

Maintaining Orthodoxy in the New World

Lecture 3: Young Israel of Ave J – 2/27/08

Special exhibit after talk by the Yosef Goldman Collection

Lecture 3 (Wed. 2/27/08): 1800 to 1880: Jacob Mordecai; Naphtali and Josephine Phillips; Warder Cresson; Isaac Leeser; Rabbi Avraham Rice; Battle with Reform; Jews and the Civil War; Grant's Expulsion Order; Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Schneersohn

Jacob Mordecai (1762 – 1838), Pioneer in Women's Education

I. Women given little education until late 19th and 20th Centuries

A. Some basics at home

B. Non-academic: not capable of learning more than this

II. Not much Jewish education even in Orthodox Jewish circles: Sarah Schneirer (1883 - 1935) Poland

A. Vienna in 1913, WWI: Rabbi Fleisch

B. He suggested that she study the works of Rabbi Shamshon Rafael Hirsch and Rabbi Marcus Lehmann; by eating only one meal a day she managed to save enough money to buy one of Hirsch's books.

C. Returned to Cracow – started Bais Yaakov

III. Another pioneer in education – Jacob Mordecai (1762 – 1838): not Jewish education, but secular education of women

A. Jacob Mordecai was “the son of Moses and Esther Mordecai, observant Jews who in 1760 emigrated from Germany to Philadelphia. Jacob was born in 1762. He attended private schools and received a classical education. At age 13, Jacob served as a rifleman when the Continental Congress was resident in Philadelphia and later helped supply the Continental Army as a clerk to David Franks, the Jewish quartermaster to General George Washington.

After the war, Jacob Mordecai moved to New York and married Judith Myers. In 1792, Judith and Jacob moved to Warrenton, [Virginia] a small town well situated on the roads linking Richmond, Charleston and Savannah. It is worth noting that despite the fact that the Mordecais were the only Jewish family in and around this small town, they remained observant Jews, keeping a strictly kosher home where Shabbos was observed, during the years that they lived there.

B. Judith died at time of birth to 7th child. He married Rebecca Myers, younger half sister of Judith

IV. Tobacco merchant

A. Not particularly interested in business

B. Obtained excellent knowledge of Hebrew language and literature. He studiously devoted himself to literary pursuits, especially Biblical research, and wrote many articles based on these intellectual pursuits.

V. Business fails – financial dilemma

A. 1808 – local residents offered to support academy for girls if he is the headmaster

B. In 1809 the school opened with 30 students and ended up being a family project. In the beginning, Jacob and Rebecca taught all the classes. However, soon they were joined in the classroom by their daughter Rachael and in later years by two of their sons. The younger Mordecai children helped with the cooking and care of the dormitories. The only instructor in the Academy who was not a member of the family was the music teacher!

C. The school's curriculum was not limited to academics; it also stressed proper manners and demeanor. Students were subjected to considerable personal discipline and a highly structured day during which they were kept constantly busy. High standards of behavior and performance were the norm for both students and faculty. The goal was to properly mold both the character and intellectual development of the students. To foster this, the headmaster and his staff carefully and regularly checked on the girls' character development.

D. Jacob made sure that students attended the church of their choice. There were times when he even went with them to the “preaching,” as he called it. He was careful to avoid all doctrinal and sectarian discussions in school activities. Nonetheless, at the same time he provided opportunities for all of his students to discuss philosophical and ethical issues. This was done using classical texts, with the goal of sharpening the girls’ critical faculties so that they would become aware of important moral and ethical considerations. Such an approach was unique for a girls’ school, since these subjects were usually studied only in schools for men.

E. Jacob Mordecai stressed that piety in any religious tradition was an important part of character development. Interestingly enough, the Mordecais also included the observance of Jewish holidays in the Academy’s educational program. Since all of the Mordecai children – male and female – attended and/or worked in the school, as well as several cousins, there was a critical mass of Jewish students to observe holidays.

At the same time Jacob encouraged the Christian students at the Academy to observe their own religious holidays. To him it mattered little what religious practices his students observed, just so long as they were respectful of the religious preferences of others. There were discussions of philosophical texts that raised moral and ethical issues that all students could deal with regardless of their religious differences.

F. Given the above it is no wonder that within a few years the Academy’s excellent reputation had spread so quickly that by 1814 Mordecai was forced to cap enrollment at 110 students.

VI. In 1819 sold school and moved to Richmond. Jewish isolation and effect upon his children

He purchased a farm and lived as an active member of Richmond’s Jewish community, serving as president of its Congregation K. K. Beth Shalome. Jacob died in 1838.

VII. One of his grandsons provides us with an insight into the enduring impact which the education given at the Academy had on its students.

When he visited Jacob's then elderly widow, Rebecca Myers Mordecai, he was impressed by the respect shown her by a former student. "One scene is vividly recalled, when Mrs. John Y. Mason, formerly Miss Fort, who was shortly to sail for France with her husband, then minister to that country, called to say farewell to my grandmother. Mrs. Mason was moved to tears, and kneeling down, begged for a blessing. Mrs. Mordecai was then a silvery-haired widow, worn and aged, and in a solemn and touching way she laid her trembling hands upon the lady's head and pronounced the priestly benediction of our race.

VIII. Jacob Mordecai was influential, like most major role models, because of his strong personality and his determined activities at a critical point in history. He inspired women to attain a level of education which had been denied them and motivated some of them, like his children, to become teachers, writers and advocates for his cause. He succeeded, in part, because he located his school strategically to attract many of the daughters of the leading families in the South, and he used his extended family and social contacts as well as his curriculum to attract them to his school. He used his knowledge, administrative abilities and his children to encourage his female students to attain a level of intellectual proficiency and professional achievement which had previously been reserved only for men. His Female Academy provided his students with skills, confidence and aspirations which allowed some of them to join the teachers, reformers and leaders of their generation who altered American social, educational and political history.

Warder Cresson: From Quaker to Shaker to Orthodox Jew

Source Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi: Warder Cresson, The Story of a Philadelphia Mystic, by Frank Fox, The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, April 1971, pages 146 -193.

I. Converts - Yisro, Rus, the Navi Ovadia, Onkelos, Bulan, king of the Khazars

II. Early Life – Born July 13, 1798 to John Elliot Cresson and Mary nee Warder

A. Prominent Quaker family

B. At 17 went to work on family farms – at 23 married and became a successful farmer

III. Began to question fundamental tenets of Quakerism – form not substance

A. Broke with faith of his fathers

B. By the 1840s, he had become, in turn, a Shaker, a Mormon, a Seventh Day Adventist and a Campbellite. The latter two denominations believed that the Second Coming of Christ was close at hand. He also became notorious in Philadelphia for religious “haranguing in the streets,” where he warned all within earshot of an approaching apocalypse.

IV. Became acquainted with Isaac Leeser in about 1840 and Mordecai Manuel Noah. Both were convinced Jews will soon return to Palestine to live in their former national homeland.

V. By 1844 Cresson became convinced that G-d was about to gather the Jewish people in Jerusalem as a prelude to the “end of days.” He wrote, “God must choose some medium to manifest and act through, in order to bring about his designs and promises in this visible world; ...This medium or recipient is the present poor, despised, outcast Jew ... G-d is about gathering them again [in Jerusalem].” He decided he had to move to Jerusalem to personally witness this great event.

In the spring of 1844 I left everything near and dear to me on earth. I left the wife of my youth and six lovely children, (dearer to me than my natural life), and an excellent farm, with everything comfortable around me. I left all these in the pursuit of truth, and for the sake of Truth *alone*. (Introduction to the Key of David, by W. Cresson, 1852. Available at <http://theoccident.org/Cresson/cresson01.html>)

VI. Before leaving for Palestine Cresson went to Washington and applied for the position of the first American Consul to Jerusalem.

A. Appointed

B. Others objected and appointment was rescinded. Cresson did not know. He had left for Jerusalem. Acted as the American Consul to Jerusalem for about half a year

VII. Conversion to Judaism

During the next four years Warder found himself being increasing attracted to the Jews of Jerusalem and at the same time developing more and more doubts about his Christian beliefs.

Finally, denying the divinity of Jesus after noting the contradictions in the Gospels, Cresson was ready for the most drastic step of his incredible journey. "I remained in Jerusalem in my former faith until the 28th day of March, 1848," he wrote, "when I became fully satisfied that I could never obtain Strength and Rest, but by doing as Ruth did, and saying to her Mother-in-Law, or Naomi (The Jewish Church), 'Entreat me not to leave thee ... for whither thou goest I will go'.... In short, upon the 28th day of March, 1848, I was circumcised, entered the Holy Covenant and became a Jew...." Cresson was then forty-nine years old.

Took the name Michael Boaz Israel.

VIII. Began his return home on May 7, 1848, confident he could convince his wife and children to also adopt Judaism

A. Wife had become a committed Episcopalian - would hear nothing of Judaism. Children also opposed

B. Wife had power of attorney in his absence and had sold the family farm as well as most of his personal effects. He was penniless!

C. Tried to resolve his differences with his family amicably

IX. Wife and some other family members lodged charge of lunacy against him

A. Sheriff's Jury of 6 men issued a verdict of insanity

B. He was not committed

X. Appealed verdict and a trial on the charge of lunacy began on May 13, 1851

A. At the heart of Cresson's defense was his claim that in addition to his family's desire to seize his financial resources was their opposition to his conversion to Judaism. They were sure that anyone who converted from Christianity to Judaism had to be insane. Thus, at the heart of this case was the question of whether a man was free to choose his religious affiliation.

B. 100 witnesses testified at the trial.

C. His wife's lawyers accusations were numerous: Cresson had joined various sects such as the Shakers, Millerites, Mormons, Irvingites, and Campbellites before departing for Palestine to become a Jew; before every election he would prophesy a war and he refused to vote, since he thought that no President should rule; he harangued the people in the streets and upon one occasion walked with some friends around a house (it was not clear whose) and, lacking ram's horns, shouted, in an effort to make the walls fall down; he informed Dr. Ramsay, a Presbyterian clergyman, that he saw in Jerusalem the embalmed body of King David; he claimed the Ten Lost Tribes were in Africa and that he had acquired evidence, while in Germany, that the Savior was a Negro; he applied epithets to the Savior and his Mother ("which we cannot here relate"); he took to Jerusalem an American flag and a white dove and insisted, when receiving his commission as Consul at the State Department, that he would now be a "door-keeper in the House of the Lord." It was even alleged that he claimed to have seen angels while he was circumcised in Jerusalem. But the more serious charges were that he wasted his estate, resorted to threats, and "attempted by violent means to compel his wife and children to embrace the Jewish religion and ... threatened to shoot the family."

D. There were altogether seventy-three witnesses called by Cresson's lawyers, including outstanding physicians who testified that he was sane, many prominent members of the Jewish community, including some notable national figures such as Mordecai M. Noah of New York.

But surely the most unusual defense witness was Colonel Peter A. Browne, described as a man “ardently devoted to pursuits of science ... exploring an almost untrodden tract of experimental investigation.” Colonel Browne testified that he had discovered a remarkable characteristic always manifested in the hair root, based on a careful examination of thousands of specimens of hair for the past few years. [When he observed the root (or button) under a microscope, a regular, pestle shape and a clear, translucent color, were invariably indicative of a normal personality. The hair root of an insane person, on the other hand, was dark in color, neither transparent nor translucent and distorted in shape. Colonel Browne contended that the change in the roots of the hair was produced by a bodily disease, and that since insanity was a physical ailment it naturally caused changes in hair structure. He admitted that a purely physical ailment might cause such alterations in hair structure of a sane person, but then, obviously, the absence of such symptoms, as in Cresson's case, indicated that the person was free of both physical and mental aberration. It was his opinion, formed from many conversations with the defendant and confirmed by a microscopic examination of the hair roots, that the defendant was sane.]

Browne submitted to members of the jury hundreds of hair specimens collected from several lunatic asylums and his testimony made a considerable impression on all participants. The press was eventually filled with praise of his research. “This new physiological test of insanity,” one reporter wrote, “deserves to be received with great regard. It is a matter well worthy of the serious attention of the Medical faculty.... The people of Pennsylvania ... should be proud that Peter A. Browne was born in their state and now honors and distinguishes it by researches, experiments and discoveries worthy of a Franklin or Rittenhouse.”

E. Ultimately Cresson was vindicated of all charges.

The Philadelphia newspapers were almost unanimous in their praise of the results of the trial. They emphasized the issue of religious freedom. Noting that Warder Cresson was perhaps “fickle” and “of unsteady disposition” in his choice of sects, they quickly added that it was his conversion to Judaism, and the anger which this caused the family, that precipitated the suit. “If he had become a Roman Catholic

they would probably have acquiesced.... They could permit him to become a Shaker, a Millerite, or a Mormon, but when he became a Jew, all confidence in his sanity was lost.”

XI. Return to Jerusalem, Agricultural Plans

Cresson/Israel prayed at Congregation Mikveh Israel and lived according to halachah during the four years he spent in Philadelphia after his return from Jerusalem. Eventually he divorced his wife Elizabeth and, in 1852, returned to the Holy Land.

He became even more convinced that the Jews would soon return to the land of Israel. He felt that a necessary precursor to this was the development of agricultural endeavors by Jews. As a result, he proposed a sophisticated plan for the establishment of Jewish agricultural settlements. Indeed, his vision for agricultural development was far reaching, and it anticipated later Zionist efforts.

In 1855 he acquired a tract of land near Jaffa with the intention of putting his plans into practice. However, his planned model farm never developed due to insufficient financial support.

In the mid-1850s he married Rachel Moleano, and became an honored member of Jerusalem’s Sephardic community. They had two children, David Ben Zion and Abigail Ruth. Neither child lived to adulthood.

Warder died on October 27, 1860 and was buried on the Mount of Olives “with such honors as are paid only to a prominent rabbi.” His unusual life encompassed the almost unheard of step of converting to Judaism, the issue of religious freedom, and the effect of national movements upon the Jews that eventually led to changes in their social and economic conditions.

XII. Postscript – Meeting with Herman Melville

Herman Melville (1819 – 1891), the author of Moby-Dick, at one point in his life “looked to Palestine as the source of human experience and a possible hope for the future.” He went so far as to borrow money in order to go to Palestine.

There, in January, 1856, he met Cresson. But the trip shattered his illusions. Palestine seemed to him a symbol of a dying world rather than of nativity. “In the emptiness of the lifeless antiquity of Jerusalem,” Melville wrote in his Journal, “the migrant Jews are like flies that have taken up their abode in a skull.” Cresson's theories on agriculture he quickly dismissed. “The idea of making farmers of the Jews is vain. In the first place, Judea is a desert, with few exceptions. In the second place, the Jews hate farming . . . and besides the number of Jews in Palestine is comparatively small. And how are the hosts of them scattered in other lands to be brought here? Only by a miracle.” About Cresson, he noted in his Journal: “Warder Crisson [sic] of Philadelphia—an American turned Jew—divorced from (former) wife—married a Jewess, etc., Sad —”

It is clear that Cresson and Palestine affected Melville deeply. Out of his impressions of the journey emerged a long, spiritual poem, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*. Nathan, a Christian turned Jew, one of the leading characters of this unusual work, was obviously patterned after Cresson.

Melville could not believe that Jews would ever return to Eretz Yisroel and turn it into a country where agricultural endeavors thrived. Cresson was convinced that this would happen. History has shown who was correct.

Naphtali and Josephine Phillips

I. Naphtali Phillips, the ninth child of Rebecca Machado and Jonas Phillips, was born in New York on October 19, 1773.

A. Young Naphtali became interested in journalism, and his first job was with the *American Advertiser*, a leading Philadelphia newspaper. “On September 16, 1796, he personally took from the press of that journal the first printed copy of Washington's Farewell Address.”

B. Moved to NY in about 1801 - Active in Shearith Israel – served for 14 terms as president.

II. Josephine Phillips

Josephine Phillips (1814 – 1896) was either the 6th or 7th child to be born to Rachel and Naphtali Phillips. (Since she had a twin sister, Jochebed, it is not clear who was born first.) She was deeply affected by Lincoln's assassination on April 15, 1865, and wrote a moving letter to her brother-in-law.

Her letter, written only five days after Lincoln's death, expresses her profound grief. The significance of the letter quoted below lies not so much in its confirmation of historical data, as in the fact that it was a typical personal outpouring of grief that was shared by untold numbers of other Jews.

New York, April 20th 1865.

Dear Adolphus

I received your letter last Monday & presume you also got mine containing our mutual sorrow & horror at the sad event that has plunged all in profound grief, never in history has any event in any nation brought forth such real regret, & the loyalty of the people high & low rich & poor is seen mingled with love & veneration for the man "whose heart was warm whose hands were pure whose doctrine & whose life coincident exhibit lucid proof that he was honest in the sacred cause & to such are rendered more than mere respect." These lines from Cowper are forcibly brought to my recollection as illustrating much of the character of our lamented President. New York is literally clad in black & it is more rare to see a house without it than with it, from the splendid mansion to the smallest Shanty, even the gates of the poorest black or white display their emblem of sorrow; full well I can imagine how badly you feel it was only last week you wrote me about your being at his house & seeing him come out & request the band to play Dixie, & to-day that he appointed to celebrate our victories, his own funeral takes place. I have not yet recovered from the shock of last Saturday. Yesterday we had shool & a very large assemblage, the services were

very solemn, the Tabah [Torah reader's desk] was covered with black also the pillars & gallery, to-day we have it again at three o'clock" nothing is thought or talked of to-day no stores are opened & the poorest person will not work. I see by the paper the body will be here on Monday, his poor wife & children what a sad change for them! I am truly glad Mr. Seward & son will recover & also that his assassin is arrested, but it seems strange Booth has yet eluded the vigilance of the police, his Mother I hear resides in 19th St. NY. & is of course in the greatest affliction, what a villain he is!

JOSEPHINE

The morning paper mentions the fact of the synagogues being the first places of Worship that had Prayers for the President.

Josephine never married.

Letter to Lincoln During Civil War

A letter to Abraham Lincoln about a Sabbath-observing soldier" in which his father wrote:

“Now I stand before you as your namesake Abraham stood before G-d Almighty in days of yore, and asked, ‘Shall not the Judge of all earth do justice?’ so I ask your Excellency, the first man and President of all the United States, Shall you not do justice? Shall you not give the same privilege to a minority of the army that you give to the majority of it? I beseech you to make provision, and to proclaim in another order, that also all those in the army who celebrate another day as the Sunday may be allowed to celebrate that day which they think is the right day according to their own conscience; and this will be exactly lawful, as the Constitution of the United States ordains it, and at the same time it will be exactly according to the teaching of the Bible, as recorded in Leviticus xix. 18: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’”

Isaac Leeser (1806 – 1868)

If one were to ask, “Who, during the nineteenth century, was the one person most responsible for perpetuating traditional Judaism in America?” then the answer must be Isaac Leeser. Leeser translated both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic versions of the siddur as well as the Tanach into English. In 1843 he started the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, the first Jewish periodical published in America. He founded the Jewish Publication Society of America, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, and Maimonides College. He sought to transform the lectern into the pulpit and, on June 2, 1830, delivered his first English sermon at Philadelphia’s Congregation Mikvah Israel. He vigorously opposed the Reform movement doing his utmost to convince American Jews that the religion of their fathers could and should be practiced in the New World. In short, during his lifetime, he was in the forefront of everything related to traditional Judaism in America.

Isaac Leeser was born on December 12, 1806 in the tiny rural village of Neuenkirchen near Rehine, Westphalia in Prussia into a family of humble means. His father died in 1820, when he was fourteen. After attending a traditional *Cheder* as a boy, Leeser studied at the *gymnasium* (“university”) of Munster, where he obtained a secular education. In addition, he studied some Gemara with private tutors. However, his Jewish education was not particularly substantial, and he readily admitted that he was not a great Talmudist. Indeed, he once wrote, “[I] had not the best opportunities of acquiring [Jewish] knowledge.”

I. Few opportunities for him in Europe. Came to work for his maternal uncle in Richmond, VA. Spent the next five years in his uncle’s employ. He quickly became acclimatized to life in America and within a few years was thoroughly Americanized.

II. Isaac Leeser served as Congregation Mikveh Israel’s Chazzan from 1829 until 1850. His career there was stormy. Given his unflattering appearance and abrasive personality, it is not surprising that he did not enjoy friendly relations with the members of the synagogue. He was often embroiled in battles with the congregants regarding his remuneration and contracts.

III. “Leeser was the most outstanding figure in the movement to strengthen Jewish life in America. His activity on behalf of Judaism spanned almost the entire second period of Jewish immigration and the allied publishing, and he may be credited with assuring the survival of Judaism in America while the community expanded from a few thousand individuals living in the major coastal cities to about 200,000 living in cities and towns across the country. Although Leeser lived in Philadelphia for most of his life, he was not a local leader; all of America was his field of operation, and communities from all over the country turned to him for help and guidance. Unlike any other contemporary Jewish clergyman in America (or in Europe), Leeser contributed to every aspect and stage of a Jew's life, from childhood to old age.” (Hebrew Printing in America, 1735 – 1926 by Yosef Goldman, 2006, page xiii)

IV. Pioneer preacher, publisher, Jewish educator – day school, Maimonides College

The spectrum of Isaac Leeser’s activities involved more than preaching, publishing, and education. He had a genuine concern for the poor and downtrodden. He was instrumental in the founding of a Jewish Foster Home and a Jewish hospital in Philadelphia and organized the city’s Jewish relief work.

Isaac Leeser was a difficult man to whom people were not naturally attracted. Often he was defensive and argumentative, and his short stature, poor vision, and smallpox scarred face did little to endear him to others. He never married and basically lived a hard, lonely life. He had little more than his work on behalf of American Jewry.

Nonetheless, “Isaac Leeser was a remarkable human being. He was indefatigable in his drive to make Judaism flourish in the United States. He taught American Jews that they could be leaders in the wider Jewish world. He managed to influence the development of nearly every aspect of Jacksonian and antebellum Jewish life in the United States to the point where Henry Samuel Morais’s observation that ‘the history of American Judaism and that of Isaac Leeser are one and the same’ cannot be dismissed as hyperbole but is, in a very significant way, an accurate assessment of the American Jewish experience from the day

Leeser first led a religious service at Mikveh Israel in 1829 to his death in Philadelphia in 1868.” (Sussman, page 254)

Isaac Leeser was in the forefront of everything Jewish in America during the nineteenth century. Indeed, it is difficult to find another Jewish leader in history who can rival Leeser’s breadth of activities.

He believed that America was a place where Jews and Judaism could flourish, and that an exciting Orthodoxy could be created here. Where many others saw only gloom and doom, he saw hope and success. He was certain that the laxity in Jewish religious practice so prevalent during the nineteenth century could be overcome if American Jews would only develop the proper organizations to meet the challenges of the times.

Rabbi Abraham Rice (1802 – 1862)

I. Studied with Rabbi Avraham Bing in Wurzburg and received semicha from him. Also studied with Rabbi Wolf Hamburger in Furth.

II. According to some he had a wooden leg and hence the German government would not let him become a rabbi. Came to America, first to Newport, then to Baltimore in 1840. Became rabbi of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.

A. First ordained rabbi in North America. Congregation wanted reforms, which he opposed. Only Shomrei Shabbos as members.

B. Left congregation in 1849. Opened a business and a small shul.

C. Spokesman for Orthodoxy against Reform.

D. Resumed position in 1862, but not long afterwards he died

E. America was a religious desert. Children, grandchildren not observant

F. Great grandson Shraga (Phil) Rice became observant.

Jews and Civil War - Grant’s Expulsion Order

I. Jews on both sides of the controversy. Southern Jews owned slaves. Sometimes literally pitted brother against brother.

Alfred Mordecai

II. Grant's Expulsion Order

**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.**

This order expelled all Jews from Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi!

Subordinates enforced the order at once in the area surrounding Grant's headquarters in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Some Jewish traders had to trudge forty miles on foot to evacuate the area. In Paducah, Kentucky, military officials gave the town's thirty Jewish families — all long-term residents, none of them speculators, and at least two of them Union Army veterans — twenty-four hours to leave.

II. Furor of protest

Needless to say, Jewish efforts to get Grant's order rescinded were not long in coming. A group of Jewish merchants residing in Paducah, KY, dispatched an indignant telegram to President Lincoln, condemning Grant's order.

**PADUCAH, KY.,
December 29, 1862.**

Hon. ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
President of the United States:

General Orders, No. 11, issued by General Grant at Oxford, Miss., December the 17th, commands all post commanders to expel all Jews, without distinction, within twenty-four hours, from his entire department. The undersigned, good and loyal citizens of the United States and residents of this town for many years, engaged in legitimate business as merchants, feel 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, and would place us, besides a large number of other Jewish families of this town, as outlaws before the whole world. We respectfully ask your immediate attention to this enormous outrage on all law and humanity, and pray for your effectual and immediate interposition. We would respectfully refer you to the post commander and post adjutant as to our loyalty, and to all respectable citizens of this community as to our standing citizens and merchants. We respectfully ask for immediate instructions to be sent to the commander of this post.

**D. WOLFF & BROS.
C. F. KASKELL.
J. W. KASWELL.**

Cesar Kaskel arrived in Washington on January 3, 1863. Two days earlier, the Emancipation Proclamation had gone into effect. Kaskel conferred with influential Jewish Republican Adolphus Solomons and then went with Cincinnati Congressman John A. Gurley directly to the White House. Lincoln received them promptly, studied Kaskel's copies of General Order No. 11 and the specific order expelling Kaskel from Paducah and

commanded Halleck to order Grant to revoke General Order No. 11. Grant complied three days later.

The issue of Grant's anti-Semitism was raised during his run for the presidency in 1868. Grant consulted with a number of Jewish communal leaders, and they went on record saying his issuance of General Order 11 was an anomaly and that he was not an anti-Semite. Grant claimed that Order 11 was prepared by a subordinate, and he had signed it without reading it.

The general carried the Jewish vote during this presidential election and maintained good relations with the Jewish community throughout his presidency. In 1874 he attended the opening of Adas Israel Congregation in Washington, DC, and stayed for the service, unlike some Jews who left after the dedication ceremony.

According to family legend, Grant ate only kosher meat during the last few years of life. He did this after having read *Vindication of the Israelitisch Way of Killing Animals* by Rabbi Aaron Zev Friedman.

Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Sneersohn (1833 – 1881)

Harold Sharfman, in "[The First Rabbi](#)" writes:

That year, (1870, HT) there arrived in America, a unique personality, a Jerusalemite, a Judean diplomat without portfolio, who became an American citizen before returning to the Land of Israel. He was Hayyim Zevi Sneersohn, a grand-grandson of Shneur Zalman, Rabbi of Liadi, the founder of Chabad Chasidism.

He had immigrated to then-Palestine with his mother in 1840 (aged 8?) and was recognized as a prodigy. By 1860 he was traveling to the Far East and as far as Australia to raise funds for the poor of Israel.

In 1869 met with President Ulysses S. Grant – Removal of American consul to Jerusalem

Appointment of Benjamin Franklin Peixotto as consul to Roumania

In May 1870 he traveled to Cincinnati, where he told audiences that he felt he could discern the finger of G-d pointing to a day “not far distant, he hoped, when the great deliverance would take place and the land [of Israel] be restored to the Jewish people.”

“He stressed the need to purchase land and erect buildings, because the restoration would not be accomplished just by the word of G-D. He pointed out that Abraham too, bought land, even though it had been divinely promised to him.”

Invited by Brigham Young to speak at Tabernacle in Salt Lake City

He had one son, Moshe, no grandchildren are known. He passed away in South Africa in 1881-1882 as a young man, while raising funds for the Needy of Israel.



רבי חיים צבי שניאורסון
(תקצ"ד—תרמ"ב)