

JHSSA DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL RECORD

TITLE: Congregation House of Jacob fonds

No.: CHJ

DATE RANGE: 1909-1984, predominant 1980-1983

EXTENT: 22cm of textual records. – 3 objects

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

Congregation House of Jacob, sometimes referred to as *Beit Yaakov* or Beth Jacob, was organized in 1907 and received its provincial charter as “Congregation of the House of Jacob” in 1909. Among the declared purposes of the new congregation were “to make donations to or otherwise assist any public charitable ... or useful Institution ... ” and to “promote the extension of the Hebrew faith”. A one-room structure was built at the back of a lot on 3rd St and 5th Ave E to serve as prayer hall and classroom while funds were raised to erect a permanent sanctuary, and services were led by members and short-term clergy, including Rabbi Hyman Goldstick, Rev. Hirsch Sosinsky, I. Kadushin, and Rev. Isaac Klegman. The founding president was Jacob Diamond; early presidents included Charles Malkin, J.A. Guttman, Jack Bercuson, J. Lukatsky, H.L. Epstein, Morris Groberman, E. (Yoel) Shapiro and John Hector.

In 1911 a 500-seat synagogue was constructed in front of the original building. The cornerstone, in Yiddish and English, notes the donations of Charles Bell, Alexander Bell, and Jacob Polsky. A *mikvah* (ritual bath) was built behind the synagogue. Services continued to be performed by congregation members and short-term clergy, including Solomon Roubin (Rubin), who was willing to work for the fees available to him from community and life-cycle events. The first long-term Rabbi was Rabbi Simon Smolensky who led the congregation from 1917-1935, and the congregation’s longest-serving spiritual leader was Rabbi David Barenholz, from 1939 through 1968.

The congregation was responsible for *kashrut* (kosher) supervision for the Jewish community of Calgary and area, and over the years this function provided an important source of income, along with synagogue seat sales, membership dues and pledges for special occasions. In its early years the synagogue building provided a meeting place for many events and activities within the Calgary Jewish community, which had no other communal building until 1926. One of the Congregation’s first projects was to organize a Jewish school, Talmud Torah, which soon became an independent organization. In 1980 the congregation established another school, Akiva Academy, which remained affiliated.

The House of Jacob building was sold to the City of Calgary in 1967, and demolished the following year to make way for urban renewal. The congregation moved to a smaller building at 12 Avenue and 12 Street S.W. and made several small amendments to the constitution. After that building was sold in 1979, the congregation met in a series of temporary locations, both rented and purchased. A move to revitalize the congregation resulted in extensive changes to the original constitution, including clauses specifying that the practices of the Congregation were to accord with “the tenets of Traditional Orthodox Judaism”, and that female members would be allowed to participate in all voting. In addition, a resolution was passed to relocate the synagogue to the deeper south west quadrant of the city.

In 1984 Congregation House of Jacob officially became Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel. The new congregation incorporated the cornerstone from the 1911 House of Jacob synagogue into their building, and in some of their early unofficial documents refer to themselves as Congregation House of Jacob. They became the parent organization for Akiva Academy.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The fonds consists of minutes, financial statements, membership lists, deeds for synagogue seats, rabbinical contracts, land purchase and sale documents, correspondence and newsletters, as well as a book of psalms with the congregation's stamp, and 2 bricks from the foundation of the 5th Avenue Congregation House of Jacob synagogue building.

The fonds has been arranged into the following series: Governance; Minutes; Correspondence; Land Sales & Purchases; Financial; Membership; Events, Publicity and Mailings; Newsletters; Objects.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of fonds

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel; also see individual series

LANGUAGE NOTE: some material in Yiddish; see series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

ASSOCIATED RECORDS: Glenbow Museum; various fonds and collections

ACCRUALS: no further accruals expected

RELATED GROUPS OF RECORDS: JHSSA photo collection; JHSSA Oral History collection;
Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel; Akiva Academy; Smolensky fonds;
Calgary Jewish Community Council (kashrut)

GENERAL NOTE: Includes the following accessions: 98-007, 99-013, 2000-008, 2002-014, 2007-006,
2007-019

Series Title:	Governance	No.:	.01
Date Range:	1909, 1922-1924, 1963, 1969, 1979-1982; predominant 1980-1981		
Extent:	3.5cm of textual records		

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of copies and drafts of the Constitutions (1909, 1969, 1980) of the Congregation House of Jacob, as well as copies of Certificates of Incorporation (1909, 1969), registration information (1980), and copies and drafts of rabbinical contracts. The dates of the copies are unknown.

The series has been arranged into the following sub-series: 1909; 1969; 1979-1982; Rabbinical Contracts.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Minutes

No.: .02

Date Range: 1936-1963, 1967-1968, 1979-1983

Extent: 7cm of textual records

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of one minute book (1936-1963) (Yiddish) as well as loose minutes (English) from Board, Executive and Annual General Meetings of Congregation House of Jacob. Also included is a handbill for a 1954 meeting "... to formulate plans for the erection of a new building for a modern orthodox shul."

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

LANGUAGE: some material is in Yiddish, no translation available

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Correspondence

No.: .03

Date Range: 1980-1982

Extent: 1cm of textual records

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of correspondence regarding the activities of Congregation House of Jacob, as well as blank letterhead from the original synagogue location, and blank letterhead and envelopes from the second synagogue location.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Land Sales and Purchases

No.: .04

Date Range: 1967-1984

Extent: 3cm of textual records

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of correspondence, maps, plans, reports and architects' renderings regarding the purchase, sale and building of various Congregation House of Jacob properties, including material regarding a 1983 ground-breaking ceremony.

The series has been divided into the following subseries: 1967-68, which involves the sale of the 5th Ave property; 1979-1981, 12th Street, which includes the sale of the 12th St. property as well as pre-proposals regarding the congregation's requirements; 1981 Herron property; 1980-1984, 92nd Ave property; 1983 Ground breaking.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Financial
Date Range: 1979-1983
Extent: 1cm of textual records

No.: .05

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of financial reports and statements regarding the activities of Congregation House of Jacob.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Membership
Date Range: 1909, 1917-1940, 1979-1983
Extent: 3cm of textual records

No.: .06

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of a 1909 [membership] receipt, a Wedding Register, 8 Deeds of Sale for synagogue seats and one blank Deed, as well as membership and mailing lists for Congregation House of Jacob.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Register -- Minnie Segal; Deeds – Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel, Dorothy Robbins, estate of Jay Joffe

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Events, Publicity & Mailings
Date Range: 1973-1983
Extent: 1.5cm of textual records

No.: .07

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of mailings, forms, programs and organizational material for Congregation House of Jacob activities, including High Holiday services and educational programs, theatrical events, Shabbatons and fundraisers.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Newsletters

No.: .08

Date Range: 1979-1984

Extent: 2cm of textual records

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of newsletters produced by the Congregation House of Jacob, including several cut-and-pasted originals. The earlier issues were 17.5cm x 21cm booklets called *Bulletin*. In December 1980 the name was changed to *The Voice of Jacob*. In March 1981 the format was changed to 22cm x 28cm. The series includes the following issues: 1979 August, Shavuot, Fall, Chanuka; 1980 Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Pesach, Shavuot, December; 1981 March, May, July, September, December; 1982 March, August, December; 1983 Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah; 1984 September

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Objects

No.: .09

Date Range: 1911, 19--

Extent: 3 objects

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of 2 bricks from the 1911 Congregation House of Jacob building, and an undated volume called *Psalms*, with the Congregation's stamp on several pages.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Doris Miller (bricks); David Zuckerman (book)

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access