

Congregation Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob and David
Jewish Historical Society of MetroWest Archives

Prepared by Jill Hershoin (April, 2009)

Record Group:

1

Collection Number:

36-99

Creator:

Congregation Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob and David

Inclusive Dates:

1932-1978

Extent:

1 cf

Abstract:

Records of Congregation Ahavat Achim B'nai Israel

Acquisition information:

Acquired by the Society in 1999

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Society of MetroWest

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N/A

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History:

The history of Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob and David is a chronicle of the merger of many congregations which can be traced back more than one hundred years to the founding of Ahawas Achim Anshe Warshaw. Established by a small number of immigrants from Eastern Europe, the original congregation grew and prospered and by 1900, was able to erect a permanent structure, complete with a mikveh, in what is now the central ward of Newark. By the 1930's, with movement of the Jewish population of Newark out of the central ward and into the Clinton Hill and

Weequahic areas, the leaders realized the congregation would have to relocate. In 1935 they welcomed the opportunity to merge with Anshe Lemberg B'nai Jacob. That year, Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob was founded.

Anshe Lemberg B'nai Jacob was founded in 1903 and was originally located on Barclay Street in Newark's Central Ward. In 1931 it took over an imposing building on Avon Avenue which had previously been occupied by Congregation Tzemach Tzedek. Tzemach Tzedek had been formed in the 1920's and the cornerstone of the Avon Avenue structure had been laid in 1937. Unfortunately, Tzemach Tzedek experienced insurmountable financial difficulties because of the Great Depression and was unable to maintain the Avon Avenue property. The congregation had no recourse but to be absorbed by Anshe Lemberg B'nai Jacob. The newly formed congregation was named B'nai Jacob.

In 1936 Rabbi Hershel Cohen was hired as the congregation's chazzan and in 1939, he was elected rabbi, a position he held until he was named Rabbi Emeritus in 1969. Rabbi Cohen passed away on January 20, 1989. Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob was a large, dynamic congregation with a membership of some four hundred families. By the mid 60's, most of the Jews in the Clinton Hill area had moved to the suburbs and it was imperative that the congregation relocate. Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob began negotiations with B'nai David of West Orange resulting in another merger and the creation of Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob and David.

B'nai David, named after the father of Bernard and Lee Kahn, had been formed in 1961 by a small group of West Orange residents. B'nai David was eager to build a strong Orthodox community in West Orange and so it welcomed the inquiries of Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob. The merger was concluded in 1966 and an edifice was purchased on Pleasant Valley Way for a sanctuary and a Talmud Torah. Alvin Marcus became Rabbi in time for Rosh Hashanah, September 1968.

The continuing exodus of Jews from Newark in the 1960's and 1970's resulted in two additional synagogues being absorbed by Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob and David. The first, Tifereth Zion, became part of AABJD in 1970, and the second, Toras Emes, in 1974. Tifereth Zion had been located in the Weequahic section of Newark ever since it was founded in 1924. Toras Emes, the Ferry Street shul, had been located in the Ironbound section of Newark ever since its beginning in 1905. The congregation prospered until the 1930's, when the Jews of the Ironbound area slowly began to move to other parts of Newark and to the suburbs.

Another affiliation included Emunath Israel of East Orange. A scholarship fund was established in memory of its Rabbi, Israel Goldblum,

to assist young adults attending school in Israel. Kehilath Israel of Newark's Chancellor Avenue and the Metzger Family Association are other organizations which merged with them.

Rabbi Alvin Marcus served as Rabbi through August 1998, when he was installed as Rabbi Emeritus. Rabbi Yaakov Sprung served as Rabbi from then to August 2004 and was followed by Rabbi Eliezer Zwickler, who currently holds this pulpit.*

* Taken directly from:

<http://www.aabjd.org/content.php?pg=History&ID=145>

Scope and Content:

While the congregation is most recently known as Congregation Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob and David, the documents contained within the collection belong to the following institutions: Congregation Ahavas Achim Anshe Warshau, Congregation B'nai Jacob, Congregation B'nai David, Tifereth Zion and Toras Emes. To better understand the collection, it was decided to arrange the series by the name of the institution.

Additional material was added in 2011 after the JSHMW received a donation from Aaron Frank.

This collection is generally comprised of documents. The collection is arranged in six series, as follows:

- I. Congregation Ahavas Achim Anshe Warshau
 - A. Legal
 - B. Membership
- II. Congregation B'nai Jacob
 - A. Correspondence
 - B. Employees
 - C. Finance
 - D. Legal
 - E. Membership
 - F. Miscellaneous
 - G. Organization Information
 - H. Press
 - I. Publications
 - J. Vendors
- III. Congregation B'nai David
- IV. Congregation Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob and David
 - A. Correspondence
 - B. History
 - C. Press

- V. Tifereth Zion
 - A. Organization Information
 - B. Press
- VI. Toras Emes
 - A. Press

Conservation Notes:

N/A

Removals:

None

Organization:

The materials are organized alphabetically, then chronologically when needed, within the series.