Beth El, Congregation Beth Jacob, Congregation Beth Emeth. Miscellaneous correspondence and clippings, 1860s-1907