



When General Grant Expelled the Jews (Jewish Encounters Series)

Jonathan D. Sarna

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Finalist, 2012 National Jewish Book Awards

A riveting account of General Ulysses S. Grant's decision, in the middle of the Civil War, to order the expulsion of all Jews from the territory under his command, and the reverberations of that decision on Grant's political career, on the nascent American Jewish community, and on the American political process.

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" 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 antisemitism 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Although the order was quickly rescinded by a horrified Abraham Lincoln, the scandal came back to haunt Grant when he ran for president in 1868.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 group loyalty and national loyalty that continues to roil American political and social discourse.

JEWISH ENCOUNTERS SERIES

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