



## **Congregation Beth Ahavah records, 1974-1987 : Ms.Coll.6**

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Finding aid prepared by Finding aid prepared by staff of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia. on

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John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives, William Way LGBT Community Center  
1315 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
[archives@waygay.org](mailto:archives@waygay.org)

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives, William Way LGBT Community Center
<b>Creator:</b>	Congregation Beth Ahavah (Philadelphia, Pa.).
<b>Title:</b>	Congregation Beth Ahavah records
<b>ID:</b>	Ms.Coll.6
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1974-1987
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1.5 Linear Feet
<b>Physical Description:</b>	2 record cartons
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	Beth Ahavah was founded in 1975 as an LGBT synagogue in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Beth Ahavah is an affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism and still active as of 2012. The Beth Ahavah records, 1974-1987, consist of administrative records (correspondence), membership records, financial records, and event/program records.

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## Biographical/Historical Note

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Congregation Beth Ahavah was founded in September 1975 as a community and religious organization for lesbian and gay Jews and their family and friends. Services and social events were originally held in members' homes. Beth Ahavah moved to Dignity House (252 S. 12th Street, Philadelphia) in 1977, and to 2116 Walnut Street, Philadelphia in 1980. Beth Ahavah relocated to 8 Letitia Street, Philadelphia, in 1992. In 1990, Beth Ahavah became an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the central body of the Reform Jewish movement in the U.S. This marked the first time the congregation officially aligned itself with a particular branch of Judaism. In July 2007 Beth Ahavah affiliated with Congregation Rodeph Shalom. Beth Ahavah retains its congregational status within the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) and its membership in the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Jews: Keshet Ga'avah.

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## Scope and Content Note

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The Beth Ahavah Papers primarily document the first decade of activities sponsored by Beth Ahavah, a gay and lesbian synagogue in Philadelphia. Beth Ahavah donated the papers to the Library/Archives in 1987.

Besides information specifically about Beth Ahavah, the collection includes extensive documentation of the International Conferences of Gay and Lesbian Jews and information from other gay and lesbian synagogues. Other papers in the collection trace Beth Ahavah's interaction with non-Jewish gay groups and non-gay Jewish groups.

A small percentage of the papers have been embargoed for 50 years from their creation date to maintain the privacy of individual members and employees. For additional material about congregation Beth Ahavah, see its newsletter, *The Shofar*, in the Library/Archives' General Ephemera Collection.

The collection is organized into six series: "I. History"; "II. Financial records"; "III. Organizational records"; "IV. Correspondence"; "V. Material from other organizations"; and "VI. Reference files." A folder-level inventory is provided below.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives, William Way LGBT Community Center

1315 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
[archives@waygay.org](mailto:archives@waygay.org)

### Conditions Governing Access Note

A small percentage of the records have been embargoed for 50 years from their creation date to maintain the privacy of individual members and employees. Contact John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia for information about accessing this collection.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Gift of Congregation Beth Ahavah, 1987.

## Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2011-2012 as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR), using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia. The HCI-PSAR project was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was done in the HCI-PSAR project.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials Note

American Jewish Archives: Congregation Beth Ahavah nearprint geography file.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Gays
- Jewish gays
- Jews
- Judaism
- Lesbians
- Philadelphia (Pa.)
- Sexual minorities
- Congregation Beth Ahavah (Philadelphia, Pa.).

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## Collection Inventory

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### I. History

Title/Description	Instances
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History of Beth Ahavah, circa 1970-1980	folder 1
Material on Beth Ahavah, 1975-1977	folder 2

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## II. Financial records

Title/Description	Instances
Treasurer's reports, 1979-1981	folder 1
Income Statements, 1979	folder 2
Income Statements, 1980	folder 3
Projected budget, 1983-1984	folder 4
Bank statements, 1980-1981	folder 5
Bank statements, 1982	folder 6
Bank statements, 1983	folder 7
Bank statements, 1984	folder 8
Bills and receipts, 1981	folder 9
Bills and receipts, 1982	folder 10
Bills and receipts, 1983	folder 11
Bills and receipts, 1983	folder 12
Bills and receipts, 1983	folder 13
Bills and receipts, 1984	folder 14
Rowe Fund, 1979-1982	folder 15
Financial statements conference, 1981	folder 16
Membership applications (RESTRICTED), 1983	folder 17

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## III. Organizational Records

Title/Description	Instances
By-laws (multiple versions), circa 1985	folder 1
Membership records (RESTRICTED), 1980-1981	folder 2
Articles of incorporation, 1977	folder 3
Sales tax exempt status, 1977	folder 4
Lease for 1226 Walnut Street, 1980	

	folder 5
Minutes (Beth Ahavah Board), 1982-1984	folder 6
Services, circa 1978-1981	folder 7
Program Committee, 1979	folder 8
Minutes (Beth Ahavah Board and Committee), 1982-1986	folder 9
Material on fundraising, undated	folder 10
Press releases, circa 1980-1985	folder 11
Dedication Weekend, 1980	folder 12
"Evita" materials (RESTRICTED), 1980	folder 13
Purim Dance, 1977-1981	folder 14
Social Events, 1978-1987	folder 15
Publicity, 1980	folder 16
Agreements of Beth Ahavah with Dignity (rental agreements), 1977-1979	folder 17
Fourth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews, 1979	folder 18
Fifth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews, 1980	folder 19
Sixth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews, 1981	folder 20
Sixth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews (financial records), 1981	folder 21
Sixth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews (correspondence) (RESTRICTED), 1981	folder 22
Issues of <i>Shofar</i> , 1982-1985	folder 23
Trees (fund raising/tree planting event) (RESTRICTED), 1979	folder 24
Northeast Regional Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews, 1984	folder 25
Programs (award presentations), 1983-1985	folder 26
Mailing authorization, 1977-1982	folder 27
Social events (RESTRICTED), 1980-1987	folder 28
Social events survey (RESTRICTED), 1979	folder 29
Newsletter, 1980	folder 30

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## IV. Correspondence

Title/Description	Instances
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Correspondence, 1974, 1976, undated	folder 1
Correspondence, 1977	folder 2
Correspondence, 1978	folder 3
Correspondence, 1979	folder 4
Correspondence, 1980	folder 5
Correspondence, 1981	folder 6
Correspondence, 1982	folder 7
Correspondence, 1983	folder 8
Correspondence, 1984	folder 9
Letters to the President (RESTRICTED), 1979-1981	folder 10

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## V. Material from other organizations

Title/Description	Instances
Gay synagogues, 1976-1981	folder 1
Various gay organizations, 1979-1987	folder 2

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## VI. Reference files

Title/Description	Instances
Material from other organizations, 1973-1980	folder 1
Material from other synagogues, 1977-1983	folder 2
Newspaper clippings, 1978-1984	folder 3
Articles, 1971-1984	folder 4
Programs, 1980-1983	folder 5

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