



Shifting Veils

Religion, Politics, and Womanhood in the Civil War Writings of American Jewish Women

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“If I do not keep the friends I have, I shall indeed be bereaved,” wrote Emma Mordecai, a refugee from Richmond, Virginia, in May 1864. That belief guided Mordecai’s adjustment to life in her sister-in-law’s home in the Confederate countryside, where she had gone to escape the dangers and privations besieging Richmond as the armies of Lee and Grant fought fewer than ten miles away.¹ Although Mordecai faced greater danger than most American Jewish women, many of whom lived in the North, she was not alone in relying heavily on friendships for the duration of the war.

Jewish women of that era were thoroughly immersed in American culture. Prior to Eastern European immigration late in the nineteenth century, American Jews did not live in ethnic neighborhoods. Indeed, because so many Jews were small peddlers, they were sometimes forced by economic pressure to move to small towns where they could provide a town’s sole general store. Even in large cities, Jewish neighborhoods of the kind that developed in industrial cities in the early twentieth century, neighborhoods that provided an all-encompassing Jewish subculture, did not exist. Prior to 1880, Jewish women in American towns and cities obtained schooling with Gentile peers, served a Gentile public in family stores, and socialized, at least occasionally, with non-Jewish friends, male and female. Many of these women joined charity organizations serving both Jews and

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non-Jews, and others wrote poetry and short stories for both Jewish and non-Jewish presses. Thus, when antisemitism increased sharply during the Civil War, on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line,² American Jewish women were personally challenged to navigate the cultural storm.

Civil War anti-Jewish sentiment can be traced to two trends. First, Americans both North and South used Christian religious rhetoric to justify their causes. Northern abolitionists argued that their Christian faith could not allow them to remain silent while slavery thrived, and Union soldiers marched to the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” The Union’s military forces did not allow Jewish chaplains until 1862, after a protest by Jewish soldiers.³ First in the North and later in the South, the belief that America played a pivotal role in bringing the second coming of Christ reached an apogee just before and during the Civil War.⁴ Southern antisemitism was fueled in part by a more fundamentalist style reading of the New Testament than was common in most Northern churches.⁵ The Confederacy went so far as to define itself as a Christian nation in its constitution. Southern clergy mounted frequent revivals among the troops, both to obtain God’s favor and to enable soldiers to fight without fear of death. Historian Harry Stout explained that the Confederacy declared many fast days, a practice previously more common in the North, to bind the civilian populace to the war effort, to seek God’s favor, and to enable civilians and troops alike to display their patriotism and piety—then defined as the same thing.⁶

In part because of the Confederacy’s cultural traditions, and in part because it recognized that it lacked both the manpower and heavy artillery of the North, it relied heavily on winning God’s favor for its chance of victory. A century later one writer described the Jesus of the South as a “constant presence . . . perched on the shoulder of every believer.”⁷ That faith had penetrated the South by 1850, as Methodist and Baptist forms of Christianity, buttressed by cross-denominational revivals, replaced the earlier dominance of the more staid, patrician style of Episcopal Christianity.⁸ Southern women especially depended on piety to effect victory because their cultural traditions expected women to be pious and because they, even more than their menfolk, lacked the military and political means of winning the war.⁹ Those Confederates who did not help the South to win God’s favor—by lack of reverence for Christ—were, by this logic, suspected of aiding the enemy.

At the same time, Victorian America as a whole moved away from traditional forms of piety and sought meaning in secular as well as religious

pursuits. Historian Anne Rose has argued that this trend was evident among leading Americans in all regions of the country over the course of the century. Americans' experience of the Civil War, she insists, needs to be understood as an expression of the general cultural trends of the nineteenth century. The Victorian era's more individualized efforts to obtain a sense of personal meaning helped to shape America's experience of the war as well as to memorialize the war during the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁰ Practical wartime factors contributed to this individualization of religion. The South lost much of its clergy and many houses of worship as men were drawn into the military and communal buildings were burned or converted into hospitals.¹¹ Thus, the resolution of religious conundrums was often left to individual effort and ingenuity.

The second reason for antisemitism linked prejudice and economics. One historian argues that Southern antisemitism was fueled by a widespread dislike of foreigners and the suspicion of merchants common in an agrarian society.¹² Yet the South as a whole cannot be said to have been anti-Jewish. As the economy of the South worsened and as the North sought to control espionage and contraband, the Shylock stereotype surfaced in both the North and the South. General U. S. Grant ordered all Jews removed from an area in western Tennessee in frustration over cotton trading across enemy lines. However, Grant's attitude was not universal. He took action despite his own father's appeal to him for special trading permission for a group of Jewish merchants. Democrats in Congress issued a resolution against the decree, and Lincoln rescinded it.¹³ Public opinion in western Tennessee so favored the Jews there that "the order was completely ignored in certain communities."¹⁴

Both before the war and after it, Southern Jews held both elective and appointive political offices.¹⁵ Prior to the war, Judah P. Benjamin was the first self-proclaimed Jew elected to the U.S. Senate (representing Louisiana), and he served as attorney general, secretary of state, and secretary of war to the Confederacy.¹⁶ The Southern states varied in religious tolerance: although Louisiana elected Benjamin to national office and South Carolina elected and appointed Jews to various offices,¹⁷ North Carolina maintained religious oaths that effectively banned Jews from public office until 1868. Denunciations of Jews became more commonplace during the Civil War and Reconstruction.¹⁸ Southerners explained their defeat as God's chastisement for widespread sinfulness.¹⁹ Across the South, both small merchants and public figures like Benjamin were blamed for the region's economic woes and its military defeat.²⁰ Newspapers and

magazines in Richmond, Virginia, for example, sometimes referred to Jews as “Yankees among us” and depicted them as Shylocks.²¹ Although Richmond’s major industries were not in Jewish hands, Jews were among those blamed for the South’s economic ills as the war dragged on.²² Historian Anne Rose concludes that “public demonstrations of piety and the use of Christian concepts became more pronounced in the course of the war,” in both North and South.²³

For Jewish women of this period, antisemitism could not be said to have been universal and open but rather sporadic and threatening. To navigate that social and political turbulence, to maintain established ties, or to forge new alliances, Jewish women displayed either their patriotism, their religious piety, or their common understanding that good women are supposed to maintain family and social ties. Their personal perception of their own needs and of the degree of danger they faced determined their highly individualized shaping of their community during the Civil War. After determining whom they loved and needed and whom they could trust, they displayed those aspect of their own identities that would in turn enable them to present themselves as trustworthy. Through this delicate dance, they survived the war. For some Jewish women, the Civil War made additional critical demands on their religious practices, such as obtaining kosher meat and candles and finding suitable public worship. Consequently, they were forced to forge new alliances and to refashion their standards of meaningful association. In their diaries and letters these women reshaped religious identity, gender expressions, political loyalties, and personal relationships.

A decade ago, women’s historians noted that by the early decades of the nineteenth century, women carried most of the responsibility for maintaining social relationships among kin. Moreover, this duty helped to define women’s lives.²⁴ While this was less the case among Jewish extended families whose men were linked by business, synagogue, fraternal, or charitable activities, once those activities were broken, by war, women maintained family ties. To the extent that women accepted this role in both peacetime and wartime, they approached it with seriousness and sought ways to surmount challenges to its successful accomplishment. In many families, these ties linked both Jews and non-Jews, Yankees and Southerners.

Most of the women discussed in this essay also maintained family ties with Christians. These familial commitments provided a tradition of avoiding potential conflict while searching for commonalities to create

social harmony. Emma Mordecai, Phoebe Yates Levy Pember, Rebecca Gratz, and Miriam Moses Cohen all sustained family and friendship relationships with Christians. During the Civil War these women learned to attend more carefully to the subtleties of these and similar problematic relationships.²⁵ By veiling differences, Jewish women were able to suppress potential dangers to social and familial relationships. At the same time, they could display their common identities as women, family members, or Jews. By adapting themselves to various measures of in-group memberships, women thus fashioned new meanings for the concepts of friendship, family, and community. During that war, when the determination of friend or foe was the degree to which an individual displayed shared values and commitments and when religion was made to serve political causes, Jewish identity could be a liability or an asset.

Jewish women used letters and diaries to express their own perceptions of their experiences to themselves and to others in ways that reshaped and strengthened communal ties during the crisis years of the Civil War. In that process, religion and politics were like shifting veils, lifted and lowered as the writers needed, reconstructing ideas and beliefs so as to find their place within their new communities. In so doing, these writers strengthened their communal bonds.

Emma Mordecai was born in 1812, in Warrenton, North Carolina, a younger child among twelve siblings. Her family maintained the Jewish Sabbath and dietary laws despite being the only Jewish family in town. Her father, Jacob Mordecai, was known both locally and nationally as one of the country's leading Hebraists, an acknowledged authority on Jewish law and lore. In Warrenton, a small town near the Virginia border, he directed, with the assistance of his wife and three older children, the highly successful Warrenton Female Academy, from 1809 until 1818.²⁶ His children continued the family's reputation for erudition, discipline, and scholarship. By the 1840s, Emma Mordecai, then living in Richmond, Virginia, held a responsible position in her congregation's Sunday school, published at least one article on Judaism, and attended synagogue regularly.²⁷

As an unmarried woman, Emma Mordecai undoubtedly was more accustomed to depending on female extended family and friends than were women whose husbands had gone to war and for whom this behavior was new.²⁸ Nonetheless, when she left Richmond for the home of her sister-in-law, Rosina Young Mordecai, in rural Rosewood in 1864, Mordecai was anxious about adjusting to life on Rosina's farm. Although determined to subjugate her own preferences and desires to the household

and communal responsibilities she took on in trade for food and shelter, Mordecai brought with her a blank diary. Diaries are often written to aid their authors in overcoming a crisis or in adjusting to change.²⁹ Mordecai's diary provides a secure place in which to review her new experiences and to shape her responses to them, thus providing her with an emblem of her identity. When she finally settled in at Rosewood, "in spite of some experience and all resolutions to the contrary [Mordecai] concluded to commence" keeping the diary. Subduing her fears of imminent catastrophe by focusing on the act of writing, Mordecai used her diary to help her enter the small local community at Rosewood and to reshape for herself the meanings of personal, familial, and communal experience.³⁰

Mordecai's diary, written during 1864, vividly captures those pressures shaping her adjustment to life under new circumstances. In a diary, potentially the most private and freest expression of personal experience, we might hope to uncover resistance to communal ideals or perhaps opinions unusual for that time and place. Instead, Mordecai struggled to bind herself ever more tightly to her new community and to its standards of behavior and opinion. Her diary became a means both to express her fears and to overcome them, to command her behavior and through self-control and creativity, to shape it into acceptable and approved forms.

Especially in the nineteenth century, Jews throughout the United States borrowed and adopted the attitudes common to the regions in which they lived.³¹ Mordecai shifted the priorities in her life in order to survive the difficulties of the Civil War. Friendship has been called a social trust and in this sense forms the basis for community.³² One sociologist argues that community ought to be understood as symbols bounded by the shared ideas distinguishing "outsiders" and "insiders." Their members share common values, and because they do, they turn to each other in times of need. When changes occur either in the content of shared ideas or the social contexts determining who shares those ideas, communities are reshaped.³³ The letters and diaries written by Jewish women during the Civil War illustrate and explain the ways women strove either to remain within, to enter, or to transform communities torn by the war. Southern women relied on each other in new ways and made changes in their personal understanding of the meaning of womanhood that were born of necessity. Southern Jewish women's lives reflected these larger patterns. War underlined the differences in gender responsibilities; yet, as the war went on and as daily personal survival became more difficult, women relied more

and more on themselves and on each other to cope with life without men. In that process, Southern traditions of male protection, aid, and supervision were altered.³⁴

As Mordecai begins her diary, she describes her emotions on leaving Richmond. She hopes she will be a “blessing and not a torment or inconvenience” to her host and sister-in-law Rosina, acutely aware that her safety and comfort depend upon her ability to keep Rosina happy.³⁵ This situation framed all her experience while at Rosewood and no doubt exacerbated Mordecai’s need to control both her behavior and her fears. Rosina is, in Mordecai’s phrase, “a good economist,” a middle-aged woman who maintained hogs, horses, cows, chickens, three “servants,” as Mordecai called them, and a vegetable garden, while caring for her teenage daughter.³⁶ All in all, Rosina’s house was a fine place to be during the latter days of the Civil War, when food became scarce in the South.

Although Rosina and Emma might already be considered members of the same community—female Southerners and Virginians related by marriage—Rosina was a Christian, and Emma Mordecai was a Jew. Religious differences often mark an important boundary between communities. But these women constructed, under pressure of war, a new relationship in which womanhood outweighed all other determinants of community. Although some of Mordecai’s siblings married non-Jews, as had her brother Augustus, Rosina’s deceased husband, and although two of her sisters actually converted to Christianity, Emma Mordecai remained a Jew. She taught in her synagogue’s Sunday school and wrote at least one book about Judaism for children.³⁷ Having previously worked to clarify and strengthen the distinction between Jews and Christians, she now believed she must find a way to accommodate her own religious life within her Christian sister-in-law’s household.

In Richmond, Mordecai participated in Jewish communal celebrations. Indeed, she arrived at Rosina’s home after spending Passover with a Jewish family. Once settled in at Rosewood, however, religion became for Mordecai an almost completely private matter. While at Rose’s (as Mordecai called her sister-in-law), on Shabbat, Mordecai “read the service” in her room from her prayer book.³⁸ Occasionally, she visited Jewish family and friends in town for larger celebrations and rare synagogue attendance.³⁹ She made no secret of her religion, but neither did she display it before Rosina. Although in acknowledging one holiday, Mordecai wrote in her diary, “Blind and foolish are those children of Israel who persuade themselves that the laws given to them by the Unchanging One for them and

their descendants to observe forever are not binding on them,” nowhere does she mention maintaining Judaism’s laws herself apart from the most rudimentary forms of worship.⁴⁰ Dietary laws, for example, would have marked a boundary between Mordecai and her Christian host, indicating that in some way they belonged to different communities. Yet Mordecai’s account of her stay includes descriptions of dozens of shared meals and common preparations, with no reference to the Jewish dietary laws. In the 1840s, Mordecai had defended Judaism in the national periodical the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, and her father observed Jewish laws, but we do not know if Mordecai herself kept dietary laws in her own home.⁴¹ However, despite her daily fears for her own safety that prompted her to prayer and despite copying into her diary the injunction against disobedience to God’s laws, Mordecai apparently never increased her own level of observance while living in Rosina’s home. It seems likely that she was unsure that she could afford to display marked religious difference while living in a Christian home. Rather, Mordecai accommodated herself to the responsibilities and rhythms of Rosina’s household. She spent much of her time in mending and sewing clothes, doing domestic chores, and serving cold milk, biscuits, and fruit to the hungry Confederate soldiers who appeared on their porch or in their yard almost daily.

Most days, Mordecai took food from Rosewood to the wounded soldiers she tended in Seabrook Hospital, the General Winder Hospital, and St. Frances de Sales Hospital.⁴² Her diary includes several sentences describing each hospital visit she made. In the rhetoric of Confederate patriotism she recorded her horror at the suffering of “pure, highminded” and “noble, uncomplaining, all enduring heroes.”⁴³ She was also alarmed by the hospitals’ shortages of staff and food. Yet when Rosina became ill, Mordecai barely mentioned any effort to care for her friend. Why the difference in the descriptions? It may be, as she admitted in one entry, that the hospital scenes appalled her, and her strong emotion prompted her to write. By writing about hospital conditions, she convinced herself of the importance of her labor there and persuaded herself to return. Tending Rosina at home, on the other hand, may have seemed so ordinary a part of woman’s life it was unworthy of note. Mordecai wrote only curt sentences noting that Rosina was ill and spending much or most of several days lying on the couch or in bed.⁴⁴ Mordecai also may have resented Rosina’s illness, which left more household responsibilities on her own shoulders. Patriotic fervor also seems to have influenced Mordecai. By 1864 the South had begun to romanticize its failed world, in part by idealizing the

heroism of those who fought and suffered for their “lost cause.” Mordecai’s hospital scenes share that rhetoric.

Patriotic feelings, however, revealed another difference between the two women. By May 14, only six weeks after Mordecai arrived at Rosewood, the women had their first disagreement. When a mutual friend nearer the scene of the day’s battle wrote assuring them that General Lee had won, Rosina doubted the report. Mordecai argued with her host over its credibility, angering Rosina by telling her that she “hugged worry with the closest affection.” The two women did not speak until the next day, after Mordecai “used every means with [her]self to get into a right frame of mind,” including confiding the incident to her diary. She apologized to Rosina the next morning, commenting, “If I do not keep the friends I have, I shall indeed be bereaved.” The following day, a Sunday, Mordecai went to church with Rose and agreed that the preacher had made some “excellent remarks.”⁴⁵ As Mordecai moved beyond veiling her Judaism to actively listening to and attending Christian worship, an important boundary between the two women, their religious difference, was temporarily erased in order to strengthen their household community and friendship. Until their political rift healed, Mordecai concluded that other areas of potential conflict, such as their religious differences, must be hidden.

On July 4, 1864, Mordecai avoided facing the imminent danger to her regional community, the South, by focusing on familial and local relationships. That day, as she expected to hear celebrations from the “Yankee gunboats” nearby, Mordecai encountered more Confederate “refugees,” “exiles” from embattled Maryland and Petersburg, Virginia. She worried about how stragglers would be cared for, and while she fretted about civilians, she did not mention soldiers, despite the fact that she had spent most of the previous two months tending soldiers both in hospitals and at Rose’s front door. She assured herself that “Yankee . . . guns can be destroyed if [Confederates] choose to do it,” immediately dropping the subject of the Confederate suffering around her. Instead, she refocused on domestic scenes, and in the very next sentence, Mordecai described how her niece and nephew, enjoying a horseback ride, “looked very pretty and pleasant as they rode off under the trees.”⁴⁶ In this passage, Mordecai deliberately avoided the issue of the impending destruction of the Confederacy by shifting her attention to her immediate familial community. Her diary describes countless visits to friends, relatives, and soldiers, visits by which she knitted her own life into the local community rent by the war. In this entry, the uncertainty and ambiguity of the war are replaced by the clarity

and reassurance of happy familial events. In so doing she constructed an image of an intact community with which to suppress her fears of a broken Confederacy and subsequent threats to family members.

Thirty-one years after the war, Mordecai returned to the diary, filled in passages lost to paper-eating insects, and passed along this memorial of her life to younger relations.⁴⁷ By then a romantic image of the Old South had taken shape in popular American culture, a myth built in no small part by the published memoirs of Confederate generals and politicians.⁴⁸ Perhaps Mordecai embellished her accounts of hospital scenes at this later time when war memoirs were popular. Mordecai may have felt encouraged to return to her own Civil War diary by the memoir of Phoebe Yates Levy Pember, whose popular 1879 volume was based on the diary she kept while working as a head matron at Richmond's Chimborazo Hospital,⁴⁹ then the largest hospital in the world.⁵⁰ Pember, like Mordecai, veiled religious differences in order to construct her communal bonds and to bolster the friendships on which her own security depended.

Phoebe Yates Levy was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1823. Her father, Charlestonian Jacob Levy, met and married British-born Fanny Yates while visiting Liverpool, England, as a young man. After the young couple settled in Charleston, Fanny was reputed to have been the leader of "the best Jewish society." The Levys relocated to Savannah, Georgia, after the birth of their children. In the smaller town of Savannah, Jews and Christians mingled more freely than in Charleston, and this may have appealed to the couple.⁵¹ Phoebe married a Gentile, Bostonian Thomas Pember, but was widowed in 1861 when he died of tuberculosis. She then returned to her family, which had moved on to Marietta, Georgia, but after only two months there began seeking a way to support herself elsewhere. According to her memoirs, she was uncomfortable living again in her parents' home. Like Mordecai, Pember was forced to seek some new way to survive during the Civil War. She arranged for a matron position at Chimborazo Hospital near Richmond through a friend, the wife of George W. Randolph, then the Confederacy's secretary of war. In December 1862, Pember began at Chimborazo by cleaning an unused kitchen and preparing a huge vat of chicken soup for the patients.⁵²

Pember was the first woman to hold a matron's position at Chimborazo.⁵³ According to historians, the work of women—like Pember, Clara Barton, and the countless female nursing volunteers like Mordecai—consistently outshone that of male nurses during the Civil War. A Kentucky committee investigating hospital conditions discovered that patients



While nursing the wounded in the Confederate stronghold of Richmond during the Civil War, Phoebe Yates Levy Pember veiled her Judaism except when she could present it in a manner emphasizing her loyalty to the South and its cause. Courtesy of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.

under the care of male nurses suffered a mortality rate double that of patients tended by female nurses.⁵⁴ Indeed, women's Civil War nursing, on both sides, assured that the nursing profession would remain a largely female field after the war. Some historians credit female nurses with helping advance women's suffrage by improving the image of women in the public mind.⁵⁵ The first modern nursing school opened in the United States only five years before Pember's diary appeared, and her book no doubt added to a growing effort among philanthropic women as well as nurses to advance professional education and public support for trained female nurses.⁵⁶ At the time that Pember began her work at Chimborazo in 1862, female nursing institutions in the United States were, in almost every case, linked to Christian religious orders or denominations. Florence Nightingale's well-known successes in transforming military nursing in Europe, only a few years before the American Civil War, came after her own training and labors in Catholic institutions.⁵⁷

Although we do not know if Pember actually practiced Judaism, she made no secret of her heritage. In a letter to her sister, Louisianan Eugenia Levy Phillips, Pember remarked on the hypocrisy of Christian women who deemed forgiveness the hallmark of their religion yet relished revenge against Yankees, to the point, in the case of one woman, of hoping to use a Yankee's skull for a jewel box. At one moment, Pember so merged her Jewish identity to her Southern patriotism that she claimed relief that she, unlike her Christian friends, was "born of a nation that did not enjoin forgiveness on its enemies." She archly suggested that "until the war was over [every Southerner] should . . . join the Jewish church . . . and leave forgiveness alone."⁵⁸ Pember may well have been comforting her sister, who had been banished to Ship Island by Union general Benjamin Butler for three months to prevent her further inciting a riot against the Union occupiers. Eugenia was so outspoken in defending the South that some Union officials considered her a threat to the Northern war effort.⁵⁹ By sharing with her sister the common Christian view that Judaism did not enjoin forgiveness on its members, Pember turned an idea used by Christians to condemn Judaism into a measure of their own patriotism to the South.

Christmas 1864 found Pember at work. In a letter to a friend, the wife of Major General Gilmer, Pember described her efforts to provide a celebration for Christian patients in her hospital as well as to join in celebratory dinners at the homes of Christian friends and supervisors. In that letter, Pember began by emphasizing difficulties she faced as a woman,

eliciting her friend's sympathy while avoiding the fact that, since she was not a Christian, she could not possibly celebrate this holiday as a Christian would. Yet that unstated fact grounds her day's experience. Others might ask why Pember hadn't gone to church. Because, she could reply, she was too busy working hard to make that day joyous for Christians.

Pember, like Mordecai, was reluctant to display her own Jewish identity before the Christians on whom she depended, unless she could present her Jewishness in a manner that underlined her loyalty to a shared Southern community. In her letter to Mrs. Gilmer, therefore, Pember needed some delicacy in describing her own working Christmas day. She began with a complaint that Christmas seemed like a week's worth of work. At a tedious dinner party at an officer's home on Christmas eve, a loud woman embarrassingly remarked on Pember's unmarried state and urged a match with another guest. The next morning at Chimborazo, Pember provided eggnog and cake for the whole division at 8:00 A.M., turkey and oysters for the inmates of the hospital at 2:00 P.M., and at 5:00 P.M. dressed for a "great dinner" at the home of a colonel. Telling her friend, "it seemed to me I lived a week during the twenty four hours which constituted Christmas," Pember assured her Christian friend that she respected her holiday sufficiently to participate in the celebrations that forged Christian communal identity, regardless of the effort involved.⁶⁰ At the same time, by describing distinctly *women's* labors and predicaments, she enhanced her link to Mrs. Gilmer on the grounds of shared womanhood. Thus, just as Mordecai did with Rosina, Pember veiled religious differences between herself and her friend in order to strengthen female commonality. Pember's actions no doubt also strengthened her position as matron by assuring military families and the directors of the hospital that she understood and would carry out the cultural and religious celebrations that they believed maintained Southern communal life.

For Mordecai, Pember, and other American women, navigating the turbulence of many Civil War relationships rested on an ability to command their language and subsequently to reshape and reconstruct communal ties. Although only sixteen years old at that time, Clara Solomon, of New Orleans, had already learned the important role language played in maintaining her own security. "There is no power like that of words," she wrote in 1862.⁶¹ Indeed, Solomon so regarded her diary as an intimate friend that she named it Philemon and hoped it would serve her as a "comforting angel."⁶² Solomon was one of six sisters; her parents were natives of South Carolina but had lived for some time in New Orleans by

the outbreak of the war. Her father, a merchant, was forty-six when war broke out in 1861. Too old to serve as a soldier, he supplied the Confederate forces with clothing and other materials. At a local synagogue, Clara's older sister, Alice, a schoolteacher, rarely missed a Sabbath service. Clara herself enrolled at the local normal school. Although she never attended class on Saturdays, she seldom attended synagogue. Nonetheless, she relied on faith to help her cope with the casualties of war. On June 7, 1861, she concluded writing in her diary her complaints about war by insisting that "Divine Providence . . . doeth all things well."⁶³ The Solomon family, like nearly all Jewish families in the antebellum South, was largely integrated into the surrounding Gentile population.

Many marriages between Jews and Gentiles took place in Solomon's circle and in her own family.⁶⁴ New Orleans may have seen less antisemitism than any other important city in the country during the antebellum period.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, by age sixteen, when she wrote her diary, Clara Solomon had learned to withstand insults in silence, as her family seems to have done, at least during the war. When a Gentile friend lamented that a young man whom she liked was a Jew, Clara confided to her diary that she regretted having to listen to her.⁶⁶ Silent about antisemitism in public, teenaged Clara Solomon wrote extensively about her feelings only in her diary. Struck by the plight of a deaf-mute man who communicated via a slate and chalk, young Solomon considered his life a tragic one largely because he could not hear the laughter and condolences of friends.⁶⁷ "Necessity and war is the mother of invention," Solomon wisely wrote in 1862.⁶⁸

Mordecai, Pember, and Solomon do not offer unique instances of Jewish women who balanced shifting commitments in order to survive the war. The letters of other Jewish women living during the Civil War reveal their conscious efforts to reshape and strengthen personal, familial, or communal relationships by either displaying or veiling religious or communal commitments. Antebellum Jews lived in all parts of the country by 1848 and did not take a united stand on the issue of slavery. Rather, their political views tended to reflect those of their region.⁶⁹ Yet, in contrast to those Jewish women who chose to veil religious differences when in the company of Christian women in order to secure social ties, for some Jews, religious ties became the means for maintaining relationships with Jews in other regions despite political differences. By deliberately avoiding explosive issues and concentrating on shared concerns, Jewish women maintained ties to families and friends in other regions. Mordecai and Pember had veiled religion in order to weaken or erase its potential to

create a boundary between themselves and the women friends on whom they depended during the Civil War. Even young Clara Solomon learned by her teen years to control or modulate the display of her Jewish identity. By contrast, elderly Rebecca Gratz, a Philadelphia Unionist and devout Jew, relied on religious ties to secure her relationship with loved ones in the border state of Kentucky as well as in the Confederate South. In letters to her family, Gratz either veiled political disagreements that might divide her family, as they had divided other Americans, or displayed them in a way that supported and strengthened religious and familial ties.⁷⁰

Born in 1781, Gratz was a middle child in a family of ten children. Her father, uncle, and brothers formed a family of merchants who had engaged in coastal shipping, land speculating, and dry goods trading for almost one hundred years, from the mid-eighteenth century through the Civil War. Gratz herself grew up in post-Revolutionary Philadelphia, and throughout her long life she remained convinced that the ideals of the American Revolution signaled a new era of freedom in human history. Gratz, like her older sister, and three brothers, remained single. During her life she helped to establish and lead five different benevolent organizations: the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances (1801), the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum (1815), the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society (1819), the Hebrew Sunday School (1838), and the Jewish Foster Home (1855). When Gratz's younger sister, Rachel Gratz Moses, died in 1823, she brought Rachel's six children into her home until their father found a home nearby, and she continued to act as their mother. One of those children, Miriam Moses, married Southerner Solomon Cohen in 1836 and settled first in Charleston, South Carolina, and later in Savannah, Georgia.⁷¹

As early as the 1840s, when Solomon Cohen began speaking to audiences about the virtues of slavery, Gratz and her niece, Miriam Moses Cohen, began veiling their political differences and emphasizing their religious commonalities. Like Gratz, Miriam cared deeply about Judaism. In each letter the two women usually commented on some religious matter. For Miriam, discussions about religion provided a continuing bond with her aunt, and Miriam rarely disagreed with Gratz or raised issues that might cause friction. Miriam's husband, attorney Solomon Cohen, was an ardent and outspoken secessionist who owned several slaves and believed that Black slavery civilized both Whites and Blacks, an idea widespread in the South.⁷² Rather than debate about slavery, the women talked of religion. When Jewish religious reformer Max Lienthal wrote inspiring

works about Jewish ideas, both women wrote admiringly about his work, despite Gratz's strident opposition to the movement for religious reform then popular among some American Jews. Miriam, like Gratz, worried about the thinness of Jewish resources in America—her own congregation lacked “a good hazan” (reader). And like her aunt, Miriam noted all work authored by Jewish women and thought a piece Emma Mordecai published in the Philadelphia-based *Occident and American Jewish Advocate* “quite well written.”⁷³ Miriam's letters carefully maintained the bond between herself and her aunt across a distance that increasingly carried differences in cultural and political allegiances.

Like Mordecai, Pember, and Solomon, Gratz believed that harmonious relationships rested on well-controlled language. Reflecting her own high regard for self-discipline, Gratz disliked unbridled sentimentality in life and in literature. She believed that both domestic and world peace could be achieved only when individuals exercised rational self-control. In 1845 she complained to her new sister-in-law, Ann, the young wife of her brother Benjamin, then living in Lexington, Kentucky, that “female moralists sometimes laud candor as the . . . test of friendship—and care not how deeply they lacerate the feelings—and poison the peace of families.”⁷⁴ It was a warning to Ann, a Christian raised in the South, to avoid conflict for the sake of family harmony. In keeping the Gratz family sentimentally united while dispersed geographically, the Gratz women wrote of domesticity, religion, or gossip. Southerners in the family commented on the beauties of gardens and nature; Northerners, on the inspiration of literature. These themes constituted part of what has been called a “female world of love and ritual.”⁷⁵

In May 1844, near the holiday of Shevuot (Feast of Weeks), Gratz's sister, Richea Gratz Hays, visited her daughter Rosa Marx in Richmond, Virginia. Rosa was working on a horticultural exhibit at Falls Plantation, when “Emma Mordecai . . . walked over, . . . starting the festival with us. I was invited to spend the holy days with Rebecca Myers and attend synagogue but I declined,” Richea told her sister Rebecca. The women close to Gratz often discussed what she would think of the sermons and religious debates they heard. “Dear Rosa bought Mr. Salomon's and Mr. Leeser's sermons for the festival and read them to me. We thought of and talked of you and all our loved ones,” Richea wrote to Gratz.

Richea Gratz Hays assured her sister that the younger generation of Jewish women in the South in their circle cared about Judaism. Rosa Hays Marx, Richea's daughter, wrote her own note to Gratz underneath her

mother's text, assuring her aunt that she and her Jewish women friends had declined to attend a party because "it was the commencement of our holy days." Rosa also conveyed best wishes from Emma Mordecai, whose brother Alfred had married Richea's daughter Sara, and told Gratz that both young women hoped to see her in Richmond one day.⁷⁶ Assurances about Emma Mordecai's dedication to Judaism pleased and surprised Gratz. Gratz had been appalled when Emma's older sisters converted to Christianity. Gossiping about their conversion to her niece, Miriam Moses Cohen, Gratz insisted that their behavior would injure their characters as well as scandalize their father's memory. As those around her knew, Gratz believed that "we every day see the necessity of paying more attention to religious duties if we would not lose the dignity and honor of [Jewish] national character."⁷⁷ Her own life experience convinced Gratz that only when Jews honored their religion were they treated respectfully, and only by practicing their religion could they cultivate the self-discipline required for success in life.

Like her correspondence with Miriam, Gratz's mail from her Lexington, Kentucky, family limited itself to topics that would cause little friction. Although the Lexington Gratzes were staunch Unionists, Gratz's sister-in-law Ann was a Christian, and the two women confined their letters to uncontroversial topics. Both women discussed the details of domestic life and the beauties of nature. At Gratz's urging, Ann took up Shakespeare "with renewed spirit" and found it "elevating and refining, . . . thereby approximating us to our divine origin, perhaps as much as many of our clerical lecturers." This was the sister-in-law Gratz hoped for, one who could appreciate the spiritual benefits of reading Shakespeare. Through Shakespeare, popular in all classes of antebellum society, Gratz and Ann displayed their common identity as Americans. Moreover, by articulating his *moral* significance, Gratz and Ann echoed the central argument that, according to historian Lawrence A. Levine, "overcame general prejudice against theater."⁷⁸ More important for Gratz and Ann, Shakespeare provided them a secular source of shared spiritual and moral values and offered them common reference points for American culture. Encouraged, Gratz rewarded Ann by arranging to have four dresses, linen boots, thread, stockings, and a bonnet made for her sister-in-law.⁷⁹ Enmeshed in the details of each other's lives, Gratz's relationships with her Lexington family survived the political tensions otherwise dividing families across the nation.

The following winter, when Gratz's niece, Sarah Moses, visited her sister, Miriam Moses Cohen, in Savannah, Sarah could not help linking

religion to the national unrest. From her sister's damp house she wrote of her concern for the nation's future. Like some other antebellum Americans, Sarah worried first about what God would think of the way the country had conducted its political life, in compromises between slave and free states, in untenable rulings about new territories, in allowing Indian treaties to be broken and innocents slaughtered, and in embarking on a war with Mexico to gain its land.⁸⁰ "Nations as a rule are punished for their sins and if we should now be involved in warfare—I should look upon it as the result of the unhallowed system of politics that has been indulged in for the last few years," Sarah wrote to Gratz.⁸¹ Sarah's political sympathies echoed those of her aunt. Twelve years before Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* attacked slavery's devastation of Black domesticity, Gratz described her sympathy for Native Americans in language that revealed her concern for their domestic tragedies. She empathized with their "private sufferings" at the hands of Whites and admitted to "horror and shame" for attacks on Indian villages and families and to a "fear and dread" of "Indians" who "have so many wrongs to avenge."⁸² Sentimental literature of the time condemned politics ruled solely by economics, and, in the North, political critiques increasingly voiced concern for violence to households and domestic life. Neither Gratz nor Stowe was alone in such views.⁸³

Although Sarah Moses and Rebecca Gratz linked their anxieties for the political future of the nation to distress about domestic tranquility among families, a theme that grew increasingly powerful in the North in the years leading up to Civil War, Gratz's niece Miriam, Sarah's older sister, now a Southerner, seldom discussed politics with her Northern aunt. Instead, Miriam described religious and familial activities and the natural beauty of the South. "March is mellow sunshine, yellow jasmine in bloom. You scarcely meet anyone in the street without a sprig of it, even the horses are decorated with its bright flowers and the houses are perfumed with it." She repeated her love and concern for Gratz. Miriam talked about her father, Solomon Moses, whom she hoped would visit her for Passover, and about hosting a family celebration for Purim.⁸⁴ Miriam wrote only about family, religion, and nature, avoiding politics when corresponding with Gratz.

Few people could ever meet Gratz without learning about her religious beliefs, partly because she devoted so much time to religious activities. Even Congressman Frank Blair, Gratz's distant kin through her former Christian sister-in-law, Maria Gist Gratz, could not separate his impression of Rebecca

from her dedication to her religion, honoring her, in 1842, as “Queen of the Jews.”⁸⁵ Far from avoiding the topic of religion with those who did not share her beliefs, Gratz’s faith was so much a part of her identity that it was impossible to be her friend without addressing religious issues.⁸⁶

When Sarah Moses visited her sister, Miriam Cohen, in 1846, her letters to Gratz describing Jewish life in Savannah revealed that regional differences between North and South were beginning to affect the way American Jews understood their religious orientations. Sarah Moses saw regional and political loyalties threatening to split American Judaism, just as they did some Protestant denominations. Sarah told her aunt that, in the South, religious debates about tradition and Reform were recast in the language of the deepening national conflict. One Friday evening, Philadelphia Jewish leader Isaac Leeser visited the Cohen home, where “he had a long discussion . . . with the Levys—reform vs. anti-reform.” Sarah wrote to her aunt: “The Southern Jews say that the Northern Jews will not believe that they can have any religion because they do not adhere to all the forms prescribed by the rabbis while the Southern Jews insist that the Northern and Conforming Jews lose all spirituality in blind adherence to what their fathers did before them.”

Sarah, like Leeser and Gratz, opposed Reform but felt herself inadequate to the debate that evening. Knowing Gratz’s eloquent defense of Jewish tradition, she remarked, “I wished for your aid.” Sarah’s frustrations were evident in her letter. “The discussion ended as it must do—by either party’s remaining unconvinced,” she concluded.⁸⁷ The discussion held little chance for resolution, embedded as it was in other, perhaps even more emotionally laden, political controversies.

But as if to erase the potential for family enmity her account described, Sarah immediately shifted her topic to depict domestic Judaism thriving despite controversy in the Cohen home. She assured Gratz that although interested in Reform, Miriam and her husband remained faithful Jews at home. “We kept Friday evening just as we do it at home, . . . [and] I read my prayers quietly the next evening and thought of you.” To quell any fears she might have raised in her aunt, Sarah then praised Miriam’s womanly virtues. She admired Miriam’s self-discipline and composure. The more expressive and honest Sarah, soon to marry and move to Montreal, worried that she might never see her sister again. “How can I gain her well controlled nature?” she asked Gratz, “living in the present ‘Heart within—God overhead’—with neither regrets for the past or fears for the future?” Sarah thought such self-control impossible for her to attain herself.⁸⁸

Gratz herself used a similar device when writing younger brother Benjamin, living in Lexington, Kentucky, about her June 1860 visit to niece Miriam in Savannah. Benjamin Gratz, who, like his sister, opposed both slavery and secession, lost his son Cary, defending the Union at the Battle of Wilson's Creek. Gratz sought to minimize the potential for hostility between her brother and their niece, Miriam, by writing about Miriam's female world—domesticity and marriage. She wrote to Benjamin that “dear Miriam looks in full health and is the picture of contentment—no one can be happier in the domestic sense or more grateful to the Almighty giver of all good than she is—truly Mr. Cohen repays her tenderness and our great regard.”⁸⁹ By displaying Miriam's womanliness and her own faith, Gratz veiled the political conflicts that separated her brother Benjamin from Miriam. Thus she hoped to erase potential family conflict.

There seems no question that Miriam's political views would have estranged her from her family. A grim 1861 letter employed Confederate political rhetoric and envisioned history's epitaph to the United States: “Here lies a people who in seeking the liberty of the negro, lost their own.”⁹⁰ Echoing phrases common to Confederate speeches, Miriam wrote passionately to her aunt, outraged by the indictment of the Southern way of life frequently found in the pages of newspapers, magazines, and fiction published in the North. Quoting a phrase from Southern political speeches, Miriam believed the attack on Southern culture proved that “sickly sentimentality,” as secessionists called the abolition movement, had enveloped “every class of [Northern] society.” Moreover, she believed the cultural war against the South part of a concerted effort to “incite the poor [and] uproot the foundations of the Southern social system.” She explained to her aunt that although Southerners found the North's “system of white labor, with all its oppression and wrongs . . . abhorrent,” Southerners refrained from writing books and delivering sermons aimed at destroying the North's economic structure. For Miriam, that restraint on the part of Southerners proved their moral superiority to Northerners.⁹¹ But after this outburst in 1861, Miriam wrote only of domesticity, religion, and nature when writing to Rebecca. Miriam's husband, Solomon Cohen, was a secessionist, but he, too, usually veiled politics and displayed religion when corresponding with Gratz. Solomon Cohen also sent Gratz clippings from newspapers about events in Savannah that swept the Cohens along in the country's turmoil. Miriam and Solomon Cohen fit so well into the White population of their own town that, after her death, one obituary called Miriam “a beautiful example of Christian character.”⁹²

Despite her own Unionist convictions and her outspoken temperament, the eighty-year-old Gratz kept silent on politics when writing to Miriam. Instead she separated the public war from the privacy of the family. Focusing on emotions, Gratz wrote that her “heart was sick with every days account of wrongs and outrages” but that with Miriam’s letters before her, she could “look into [Miriam’s] own loving heart.” Indeed, Gratz insisted that her “one great consolation” was that between herself and Miriam “there was no war in [their] own hearts.”⁹³

But there was no hiding the fact that family members were preparing to battle on opposing sides. In July 1861, a few months after the war began, Gratz’s nephew, Charles E. Etting, a cadet at West Point, wrote to her about his life there, filled with drills, rifle practice, and guard duty.⁹⁴ Gratz urged Benjamin, whose political views matched her own, to stay at home in Kentucky rather than visit her in Philadelphia, because travel was too dangerous and because “every man should be at the place where his influence for the good may be needed.” Happy that Philadelphia was “decidedly Unionist,” Gratz hoped that Kentucky was free “of secessionist principles or dangers and that our beloved Union may survive.”⁹⁵

War left Gratz in a state of “constant agitation,” she explained to Benjamin’s wife, Ann. She detested the way the war tore apart families and friends. “Every day,” she complained, she heard an “account of wrongs and outrages perpetrated by kindred on each other—of familiar friends becoming bitter foes.” The Non-Intercourse Law, passed in 1861, which limited communication between North and South, interfered with her correspondence with Miriam. Gratz asked individuals with special travel passes to convey letters for her. But travel across the Mason-Dixon Line was sharply curtailed, and six months sometimes passed between letters from her niece. Gratz told Ann that she didn’t think it was fair for the law “to exist between” them: “I had a rare treat of a letter from Miriam Cohen through a private opportunity. . . . [It is] sad when the natural flow of familiar intercourse is to be either stolen or only accidentally enjoyed.” She lamented not just for her own family but for “our late happy country.” Gratz’s own opinions echoed Lincoln’s speeches.⁹⁶ It seemed to her that America’s promise of a new era of peace and freedom might come to an end.

When Benjamin’s son was killed in battle, Gratz wrote to Cary’s stepmother, Ann, that the “outrages perpetrated by kindred on each other . . . [are] too appalling to be realized.”⁹⁷ Gratz comforted Benjamin with the hope that he would be reunited with his son in another world. Benjamin’s

daughter Miriam also supported the Union. “My dear patriotic niece,” Gratz wrote later, “my heart goes with you in all our triumphs.”⁹⁸ But even Union victories failed to make Gratz happy. “I have so many dear [ones] scattered over the land,” she explained. To Ann, she detailed her dilemma, as she watched those she loved and who loved one another arm themselves against each other. No doubt thinking of Miriam Moses Cohen, who as a child was supported by the Gratz brothers and who now stood with the Confederates in Georgia, Gratz detailed her emotional turmoil. “I have been reading some loving letters from some so near to me in blood and affections whose arms are perhaps now raised against those hearts at which they have fed.” By the end of 1861, Gratz had “no faith in politicians” and thought only “Divine Providence” could convince national leaders that it was wrong to be “shedding Brothers blood in this unholy war.”⁹⁹ The following year she quit discussing politics with Confederate sympathizers, after Benjamin had admitted to her that he behaved similarly.¹⁰⁰ Niece Miriam, fearing that Gratz would die while the Civil War still thwarted her communication with her aunt, in 1864 managed to have a birthday letter stamped “Flag of Truce.”¹⁰¹

In 1865, when the Union had survived, Gratz began receiving reassuring letters from her family. Ann wrote that in Kentucky life was returning to normal and those who had fled were returning from Canada and elsewhere. With smooth delivery of the mails restored, Sarah Gratz Moses, now married to Henry Joseph, wrote weekly from Montreal, assuring Gratz that “your love, my darling aunt, is the treasure of my life—it warmed my orphan heart when God saw fit to remove my mother—and it has burnt steadily on without changes or diminution—and each year of my life I feel its influence.”¹⁰² Through the crucible of Civil War correspondence, Sarah had learned that by displaying piety and affection and veiling politics, she could remain within the Gratz family community despite geographic separation and new political loyalties. These Jewish women’s personal writings, both diaries and letters, enabled them to survive the social traumas of the Civil War with communal lives intact.

For Emma Mordecai, a woman in her fifties, her diary helped to overcome potential family conflicts raised by differences in religious and political ideas. For young Clara Solomon, too, the act of writing in her diary provided a means to express ideas and emotions that might otherwise endanger her position in a community in which antisemitism was not uncommon. Both Solomon and Mordecai used their diaries to veil more public displays of their Jewish identities by providing a private arena in

which they could express their ideas and feelings about their religion. Like Phoebe Yates Levy Pember and Miriam Moses Cohen, Solomon and Mordecai worked hard at making a place for themselves within their local communities in the South. Each of these women accomplished her goal in large part by veiling her religious difference from the Christians who played powerful roles in their worlds. Ultimately, the strategy of veiling helped Jewish women to remain within those communities that enabled them to survive during wartime despite an increase in anti-Jewish feeling.

For Philadelphian Rebecca Gratz, an elderly woman at the time of the Civil War but a dominating figure in her family, letters became the primary vehicle for keeping her scattered family united. By writing and asking about religious ideas, loyalties, disciplines, and activities, Gratz avoided mentioning the political conflicts that otherwise separated her from loved ones. When writing to her Christian sister-in-law in Kentucky, Gratz linked her expressions of piety to literary sources and modulated the expression of her own Unionist sympathies until they matched those common in Kentucky and so established a firm relationship with her new sister-in-law. Her strategy worked—the family relationships survived. Gratz certainly would have agreed with Clara Solomon's judgment on the power of words. Although Jews did not speak with a single voice,¹⁰³ the writings examined here suggest that individual Jewish women strove to reshape their local communities and their family ties through writing and language. The women had learned that through written texts they could both veil their differences from those whom they loved or needed while displaying their commonalities. Soon after the war, Jews, like many other Americans, either relocated to new regions or returned to communities and families that had been split by the war.¹⁰⁴ The sensitivity to social language that Mordecai, Pember, Solomon, Gratz, Moses, and Cohen evidenced in their writing helped them to survive the war and to provide entry to new communities and relationships that emerged at its end.¹⁰⁵

NOTES

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2. Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration: 1820–1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 158–60.

3. Jacob Rader Marcus, Foreword, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War: Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers*, ed. Jean Powers Soman and Frank L. Byrne (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), viii.
4. Randall Miller, Harry Stout, and Charles Regan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22; Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1992), 47.
5. Bertram Wallace Korn, "American Judaeophobia: Confederate Version," in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 135–36.
6. Miller, Stout, and Wilson, *Religion and the American Civil War*, 11–14.
7. Eli Evans, *The Provincials*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1997), 121.
8. Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Knopf, 1997), 206–52.
9. Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 182–83.
10. Anne C. Rose, *Victorian America and the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 20–38.
11. Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 185.
12. Korn, "American Judaeophobia," 135–36.
13. McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 622–23.
14. Seth Forman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being Jewish," *American Jewish History* 85:2 (1997): 129.
15. Ibid.
16. For a full account of Benjamin's political life, see Eli Evans, *Judah P. Benjamin: The Jewish Confederate* (New York: Free Press, 1988).
17. Mark I. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern: Jews of Savannah, Georgia, 1830–1870," *American Jewish History* 86:1 (1998): 63–68.
18. Leonard Rogoff, "Is the Jew White? The Racial Place of the Southern Jew," *American Jewish History* 85:3 (1997): 201.
19. Daniel Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863–1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 33–49.
20. Evans, *Benjamin*, 193.
21. Myron Berman, *Richmond's Jewry, 1769–1976: Shabbat in Shockoe* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 1979), 176–78.
22. Ibid., 188; Miller, Stout, and Wilson, *Religion and the American Civil War*, 313.
23. Rose, *Victorian America*, 61.
24. Micaela Di Leonardo, "The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families, and the Work of Kinship," *Signs* 12:3 (1987): 440–53; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual," in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 53–77.

25. Many thanks to Anne Rose for this insight, personal communication, December 14, 1997.
26. Sheldon Hanft, "Mordecai's Female Academy," *American Jewish History* 79:1 (1989): 72–93.
27. Richea Gratz Hays to Rebecca Gratz, May 27, 1844, Richmond to Philadelphia, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 16, American Philosophical Society (thereafter APS).
28. Emma's brother, Major Alfred Mordecai, resigned his commission in the U.S. Army rather than fight against the South, but he sat out the war in Philadelphia rather than fight against the North. His decision was unpopular with both Northerners and Southerners. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 173–74.
29. Steven E. Kagle and Lorenza Gramegna, "Rewriting Her Life: Fictionalization and the Use of Fictional Models in Early American Women's Diaries," in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, ed. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huif (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 44.
30. Emma Mordecai, *Diary*, TS, 1864, 1886, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (hereafter AJA). This was Mordecai's second diary that we know of; her first was written almost twenty years earlier when she examined her family's disparate religious loyalties and resolved her own. Emma Mordecai Diary, 1838, Mordecai Family Papers, Southern History Collection, Chapel Hill, N.C.
31. Diner, *Time for Gathering*, 156–58; Bertram Korn, *American Jewry during the Civil War* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1961), 2–16.
32. Janice G. Raymond, *A Passion for Friends: Toward a Philosophy of Female Attraction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 9.
33. Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Routledge, 1995), 10–30. Lynn Hankinson Nelson has argued that these relationships have epistemological import. "Epistemological Communities," in *Feminist Epistemologies*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 121–60.
34. Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 248–54.
35. Mordecai, *Diary*, AJA, 1.
36. *Ibid.*, 8.
37. Hanft, "Mordecai's Female Academy," 90; Hays to Gratz, May 27, 1844; Mordecai, *Diary*, AJA, 16.
38. Mordecai, *Diary*, AJA, 17, 30.
39. *Ibid.*, 24.
40. *Ibid.*, 42.
41. Miriam Moses Cohen to Rebecca Gratz, March 22, 1846, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 16, APS.
42. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 179.
43. Mordecai, *Diary*, AJA, 22.
44. *Ibid.*, 56–60.

45. *Ibid.*, 18–19
46. *Ibid.*, 59.
47. *Ibid.*, 56.
48. McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 197; C. Vann Woodward and Elizabeth Muhlenfeld, eds., *The Private Mary Chestnut: The Unpublished Diaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), xxv.
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51. James Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 53–54.
52. Wiley, *Southern Woman's Story*, 19.
53. *Ibid.*, 6.
54. Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 97.
55. McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 480; Wiley, *Southern Woman's Story*, 7.
56. Richard H. Shryock, *The History of Nursing* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1959), 295; Susan Armeny, "Organized Nurses, Women Philanthropists, and the Intellectual Bases for Cooperation among Women, 1898–1920," in *Nursing History: New Perspectives, New Possibilities*, ed. Ellen Condliff Lagemann (New York: Teachers College Press, 1983), 16–17.
57. Shryock, *History of Nursing*, 269–77.
58. Quoted in Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 206; see also Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 179.
59. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern," 66–67, 75.
60. Wiley, *Southern Woman's Story*, 158.
61. Clara Solomon, *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon: Growing Up in New Orleans, 1861–1862*, ed. Elliott Ashkenazi (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 98.
62. Quoted in Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 164.
63. Quoted in *ibid.*, 192.
64. Solomon, *Civil War Diary*, 2–19.
65. Bertram Korn, quoted in Eli Evans, *The Provincials* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 205–6.
66. Solomon, *Civil War Diary*, 284.
67. *Ibid.*, 98.
68. Quoted in Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, frontispiece.
69. Korn, "American Judaophobia," 12–30; Tedlow, "Judah P. Benjamin," 49; Eli N. Evans, "Southern Jewish History: Alive and Unfolding," in Kaganoff and Urofsky, *Turn to the South*, 160.

70. Dianne Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 195–208.
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72. Greenberg, “Becoming Southern,” 62–63.
73. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 203.
74. Rebecca Gratz to Ann Gratz, November 24, 1845, Rebecca Gratz Papers, P-9, American Jewish Historical Society (hereafter AJHS); quoted in Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 198.
75. Smith-Rosenberg, “Female World,” 73.
76. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 199; Richea Gratz Hays to Rebecca Gratz, May 27, 1844, Gratz Family Papers, Collection no. 72, box 16, APS.
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81. Sarah Gratz Moses to Rebecca Gratz, April 1846, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 16, APS.
82. Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Moses Cohen, May 20, 1838, Miriam Moses Cohen Papers, Southern History Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
83. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Avon Books, 1977), 73; McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 88–91; Jane Tompkins, “Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Politics of Literary History,” *Glyph* 8 (1981): 4.
84. Miriam Moses Cohen to Rebecca Gratz, March 22, 1838, Miriam Moses Cohen Papers and Books, Collection no. 2639, Southern History Collection.
85. Frank Blair to Rebecca Gratz, November 13, 1842, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 11; Hyman Gratz to Rebecca Gratz, August 2, 1847, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 15, APS. Blair married Maria’s sister Eliza Violet Gist in 1812 (Gist Genealogy, Genealogies file, AJA).
86. Mrs. Shroeder to Rebecca Gratz, July 20, 1847, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 15, APS.
87. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 203.
88. *Ibid.*, 203–4.
89. Rebecca Gratz to Benjamin Gratz, June 24, 1860, Rebecca Gratz Paper, manuscript collection 236, AJA.

90. McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 102, 230.
91. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 226.
92. Mrs. James T. Dent, clipping, Gratz Family Papers, box 11, APS.
93. Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Moses Cohen, n.d., Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 11, APS.
94. Charles Etting to Rebecca Gratz, July 14, 1861, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 9, APS.
95. Rebecca Gratz to Ann Gratz, December 13, 1860, in *Letters of Rebecca Gratz*, ed. David Philipson (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1929), 417–18.
96. McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 309.
97. Rebecca Gratz to Ann Gratz, June 8, 1861, Rebecca Gratz Papers, P-9, AJHS.
98. Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Gratz, August 24, 1861, Rebecca Gratz Papers, manuscript collection 236, AJA.
99. Rebecca Gratz to Ann Gratz, October 30, 1861, Rebecca Gratz Papers, P-9, AJHS.
100. Rebecca Gratz to Benjamin Gratz, Rebecca Gratz Papers, manuscript collection 236, AJA.
101. Miriam Moses Cohen to Rebecca Gratz, Savannah to Philadelphia, February 18, 1864, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 9, APS.
102. Sarah Moses Joseph to Rebecca Gratz, December 27, 1865, Gratz Family Papers, collection 72, box 9, APS.
103. Diner, *Time for Gathering*, 156.
104. *Ibid.*, 157.
105. Diane Lichtenstein's *Writing Their Nations: The Tradition of Nineteenth-Century American Jewish Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) analyzes the ways Jewish women modulated their American and Jewish identities in published writings later in the nineteenth century.