

Congregation Agudath Israel
Jewish Historical Society of MetroWest Archives
Prepared by Jill Hershorerin (8/26/08)

Record Group: 1

Collection Number: 17-06

Creator:

Congregation Agudath Israel

Inclusive Dates:

1952-2004

Extent:

6 cf

Abstract:

Historical records of Congregation Agudath Israel. Records donated by Alice Perkins Gould

Acquisition information:

Acquired by the Society in 2007. This organization has been in existence since 1930, yet the records that are in this collection are from 1952-2004.

Preferred Citation:

Congregation Agudath Israel Collection, Jewish Historical Society of MetroWest

Access restrictions:

The collections of the Society shall be available for examination and study by any member of the public under the normal security procedures and other special procedures established for the protection of the specific collections.

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History:

Congregation Agudath Israel of West Essex began around 1920 when a small group of Jewish families gathered in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Goodwin and organized The Jewish League of Caldwell. Arrangements were made for a religious school to be conducted in a nearby real estate office whose furniture was donated from a funeral parlor. High Holy Day services were conducted in Caldwell's Masonic Temple.

In 1922, the groundbreaking ceremony for the one-room stucco synagogue occurred. Services were conducted by Joseph Salper and rabbis from Newark

were hired for the High Holy Days services. In 1934, Rabbi Goldman was hired, the first of several rabbis to serve the Jewish League until August, 1939, when Rabbi Morris Werb took over rabbinical duties.

Additional space was needed and in 1951 a lot was acquired on Academy Road and the new synagogue was dedicated in 1952. In 1953 a property adjacent to the synagogue was purchased and converted into a Hebrew School. The synagogue housed the growing congregation until 1968, when a new synagogue was dedicated.

In the meanwhile, in June of 1960, a new constitution called for a name change and the new congregation was called Agudath Israel of West Essex. With the retirement of Rabbi Werb in 1979, after 40 years of service, Rabbi Alan Silverstein was appointed. In 1989 construction began on a new building which houses the Hebrew school, administrative offices, new chapel, youth wing, library, Judaica shop and kitchens.

In the year 2000, the congregation celebrated their 80th anniversary. They continue to grow and prosper and, yet again, the need for expansion is in process to date.

Scope and Content: This collection is comprised of paper and photographs and is divided into nine series as follows:

- I. Administrative
 - a. Board Officers' List
 - b. Board Meeting Minutes, 1926-1990
 - c. Building Construction
 - d. Bylaws and Constitutions
 - e. Committees
 - f. Correspondence
 - g. Fundraising
 - h. Legal
 - i. Misc.
 - j. Organizational Charts
 - k. Schedules
- II. Certificates
- III. Events
 - a. Dedication Ceremony
 - b. Assorted events
- IV. Finance
- V. Men's Club
- VI. Press
- VII. Publications
 - a. Newsletters
 - b. Journals
- VIII. Press
- IX. Photographs (see also: Administrative/Fundraising/Building Fund – Milton Hood Ward & Co., Inc)

Of interest are a letter from President Reagan and Senators Bradley and Gallo and other politicians congratulating the congregation on the 65th anniversary - B4 F6

Conservation Notes:

n/a

Removals:

None

Organization:

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