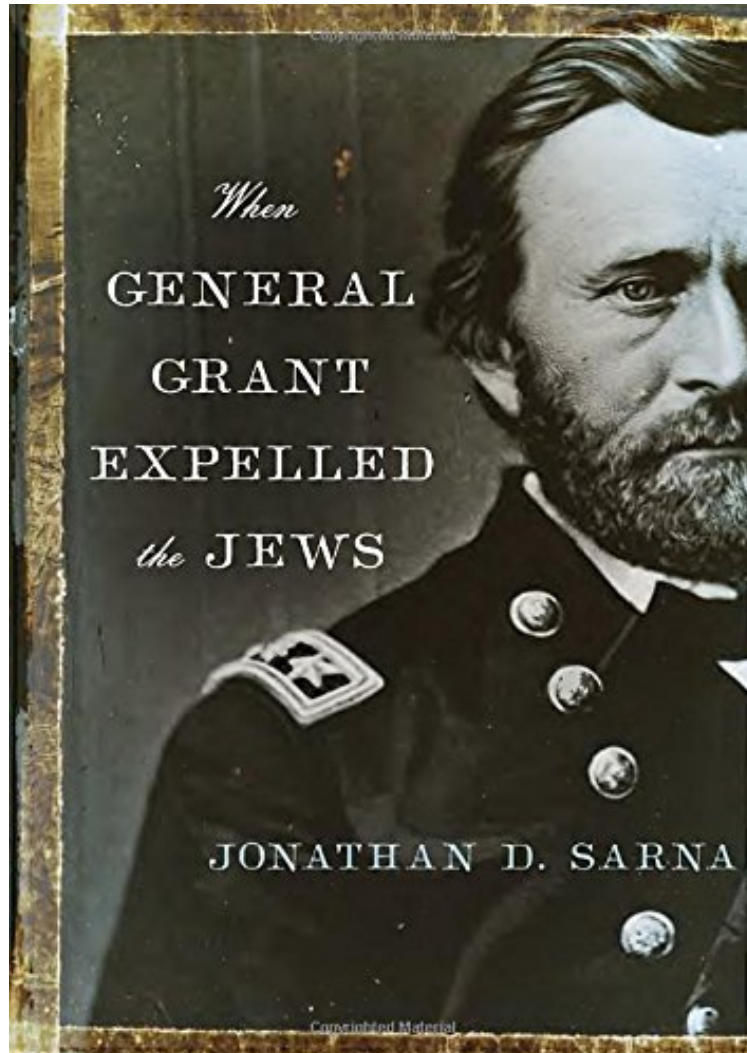


[PDF] When General Grant Expelled the Jews (Jewish Encounters Series)

When General Grant Expelled the Jews (Jewish Encounters Series)

Jonathan D. Sarna

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Jonathan D. Sarna : When General Grant Expelled the Jews (Jewish Encounters Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When General Grant Expelled the Jews (Jewish Encounters Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Important and fascinating. An angle on American history that everybody ought to know.By Ulysses DietzI'd meant to read this for years, ever since the author spoke in my town. As a great-great-grandson of U.S. Grant, I've been haunted for years by the story of the infamous Order No. 11, and it was fantastic to finally read Sarna's careful, literate reporting and analysis of what exactly happened. But there's more--it also taught me so much about the German-Jewish world of antebellum and Reconstruction America.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Recalling a forgotten chapterBy Jason A. MillerJonathan Sarna has a few different

goals in mind with this book: 1) to remind Americans of a once-notorious chapter in U.S. history that has since faded clean away from our collective consciousness; 2) to explore the rise of Jewish identity politics with the American system; and 3) to rehabilitate President Grant's legacy. The Civil War did not begin well for the Union; the Confederacy had planned their opening strikes well, gathering ordnance for months before the assault on Fort Sumter, while the Northern states didn't grasp the reality of the threat of secession and were caught somewhat on their heels. However, by late 1862, the Union Army had finally made inroads into Confederate territory, and were about to flip the tide of the war. Then-General Grant, deep into Southern territory, was disturbed by reports of a wave of smuggling that flowed from the South into the North; conflating events with ancient stereotypes, he issued an order expelling all Jews from the area. A backlash to this order immediately occurred; a consortium of Jewish leaders made their way to Washington D.C., where Grant's order was rescinded by President Lincoln. Sarna, interestingly, chooses to open the book with the Order having already been issued. This is a deliberate choice; instead of slowly building up to the events that caused the ill-considered order to be issued, and thus making the order the centerpiece to the book, he instead puts it out there on page 1, and then spends the rest of the book explaining how Grant was able to overcome its dubious legacy. In fact, Grant became the first President to ultimately embrace the Jewish community, and appoint Jewish citizens to highly desirable government appointments. The middle chapters of the book unfortunately lose focus somewhat, as Sarna describes several then-prominent Jewish figures, nearly all of whom have since been forgotten, which makes those passages a bit of a "Wait, who was THAT guy again?" slog. There's also an odd moment where Sarna traces the foundation of the Lehman Brothers financial firm to Civil War smuggling, though he wisely buries this in a footnote. However, Sarna's ultimate goal is to make the reader aware that Grant was not, as history now remembers him, one of the worst Presidents ever. He praises Grant for his ability to overcome the infamous order, and to become an ecumenical President who helped bring Jewish identity into the political mainstream -- at a moment where some groups were attempting to amend the Constitution along strict Christian grounds. This goal does cause Sarna to do a brief handwave around Grant's scandal-plagued second term, and to blame Grant's low reputation upon revisionist Southern historians who disapproved of Grant on general principles, but I think his overall point is sound. At any rate, the story Sarna tells is a fascinating one. Whether or not he fully succeeds in rehabilitating Grant's reputation, the book is indispensable in describing the American Jewish experience in the 19th century. Grant was the first U.S. President to attend a synagogue dedication, or to have a Jewish pallbearer at his funeral. Regardless of the dubious order that he issued in 1862, Grant had become a much more wise and welcoming man later in his life. A look at the current issues swirling around the 2016 Presidential campaign shows that we as a country still have much to learn from Ulysses S. Grant's personal journey... 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Sarna tells the Whole Story By Lee Haas I lived in Nashville, Tennessee for 19 years, and Ulysses Grant was a villain in the Jewish community because he expelled the Jews of Tennessee during the Civil War. He did this because Jews were among the traders who were illegally selling cotton from the South to factories in the North and selling manufactured goods from the North to people in the South. By assisting both sides of the struggle, these merchants were prolonging the war. Sarna makes no attempt to belittle this foolish move on Grant's part (which was overturned by President Lincoln). In fact, he reports that Jews in parts of several other states also had to leave their homes because of Grant's order. He then shows how Jews throughout the country were upset about it, and how the expulsion order became a campaign issue several years later when Grant ran for President. What is seldom mentioned (and probably unknown to most people) is that, as President, Grant appointed Jews to many government positions. Most Jews at the time were immigrants. Anti-Semitism was widespread in the U.S., and few Jews were involved in politics. Grant, more than any previous President, brought Jews into the government as consuls, ambassadors, postmasters, and other major officials. Grant also made efforts to support Jewish causes and defend Jews in countries where Jews were oppressed. Although Grant's infamous Order No. 11 caused much suffering among the Jews in his district, at the end of the day, Grant was a great benefactor to the Jews of the U.S. His efforts on behalf of Jews far exceeded the hardship he caused during the Civil War.

On December 17, 1862, just weeks before Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation, General Grant issued what remains the most notorious anti-Jewish order by a government official in American history. His attempt to eliminate black marketeers by targeting for expulsion all Jews "as a class" from portions of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi unleashed a firestorm of controversy that made newspaper headlines and terrified and enraged the approximately 150,000 Jews then living in the United States, who feared the importation of European anti-Semitism onto American soil. Although the order was quickly rescinded by a horrified Abraham Lincoln, the scandal came back to haunt Grant when he ran for president in 1868. Never before had Jews become an issue in a presidential contest and never before had they been confronted so publicly with the question of how to balance their "American" and "Jewish" interests. Award-winning historian Jonathan D. Sarna gives us the first complete account of this little-known episode including Grant's subsequent apology, his groundbreaking appointment of Jews to prominent positions in his administration, and his unprecedented visit to the land of Israel. Sarna sheds new light on one of our most enigmatic presidents, on the Jews of his day, and on the ongoing debate between ethnic loyalty and national loyalty

that continues to roil American political and social discourse.(With black-and-white illustrations throughout.)

An excellent study [from the] gifted and resourceful historian Jonathan D. Sarna . . . His account shines brightest around the edges of the story, offering valuable new insights into ethnic politics, press power, and the onetime ability of leaders to flip-flop with grace . . . A compelling page-turner. Harold Holzer, *The Washington Post* This provocative new book is exactly what it sounds like: an account of how Gen. Ulysses S. Grant issued an order to expel Jews from their homes in the midst of the Civil War. Anyone seeking to rock the Passover Seder with political debate will find the perfect conversation piece in Sarnas account of this startling American story. . . . His book is part of the prestigious [Jewish Encounters] series, matching prominent Jewish writers with intriguingly fine-tuned topics. Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* Richly researched [and] filled with lively, little-known personalities . . . it also contains reams of juicy quotes and delicious bits of doggerel. Jenna Weissman Joselit, *The New Republic* Engaging and splendidly researched . . . A compelling, even inspiring tale of redemption. Sarnas fine work is a heartening reminder that even politicians are sometimes touched by the better angels of their nature, and it is a welcome revision to the 18th presidents place in American and Jewish history. Commentary A thorough and thoughtful analysis. San Francisco Chronicle Sarnas remarkably illuminating little gem of a book also reminds us that being Jewish in America has always been a complex psychological negotiation. His new book examines this phenomenon while closely studying a little-known slice of early American Jewish history that will both amaze and distress readers. Jerusalem Post Magazine Powerful . . . Sarnas brilliantly nuanced exploration of the worst official anti-Semitic incident in American history offers us a clear reminder in these ideologically fraught days of why keeping up a firm wall between church and state remains a core defense for all of our freedoms. This wide-ranging and judiciously balanced book is the latest entry in the luminous Schocken/Nextbook Jewish Encounters series of books [that] thoughtfully pair a great writer and an important facet of Jewish life. Marc Wortman, *The Daily Beast* An interesting history about a little-discussed event during the Civil War. St. Louis Post-Dispatch Sarnas book is going to make a significant splash amidst a wave of new books reevaluating the career of one of our most famous army general/presidents . . . Most compelling. John Marszalek, *Moment magazine* Ulysses S. Grants order expelling Jews from his war zone has long helped insure his eternal disgrace. Supposedly, the drunken, bloodthirsty crook was also an anti-Semite! Jonathan Sarnas excellent, painstaking reevaluation of what really happened helps rescue Grants reputation; it is long overdue. It also affirms Sarnas unsurpassed standing as a historian of American Jewry. Sean Wilentz, author of *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* Thoroughly researched and crisply written, this is a very fine work that will interest students of both American and modern Jewish history. Publishers Weekly Sarna expertly navigates the repercussions of Grants shocking order, which galvanized the American Jewish community into action, reminding many who were refugees from European expulsions how insecure they were even in America. . . . Sarna weighs the short-lived order against important Jewish appointments in Grants administration, his humanitarian support for oppressed Jews around the world, and lasting friendships with Jews. A well-argued exoneration of a president and a sturdy scholarly study. Kirkus s In this compelling and focused study, Jonathan D. Sarna explores the causes and assesses the little-known impact of one of the most troubling incidents in the life of the Union's greatest commander. Geoffrey C. Ward, coauthor of *The Civil War* An absorbing account of a lamentable act by the North's greatest general, a dishonorable act committed by an honorable man. This fair and balanced treatment of the event places the commander and the Jews in the context of great conflict. Fortunately, redemption and rapprochement would follow. Frank J. Williams, president, Ulysses S. Grant Association From the Hardcover edition. About the Author JONATHAN D. SARNA is the Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and chief historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History. He has written, edited, or coedited more than twenty books, including *American Judaism: A History* and *Lincoln and the Jews*. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. 1 General Orders No. 11 Cesar Kaskels faith in America was wavering. Born in the town of Rawitsch, then part of Prussia, he, like tens of thousands of other young Jews in the 1850s, had left home and endured a long, perilous voyage across the Atlantic in hopes of establishing himself in business in the United States. Opportunities in Prussia were circumscribed for Jews, owing to domestic unrest, a failing economy, and severe legal limitations on where they could live and what kinds of occupations they could pursue. America, Kaskel had heard, was different. Dispatches in the German-Jewish press and letters received from earlier immigrants reported that in America opportunity was unlimited and freedom guaranteed to people of all faiths Jews included. That guarantee, Kaskel now feared, had been voided. Moving to Paducah, Kentucky, in 1858, Kaskel imagined he had found just the opportunity he had been looking for. The newly incorporated city, located on the Ohio River below the mouth of the Tennessee River and fifty miles up from the Mississippi, was booming. Its population grew exponentially, reaching almost five thousand residents by the Civil War. A timely investment by city fathers in the stock of the New Orleans and Ohio Railway brought Paducah excellent rail connections and a growing volume of trade. Kaskel and his business partner, merchant Solomon Greenbaum, looked to participate in this prodigious growth. They set themselves up in business. Two years later, in 1860, a Kentucky native son, Abraham Lincoln, was elected the sixteenth president of the United States. Fewer than 1 percent of Kentucky voters supported him. Fearing that the new president and his party threatened slavery and the distinctive

character of life in the South, seven Southern states, led by South Carolina, seceded to form the Confederate States of America. When the Confederacy bombarded the coastal fortification of Fort Sumter at the entrance to Charleston harbor on April 12, 1861, forcing it to surrender, war broke out. Once President Lincoln called for troops to quell the rebellion, four more states, including Virginia, joined the Confederacy, while four states on the border between the North and the South, including Kentucky, did not. The Civil War disrupted economic life in Paducah and changed Kaskel's life for the worse. The North began restricting Southern trade with Paducah as early as June 12, 1861, seeking to place economic pressure on the Confederacy. On September 6, Ulysses S. Grant and his troops captured and occupied the city, further restricting its trade with the South. The state of Kentucky declared itself neutral in the war, but Grant believed that the majority of Paducah's citizens would have much preferred the presence of the other army. Be that as it may, at least some of the city's thirty-odd Jews publicly supported the Union's cause. Cesar Kaskel was one of them; he served as vice president of the Paducah Union League Club. His younger brother, Julius, operated as a recruiter for the Union army. The disruption of free trade in Paducah created bountiful opportunities for speculators and smugglers, who always find ways to profit from wartime shortages and imbalances between supply and demand. While merchants like Kaskel burnished their pro-Union credentials in hopes of obtaining precious trade permits, officials entrusted with governing trade in and out of the city found backhanded ways to line their own pockets; so did many soldiers. In short order, public corruption rose, mutual trust declined, and recriminations abounded. As is so often the case in such circumstances, suspicion fell particularly upon the Jews, long stereotyped in Christian culture as being financially unscrupulous. Jews became the focus for much of the hatred and mistrust that the war unleashed within the city. Even though few in number in Paducah, they played an outsized role in business and trade, and as immigrants they were easily marked by their European accents and foreign ways. Unionists and Confederates alike doubted their loyalties partly because they doubted the loyalty of all Jews and partly because Jews nationwide were known to be on both sides of the struggle. Many therefore assumed, even in the absence of supporting evidence, that secessionists and Jews were engaged in rascally conduct in Paducah and that widespread smuggling was carried out as usual chiefly by Jews. Tense as conditions were in Paducah, nothing had prepared Cesar Kaskel for the events of December 28, 1862, and his agitated response to them was understandable. Pursuing his business, in his words, as a peaceable, law-abiding citizen, he was suddenly summoned, on a Sunday, to report immediately to Paducah's provost marshal, Captain L. J. Waddell. There he was handed the following order banishing him from the city:

OFFICE OF PROVOST MARSHAL Paducah, Ky., December 28, 1862
C. J. Kaskel Sir: In pursuance of General Order No 11, issued from General Grant's headquarters, you are hereby ordered to leave the city of Paducah, Kentucky, within twenty-four hours after receiving this order. By order, L. J. WADDELL, Captain and Provost Marshal

Kaskel was not the only person ordered to leave. As he heatedly informed the newspapers, anyone born of Jewish parents was likewise expelled: nearly thirty other gentlemen, mostly married, all respectable men, and old residents of Paducah, two of whom have served their country ... and all loyal to the Government. Women and children were expelled too, and in the confusion so it was recalled years later one baby was almost forgotten, and two dying women had to be left behind in the care of neighbors. Historian John E. L. Robertson preserves a (dubious) local tradition that citizens of Paducah hid some Jews to prevent their being sent away. One soldier, he reports, is said to have knocked on the door of a Jew and demanded, What are you? The resident of the house answered truthfully, Tailor. To which the none-too-bright soldier replied, Sorry to bother you, Mr. Taylor, but I'm looking for Jews. Cesar Kaskel quickly came to understand that Captain Waddell, in expelling him from his home, was simply following orders. The decision to evict Jews from the vast war zone under the command of General Ulysses S. Grant known as the Department of the Tennessee, but actually stretching from northern Mississippi to Cairo, Illinois, and from the Mississippi River to the Tennessee River appeared in a document entitled General Orders No. 11 issued under Grant's own signature eleven days earlier, on December 17. Waddell handed Kaskel a copy of Grant's scarcely-to-be-believed order, and he wisely preserved it. Subsequently described as the most sweeping anti-Jewish regulation in all American history, it read as follows:

GENERAL ORDERS No. 11, Hdqrs. 13th A.C. Dept. of the Tenn., Holly Springs, December 17, 1862. The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order. Post commanders will see that all of this class of people be furnished passes and required to leave, and any one returning after such notification will be arrested and held in confinement until an opportunity occurs of sending them out as prisoners, unless furnished with permit from headquarters. No passes will be given these people to visit headquarters for the purpose of making personal application for trade permits. By order of Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant: JNO. A. RAWLINS, Assistant Adjutant-General.

Kaskel instantly decided to fight the order expelling him from his home. His faith in America, after all, hung in the balance. There was, however, nobody of authority in Paducah with whom to fight. Nor, even had he tried, could he have appealed to General Grant. Less than seventy-two hours after issuing General Orders No. 11, Grant's forces at Holly Springs had been surprised by thirty-five hundred Confederate raiders led by Major General Earl Van Dorn. Since Grant himself was far from the scene, and the commanding officer, Robert C. Murphy, was out at some entertainment that made him, in the delicate words of a contemporary journalist, a trifle over bold, the results proved devastating: Holly Springs was surrounded by rebel cavalry and surrendered without resistance; over a million rations

burned, several hundred bales of cotton destroyed ... and 2,000 troops [captured]. Simultaneous raids to the north by troops of the dreaded Confederate cavalryman General Nathan Bedford Forrest inflicted significant damage and tore up fifty miles of railroad and telegraph lines. Communications between Grants headquarters and the military command were disrupted for weeks by these surprise attacks. As a result, news of Grants order expelling the Jews spread slowly and did not reach army headquarters in a timely fashion sparing many Jews who might otherwise have been banished. Nor did remonstrations against the order reach Grant. To overturn General Orders No. 11, Kaskel would have to appeal to superiors in Washington. Following time-tested traditions of Jewish politics, Kaskel began by appealing to the highest governmental power available. Long experience with persecution had persuaded Jews that their ultimate safety and welfare could be entrusted neither to the erratic benevolence of their gentile neighbors nor to the caprice of local authorities. Kaskel appealed instead to the president of the United States. Within just a few hours of being served with the order of expulsion, and without any known assistance from leading Jews of the time, Kaskel, his brother Julius, merchant Daniel Wolff, and Wolffs two brothers, Marcus and Alexander, dispatched a joint telegram to Abraham Lincoln at the White House. In it, they briefly set forth the terms of General Orders No. 11, described themselves as good and loyal citizens of the United States, and pronounced themselves as Americans greatly insulted and outraged by this inhuman order, the carrying out of which would be the grossest violation of the Constitution, and our rights as good citizens under it. They pointed to the larger implications of Grants order, which, if allowed to stand, would stigmatize Jews as outlaws before the whole world. They appealed to Lincoln for his immediate attention to this enormous outrage on all law and humanity and asked for his effectual and immediate interposition. With their own imminent deportation uppermost in their minds, they requested, in the final sentence of their costly telegram, that immediate instructions ... be sent to the commander of this post. Three times in three sentences they repeated the word immediate. They were desperate. Lincoln, in all likelihood, never saw this telegram. He was busy preparing to issue the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863), freeing Confederate-held slaves as an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution. The irony of his freeing the slaves while Grant was expelling the Jews was not lost on some contemporaries. The Memphis Daily Bulletin published the two documents, one above the other. The juxtaposition of these events, as we shall see, also shaped the responses of several Jewish leaders to Grants order. They feared that Jews would replace Blacks as the nations stigmatized minority. But on December 31, when the telegram was read by General-in-Chief Henry Halleck, all of this was far from anybodys mind. Not being familiar with Kaskel, and having no knowledge of the events that the telegram described, Halleck, with characteristic caution, sought to obtain more information. Respectfully referred to Gen[era]l Grant for report, he noted in his endorsement. By the time Grant reported, two weeks later, the order had been discussed in the halls of Congress. Kaskel, in the meanwhile, did not wait patiently. His telegram to Lincoln unanswered, he climbed aboard the steamship Charley Bowen, which would carry him and other Jews out of Grants department, and hastily penned a strongly worded account of their banishment for distribution to the press. The Associated Press picked up the story, and it appeared, dated December 30, 1862, in a number of newspapers, headlined, in one case, Expulsion of Jews from General Grants Department The Circumstances Stated and Documents Quoted. As a merchant, Kaskel intuitively understood the power of public opinion. He concluded his account, effectively, with a plea for help: On my way to Washington, in order to get this most outrageous and inhuman order of Major General Grant countermanded, I ask you, gentlemen, to lend the powerful aid of the press to the suffering cause of outraged humanity; to blot out as quick as possible this stain on our national honor, and to show the world that the American people, as a nation, brand the author of that infamous order as unworthy of their respect and confidence. Kaskel passed through Cairo, Illinois, and probably Cincinnati on his Paul Reverelike ride to Washington. He spread the word of Grants order wherever he went. Armed with letters from Rabbi Max Lilienthal of Cincinnati and the prominent Cincinnati merchant Daniel Wolf, he hurried on. He was determined to do whatever it took to have Grants order reversed and his faith in America restored. While Kaskel made his way as quickly as he could to Washington, other Jewish leaders, alerted to the order, swung into action. The most important by far was Isaac Mayer Wise, Cincinnati's most prominent rabbi, the editor of the Israelite, the regions most widely read Jewish newspaper, and one of the countrys leading proponents of Jewish religious reform. At forty-three, the hyperactive, somewhat contentious, and voluble rabbi was in the prime of his life. He had been in America for sixteen years, achieved mastery of the English language, and won friends in high places. Pragmatic, flexible, and politically savvy, he generally advocated compromise for the sake of unity both within the Jewish community and in the nation as a whole. Consequently, the live and let live policy of Democrats like Stephen A. Douglas strongly appealed to him, the policies of Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party largely repelled him, and the fanatical abolitionists, some of whom displayed deep religious prejudice against Jews, frightened and alienated him. Residing opposite a border state, with dear friends and near relations ... in either section of the country, Wise favored peace and sectional self-determination to uphold the union, even if that meant acquiescing to slavery. When it came to the rights of Jews, though, he was uncompromising. He was a one-man Anti-Defamation League, chronicling antisemitic slurs and actions and doing all in his power to combat them. News of Grants order first reached Wise independently of Kaskel. Jews expelled from Holly Springs, some of whom were compelled to trudge forty miles on foot to Memphis, communicated with him. Details of their experiences were somewhat garbled (an early report referred to Grants order

as No. 29), but the rabbi quickly understood that what had happened was an outrage, without a precedent in American history. He urged all whom the order victimized to send him, without delay, affidavits to this effect, made before a justice of the peace or a notary public, or publish them in other newspapers, and send us the publications. He insisted, as warriors against prejudice almost invariably do, that it was everybodys business to investigate the prejudicial order, since what had happened to Jews could happen to other spurned nationalities and religious communities, like the Irish or Catholics generally (in fact, they did face significant wartime prejudice, but never orders of expulsion). Most of all, he sought to rouse his own community to action: Israelites, citizens of the United States, you have been outraged, your rights as men and citizens trampled into the dust, your honor disgraced, as a class you have officially been degraded! It is your duty, the duty of self-defense, your duty first to bring this matter clearly before the president of the United States and demand redress, the satisfaction due to the citizen who has been mortified and offended. Privately, though, Wise counseled caution. He worried, given the temper of the times, that too strong a Jewish protest could backfire. In letters to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, he explained that this is a time of excitement and I do not wish to pour oil in the fire. I do not wish to excite prejudices against military men, as they need all the confidence of the people. Having spelled out for Stanton the substance of General Orders No. 11 and the contents of legal affidavits recounting four different examples of Jews who were expelled from Grants territory, barred from entering it, or otherwise degraded because of the order, he called upon Stanton to make an end to this chicanery. He hinted that timely action by the secretary of war would forestall the kinds of protests that could only hinder the war effort. In a follow-up letter five days later, Wise revealed as he did nowhere else that he personally opposed sending delegations to the president, but that notwithstanding my opposition, deputations from Louisville, Ky, Paducah, Ky, Cincinnati and elsewhere have been appointed ... and I must go with them to Washington. He encouraged Stanton to move quickly, previous to the call of the committees. With Kaskel and so many others en route to Washington, he faced a dilemma that many a leader can empathize with. Those whom he had himself helped to bestir now sought to move further and faster than he did, and he worried that they might rush ahead and cause mischief. The other deputations preparing to descend upon Washington, besides Kaskel, consisted of leaders and would-be leaders from across the spectrum of Jewish life. How many planned to come is unknown, but there were enough of them to catch the attention of journalists. Deputations of Jews are arriving here to solicit the President to countermand or modify the order of Gen. Grant excluding Israelites from his lines, one newspaper reported. With the American Jewish community decentralized and divided, many claimed to represent the Jewish community in America, but none did so with authority. The recently established and grandly titled Board of Delegates of American Israelites (its name echoing that of London Jewrys influential Board of Deputies), representing some twenty-five mostly East Coast congregations, was poised to send a deputation of notables to Washington. It closely followed events in the capital through the eyes of Adolphus Solomons, proprietor of the notable bookselling, printing, and publishing establishment Philp Solomons, close to the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue. The Boards leaders had called an emergency meeting and were discussing what to do when a reassuring telegram from Solomons brought word that they could stay home. The Board subsequently took far more credit than it was due for its response to Grants order. Events overtook it. The Jewish fraternal organization Bnai Brith, which boasted lodges across the United States, likewise geared up to lobby against Grants order. An eloquent plea from the orders Missouri lodges, addressed to President Lincoln, insisted that Jews were a class of loyal citizens, who had been driven from their homes, deprived of their liberty, and injured in their property without having violated any law or regulation and who were sacrificing their lives and fortunes for the union and the suppression of this rebellion. It called upon the president to annul that Order and to protect the liberties even of your humblest constituents. Attorney General Edward Bates, who forwarded this poignant document to Lincoln, expressed no particular interest in the subject. Lincoln, as we shall see, was interested, but needed no encouragement from humble Missouri constituents. Even before their petition was mailed, he had acted. The Bnai Brith petition remains valuable nevertheless, for it listed the locations where Grants order had been enforced against Jews: Holly Springs, Trenton, Corinth, Paducah, Jackson, and other places. These were not the major Jewish population centers in Grants department; far more Jews lived in Memphis. Some 150,000 Jews, most of them new immigrants, lived in the United States as a whole at that time, at least 25,000 of them in the lands of the Confederacy. Yet where Grants order might have led to the expulsion of thousands of Jews, it seems to have affected fewer than one hundred. Aside from Kaskel and his fellow Jews in Paducah, almost all those expelled were residents and traders in the vicinity of the main body of Grants army, in northern Mississippi. To be sure, some were treated roughly. A Mr. Silberman from Chicago, temporarily in Holly Springs, was reportedly imprisoned for twelve hours just for the crime of seeking to telegraph General Grant to find out if the expulsion order he received was genuine. An unnamed young Jewish trader and his fiance, traveling through Grants department on their way east, described in New Yorks Jewish Record how they were detained, forbidden to change out of wet clothes, robbed of their horses and buggy, verbally abused, and also had one of their trunks burned and their pockets picked in the wake of the order. Their expulsion, if not their mistreatment, was explained by Brigadier General James Tuttle, commander of the Union garrison in Cairo, Illinois, with the utmost simplicity: You are Jews, and ... neither a benefit to the Union or Confederacy. As painful as these and parallel stories of Jewish mistreatment undoubtedly were, it is the widespread disregard of Grants order in the large territory under his command

that actually cries out for explanation. Part of the reason, we have seen, was the breakdown of communications following the attacks on Holly Springs. Some in Grants department never saw General Orders No. 11, while others who asked questions before carrying the order out likely received no replies. One obvious question that may have given commanders pause was whether the expulsion order applied to soldiers who were Jewish. Of the eight to ten thousand Jews who donned uniforms during the Civil War, many hundreds, in late 1862, were serving under Grant, including a lieutenant colonel named Marcus M. Spiegel and a captain of the Ohio Volunteer Cavalry named Philip Trounstein. According to the broadest interpretation of Grants order (The Jews, as a class ... are hereby expelled from the Department), they should all have been banished. Nobody is known to have interpreted the order that way, but the presence of Jews in the ranks may well have delayed the orders execution in some instances. At least four different officers did telegraph Grant to inquire as to whether his order applied to Jewish sutlers, the merchants and peddlers who followed the military camps selling tobacco, liquor, clothing, foodstuffs, and a wide range of other nonmilitary goods in stores on or near the post, under license from the commander. The word sutler comes from a root meaning to follow a mean or low occupation (the word soot comes from the same cognate), and no doubt for that reason Jews, even back in Europe, had long been permitted to engage in it. As so often before, they were admitted into this less-than-respected trade and then hated all the more for practicing it. It was risky, unpopular, but nevertheless vital and lucrative work, and immigrant Jews with long experience in peddling, marketing, and extending credit took it up during the Civil War, several of them serving in the territory under Grants command. If Jewish sutlers were expelled, commanders wondered, who would meet the day-to-day needs of the soldiers? While they waited for an answer, most commanders allowed their Jewish sutlers to keep on working. Finally, and most significantly, there is evidence that at least one commander refused to carry out Grants order, believing it to be illegal. Isaac Mayer Wise, relying on information from Jews in the field, reported that General Jeremiah Cutler Sullivan refused to execute Grants order, on the grounds that he thought he was an officer of the army and not of a church. Sullivan had himself worked as a lawyer and came from a family eminent in the law. His father was a justice of the Indiana Supreme Court and his brother, Algernon Sydney Sullivan, later cofounded the white-shoe New York law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell. This may have made the general especially sensitive to human rights abuses and those legal niceties too often overlooked (even in our day) on the field of battle. At the time of Grants order, General Sullivan commanded the District of Jackson, Tennessee, and was busy repelling Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrests marauders. So his instinctive refusal to carry out Grants order is instructive. While additional evidence concerning those who refused to carry out Grants order is lacking, Wise reports that Sullivans principled resistance to the order was eventually broken: He was forced after 4 days to enforce it. Cesar Kaskel, making his way as fast as he could to Washington, probably knew nothing about any of this. Arriving in the nations capital just as the Sabbath was concluding on January 3 travel on the Jewish day of rest would have been sanctioned even by the most scrupulous authorities, given the nature of his mission he called at once upon Cincinnati congressman John Addison Gurley. Gurley was a Republican, and though defeated in his 1862 bid for reelection, he had Jewish friends and supporters in Cincinnati and enjoyed ready access to the White House. The ousted congressman, with Kaskel in tow, sought an immediate audience with the president, and according to the likely embellished account published many years later, Lincoln sent word that he was always glad to see his friends, and shortly made his appearance. The president turned out to have no knowledge whatsoever of the order, for it had not reached Washington. According to an oft-quoted report, he resorted to biblical imagery in his interview with Kaskel, a reminder of how many nineteenth-century Americans linked Jews to ancient Israel, and America to the Promised Land: Lincoln: And so the children of Israel were driven from the happy land of Canaan? Kaskel: Yes, and that is why we have come unto Father Abrahams bosom, asking protection. Lincoln: And this protection they shall have at once. Even if (as seems likely) no such conversation actually took place, Lincoln did instantly command the general in chief of the army, Henry Halleck, to countermand General Orders No. 11. He reassured Kaskel that he had nothing further to worry about and could return home. Halleck, for his part, still had trouble believing in the authenticity of the original order, though Kaskel had shown him a copy. Consequently, in writing to Grant, he chose his words carefully. If such an order has been issued, his telegram of January 4 read, it will be immediately revoked. Two days later, several urgent telegrams went out from Grants headquarters in obedience to that demand: By direction of the General in Chief of the Army at Washington, they read, the General Order from these Head Quarters expelling Jews from this Department is hereby revoked. Kaskel, by then, was safely home in Paducah, having reached there before the revocation became known. When the post commander demanded to know by whose orders he had returned, Kaskel, even years later, recalled his vigorous and definitive reply: By order of the President of the United States. Thanks to Lincoln, his faith in the country had been restored. Unofficially, Hallecks assistant adjutant general, John C. Kelton, explained to Grant the presidents central problem with General Orders No. 11: It excluded a whole class, instead of certain obnoxious individuals. Sixteen days later, Halleck followed this up with an official explanation, likely prepared for public consumption: It may be proper to give you some explanation of the revocation of your order expelling all Jews from your department. The President has no objection to your expelling traitors and Jew peddlers, which, I suppose, was the object of your order; but, as it in terms proscribed an entire religious class, some of whom are fighting in our ranks, the President deemed it necessary to revoke it. News of the revocation soon spread. Newspapers

across the country carried the story. Adolphus Solomons personally confirmed the news in a jubilant telegram to the Board of Delegates (Feeling happy to have it in my power to attest the promptitude of our Government in countermanding the ill-liberal and un-lawful order of Genl. Grant). Delegations of Jews from Cincinnati and Louisville, on their way to Washington to lobby against General Orders No. 11, also heard the news, probably from the Philadelphia Inquirer, which carried it in its issue of January 6th. Rather than turning around in Philadelphia and going home, though, they decided to continue onward and thank the president personally for what he had done. Owing once again to Congressman James A. Gurleys influential ties to the White House, the Cincinnati and Louisville delegations quickly got in to see Lincoln so quickly, indeed, that the delegates, including rabbis, lawyers, and one of Grants victims, Abraham Goldsmith of Paducah, had no time to change out of their traveling clothes. Isaac Mayer Wise, who participated in the meeting, wrote a widely circulated account of what transpired. Though he had not previously been one of the presidents acolytes, he was now deeply impressed. Lincoln, he reported, knows of no distinction between Jew and Gentile. In addition, he feels no prejudice against any nationality, and by no means will allow that a citizen in any wise be wronged on account of his place of birth or religious confession. To condemn a class, he quoted Lincoln as declaring, thereby turning Grants order practically on its head, is, to say the least, to wrong the good with the bad. I do not like to hear a class or nationality condemned on account of a few sinners.