

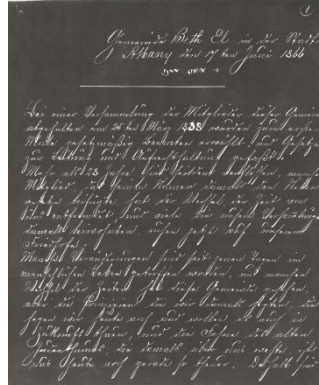


THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

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

**Manuscript Collection No. 518**



## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	Congregation Beth El (Albany, N.Y.) Records
<b>Dates</b>	1847-1885
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-518
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Congregation Beth El (Albany, N.Y.)
<b>Extent</b>	0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	German

## 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.

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](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0001_0_00672.html)).

**Scope and Content** The Congregation Beth El (Albany, N.Y.) Records describe the governance and activities of the congregation from 1847 until 1885. The records consist of Photostat copies of an 1866 constitution and bylaws (with additions made in 1878), a Board of Trustee minute book dating 1860-1883, and another congregational minute book dating 1860-1885. The collection also includes a record book citing contributions to the temple during the rabbinate of Isaac Mayer Wise (dated 1847-1852). The majority of the records are in German.

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

**Preferred Citation** Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Congregation Beth El (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-518. Congregation Beth El (Albany, N.Y.) Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Provenance** Donor unknown.

## Index Terms

<b>Subjects</b>	Jews -- New York (State) -- Albany / Synagogues -- New York (State) -- Albany
<b>Corporate Names</b>	Congregation Beth El (Albany, N.Y.)
<b>Media</b>	By-laws / Constitutions / Minutes

## Series A. General, 1847-1885

### Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1. Folder 1. Contribution book, 1847-1852
- Box 1. Folder 2. Constitution and bylaws, 1866, 1878
- Box 1. Folder 3. Board of Trustees minute book, 1860-1883
- Box 1. Folder 4. Minute book, 1860-1885