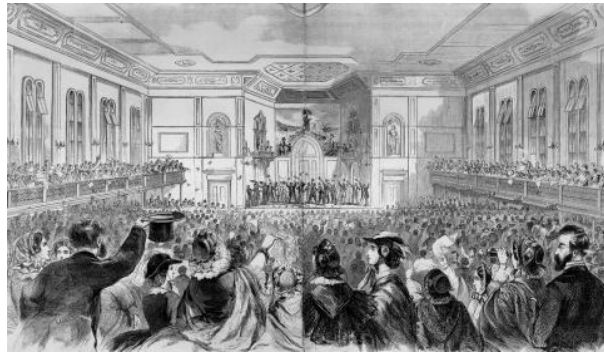




0. 1860 Secession from the Union? - Story Preface

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This illustration appeared in the November 24, 1860 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Volume 11, Number 261 (at pages 8-9). It depicts a meeting held in Charleston, at Institute Hall (later called Secession Hall), where thousands of people had gathered to decide whether they should endorse a call, from South Carolina's Legislature, to hold a Secession Convention (by which South Carolina could secede from America's Union of States).

Members of the South Carolina Secession Convention, in 1860, unanimously voted to secede from the American Union. However, there were Unionists in South Carolina who favored the idea of remaining part of the Union prior to the election of 1860.

Unionists did not necessarily agree with the actions of the Northern states, or of the federal government, but Unionists believed that the US Constitution was well equipped to protect South Carolina's way of life. These

people wanted to continue with their way of life without interference from the Federal Government.

Cooperationists were South Carolinians who favored seceding from the Union. To secede, in their view, was a last resort—and *only* if it was done with the support of *all* the Southern states. They believed that it would be a big mistake for South Carolina to secede without the cooperation and support of other Southern states.

Secessionists, also known as radicals or "fire-eaters," argued that breaking apart from the Union was the only answer for South Carolina. They believed that the issue was not debatable and had been ready to secede as early as 1852.

The events of the 1850s, and the election of President Lincoln in 1860, convinced most South Carolinians to support the fire-eaters' position.

When it became clear that Lincoln was to become the 16th President of the United States, the SC legislature issued a call for a convention to determine the relationship between South Carolina and the Union. The convention initially met at the First Baptist Church, in Columbia, but rumors of a smallpox outbreak led them to quickly and conveniently adjourn and move to Charleston (where support for secession was strongest).

It was there, in Charleston, where the leaders unanimously adopted an Ordinance of Secession. This political statement said that the federal government should not interfere with the decision-making and freedoms of the individual states (states' rights).

Because Lincoln was a Republican, and therefore opposed to slavery in the territories, many Southerners assumed that the federal government would soon make slavery illegal. Ending slavery would, in turn:

- End Southern wealth;
- End Southern political influence; and
- End the Southern way of life.

Without waiting for Lincoln to be inaugurated, South Carolina and six other Southern states issued a "Declaration of Causes" and seceded from the Union, aiming to protect the institution of slavery—upon which their way of life depended—and to protect their individual states' rights.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/1860-Secession-from-the-Union-South-Carolina-History>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/1860-Secession-from-the-Union-South-Carolina-History>