Last Hope of Liberty: Unionism and Nullification in South Carolina, 1828-1836

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For My Mother

And in Memory of My Father

"Whatever beauty or poetry is to be found in my little book
is owing to your…encouragement of all my efforts from the first to the last,
and if ever I do anything to be proud of, my greatest happiness will be
that I can thank you for that, as I may do for all the good there is in me."
– Louisa May Alcott to her mother

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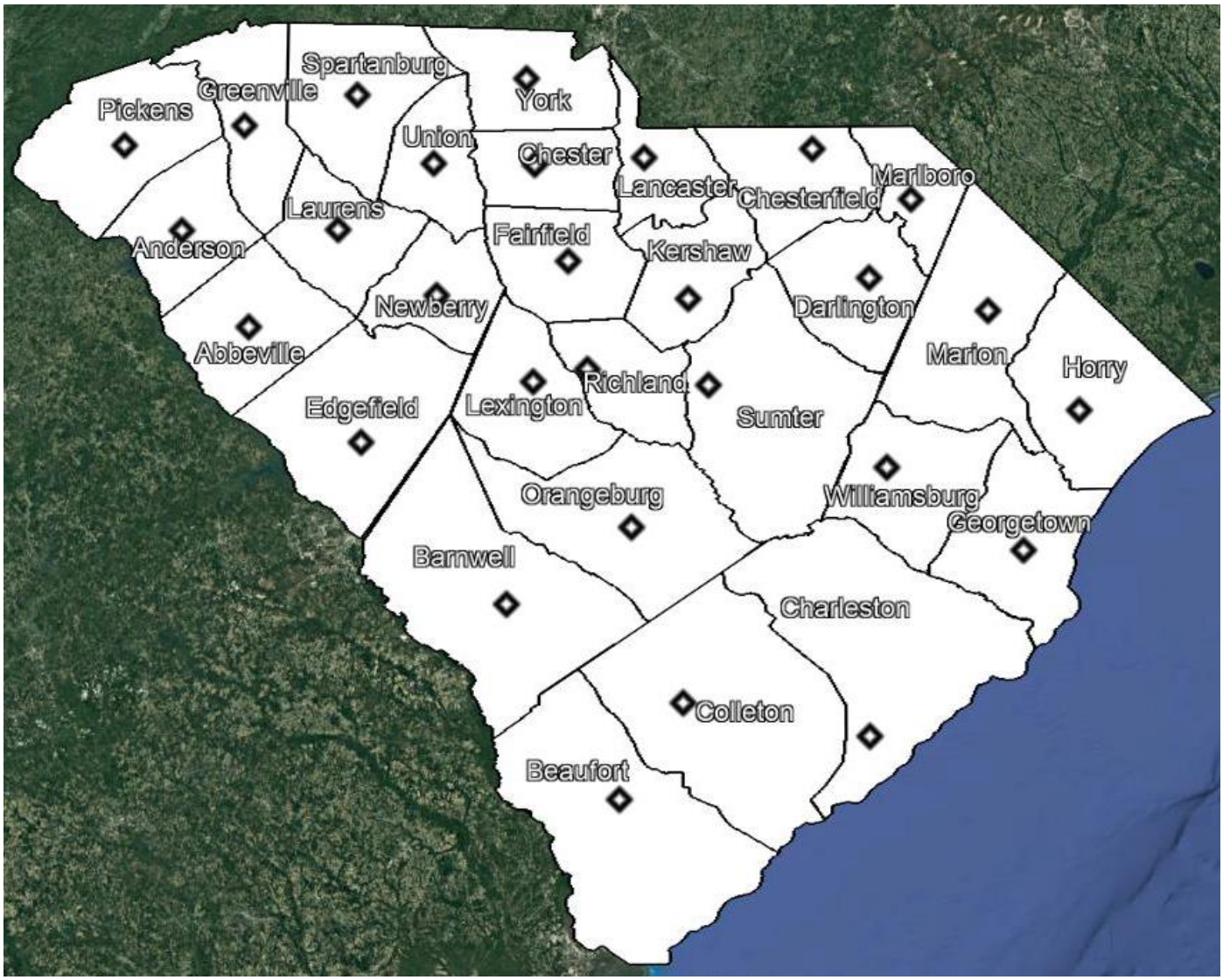


Lowcountry Parishes

Charleston District
Christ Church
St. Andrew's
St. James, Goose Creek
St. James, Santee
St. John's, Berkeley
St. John's, Colleton
St. Philip's and St. Michael's
St. Stephen's
St. Thomas and St. Dennis

Beaufort District
Prince William's
St. Helena
St. Luke's
St. Peter's

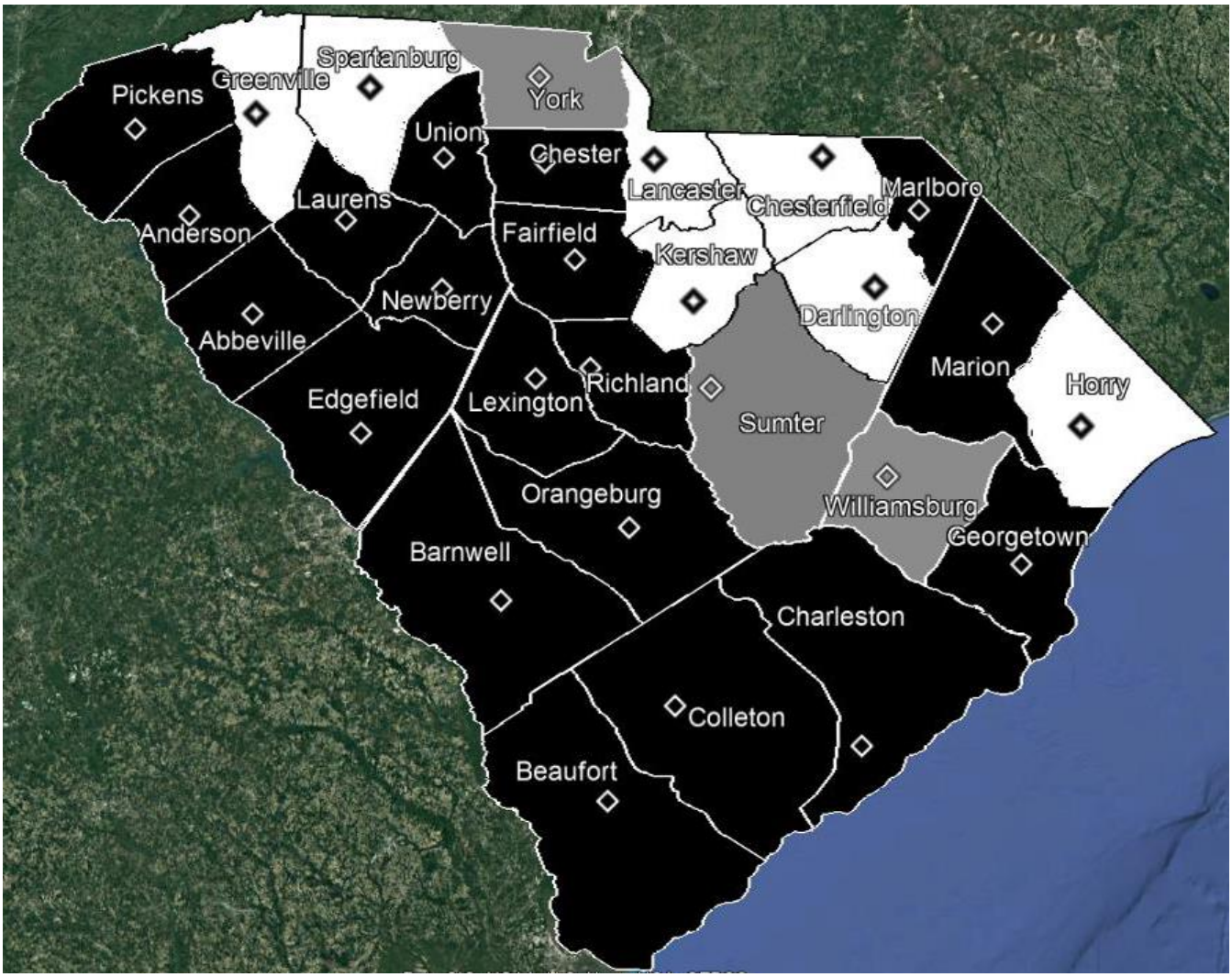
Colleton District
St. Bartholomew's
St. George, Dorchester
St. Paul's

Georgetown District
All Saints
Prince George, Winyaw

Orangeburg District
Orange
St. Matthew's

Sumter District
Clarendon
Claremont

Figure 2: South Carolina Election Results, 1832



Black Districts: Nullifier majority
Gray Districts: Nullifier majority (less than 55 percent)
White Districts: Union Party majority

Introduction

General Winfield Scott arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, in November 1832, hoping desperately to avert secession and civil war. After years of protest, the state had declared two federal tariffs null and void and threatened to dissolve the Union if the president tried to enforce them. In the weeks ahead, South Carolinians began preparing for war: building factories and supply depots, stockpiling arms, and raising an army of 25,000 men. President Andrew Jackson, in turn, offered Scott "*carte blanche* in respect to troops" and ordered revenue cutters and warships to patrol Charleston Harbor. He reinforced the city's federal garrison and vowed to march 150,000 volunteers into the state to crush the incipient rebellion. War appeared imminent, and many feared—and a few hoped—that the Union would not survive the crisis.[1]

As Scott strategized, his mind drifted to the War of 1812, when South Carolinians stood united "in the career of patriotism" and "came powerfully to the aid of the Union." He mourned that those "days of general harmony may never return." Although national statesmen were working to forge a compromise, he observed, South Carolina "could not wait—she has taken the leap & is already a *foreign* nation!!" Scott, a Virginia Unionist, prayed that "neither party [would] take a rash step," fearing that the "whole arch of Union [would] tumble in." The six hundred soldiers under his command crowded into Fort Moultrie and Fort Johnson, and as days stretched into weeks the uncertainty grew almost unbearable. As a young lieutenant observed, the men lived with muskets loaded and cannons ready, always "prepared for the worst." They

[1] John S. D. Eisenhower, *Agent of Destiny: The Life and Times of General Winfield Scott* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 134-139; Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Winfield Scott*, ed. Timothy D. Johnson (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2015), 123-135; William W. Freehling, *The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1-3; Andrew Jackson to Joel R. Poinsett, 24 January 1833, Papers of Joel R. Poinsett, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

were unsure if "war or peace" lay ahead, but they trusted Jackson to "keep his promise…that the Union *must* and *shall* be preserved."[2]

In the city itself, thousands trained and braced for battle. Over the past four years, the state's radical Nullifiers had stitched together a powerful political movement—a network of local State Rights Associations, party newspapers, and partisan militia companies. They had organized hundreds of dinners, rallies, and parades and steadily won control of the state. They captured the General Assembly in 1830, and two years later they held a commanding three-fourths majority. Those lawmakers, in turn, selected governors, senators, and militia officers all fiercely loyal to their cause. Most hoped nullification would peacefully preserve state rights within the Union, restoring the "proper" balance of state and federal power. Still, a small but growing number had begun openly calling for disunion, and countless more were prepared to defend their families and their freedom with "fixed bayonets."[3]

Previous scholars, searching for the "origins of southern radicalism," have insightfully analyzed the state's Nullifiers and the struggle between South Carolina and the federal government. Nullifiers, they observe, sought to stave off economic collapse, preserve state sovereignty, and defend the racial and gender hierarchies at the heart of their world. These historians, however, have devoted much less attention to the partisan conflict *within* South Carolina, despite the fact that 40 percent of voters vehemently rejected nullification. Slowly, and often reluctantly, these men and women crafted a political organization capable of challenging Nullifiers across much of the state. During the winter of 1832-33, as South Carolina's radicals

[2] Winfield Scott to William C. Preston, 14 December 1832, in *The Nullification Era: A Documentary Era*, ed. William W. Freehling (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), 175-177; Jacob W. Bailey to Jane Keely, 24 November 1832, and Jacob W. Bailey to William M. Bailey, February 1833, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Charleston Library Society, on microform at SCHS.

[3] Robert J. Turnbull, *An Oration Delivered in the City of Charleston Before the State Rights & Free Trade Party* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1832), 22; *The Columbia Telescope*, 16 July 1833.

mobilized for war, 9,000 men volunteered to defy their own state and fight to preserve the Union.[4]

This dissertation foregrounds the experiences and convictions of these Union men. Like many antebellum Americans, they considered the Union a fragile experiment in self-government. The Constitution was barely 40 years old, and no one knew if it would survive. Crises like the Whiskey Rebellion, the War of 1812, and the Missouri statehood debate had already shaken the country's foundations, and Union men feared that nullification now augured its destruction. As an upcountry writer explained, nullification threatened to unfurl the "bloody flag of Anarchy" and provoke a ruinous civil war, in which "brother will be arrayed against brother, father against son, and friend against friend." The struggle would "desolate our country, and the fields of Carolina [would] be drenched with the blood of her citizens." Fueled by these fears, Union men rallied to save the country from destruction.[5]

Generations of scholars have debated why the Union fell apart in 1860-61. As Cynthia Nicoletti contends, however, historians must also ask how "this Union actually held together for as long as it did." Elizabeth Varon agrees, encouraging scholars to grapple with the "tricky question of timing"—to consider not only why the Union collapsed in 1861, but also why it survived every previous sectional crisis. While slavery was the "fundamental cause" of secession

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[4] See William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965); Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

[5] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 17 January 1833. This dissertation describes Union Party voters as "Union men" to distinguish them from the "Unionists" of the Civil War era and more accurately reflect the partisan labels of the time. Voters referred to themselves as "Union men" and only very rarely as "Unionists." The label, of course, was explicitly gendered: Union men insisted that women were "Better suited to the domestic than the political circle." Contemporary women, however, were deeply engaged in the political crisis, and many became avid partisans. See *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 12 July 1834.

and Civil War, she observes, that issue had provoked intense debate as far back as the Constitution Convention of 1787. Nonetheless, "it took another seventy-five years for the war to come."[6]

This dissertation engages with these questions by examining—and reframing—the nullification crisis. The country, it reveals, came perilously close to civil war in the winter of 1832-33. Fifty percent of white military-age South Carolinians volunteered to resist federal "tyranny," while more than 150,000 men from across the Union vowed to crush the state's "rebellion." The Union survived, in part, because of the resolve and restraint of national statesmen. Andrew Jackson offered an "olive branch and sword," threatening to invade the state while striving to peacefully resolve the crisis. In Congress, meanwhile, political rivals Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun worked together to forge a workable compromise.

It survived, as well, because of the depth and resilience of southern proslavery Unionism. Nullifiers hoped to unify their state and convert Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi to their cause. As they faced down the federal government, they convinced themselves that "thousands of volunteers from these States [would] come to our aid." Ultimately, however, the other states rejected nullification, and 40 percent of South Carolinians resisted it. Public meetings across the South offered the president their "undivided support," urging him to "execute the laws and preserve the Union." In South Carolina, Union men rejoiced that "every State in the Union [had] openly and fearlessly denounced this doctrine." As the "friends of

[6] Cynthia Nicoletti, "Roundtable IV Comment," (paper presented at the Power, Violence, and Inequality Collective Fellows Mini-Conference, April 2019); Elizabeth R. Varon, "Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859," (paper presented at the Library of Virginia, December 2008), available from http://www.c-span.org/video/?282900-1/disunion.

regulated liberty and order," they worked to hold their country together and avert the "horrors of a *civil and servile war*."[7]

By returning South Carolina's Union men to the center of this story, this dissertation provides insight into the hopes, anxieties, and convictions of Jacksonian-era southern Unionists. It argues that they viewed the Union as the last hope for human liberty in a world dominated by despotism—as a bold yet fragile testament to humanity's capacity for self-government. The Union, they believed, preserved both liberty and slavery, ensuring peace, property, and prosperity for all white men. They feared that nullification would erode the Constitution and provoke social and political chaos. It would lead inevitably to secession and civil war: shattering the Union, tearing communities apart, and inspiring slave rebellions throughout the South.

These Union men were often reluctant partisans. Many still clung to the political theories of the early republic, which decried partisanship as a danger to national stability. As one scholar explains, the state's leaders viewed organized opposition as a "constitutional challenge" rather than a political alternative. Throughout the nullification crisis, Union men equated local State Rights Associations with the Jacobin Clubs of the French Revolution—clubs that "deluged in blood, so many nations of the world." Some, however, recognized that they could only save the state from destruction by "fight[ing] the Nullifiers with their own weapons." By creating a party of their own, they hoped to "preserve the Union and sustain the Government of our fathers…[and] defend ourselves when danger comes."[8]

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[7] *The New York Spectator*, 24 January 1833; *The Charleston Courier*, 12 January 1833; *The Camden Journal*, 2 February 1833 and 9 February 1833; Samuel Cram Jackson to Elizabeth Jackson, 22 January 1833, Samuel C. Jackson Papers, South Caroliniana Library (SCL).

[8] James M. Banner, Jr., "The Problem of South Carolina," *The Hofstadter Aegis: A Memorial*, ed. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick (New York: Knopf, 1974), 60-66; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 18 July 1832; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 19 January 1833. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Jeffrey S. Selinger,

In general, districts with higher slave concentrations embraced nullification, while those with lower concentrations opposed it. Nullifiers framed the tariff as a threat to slavery and white supremacy, and their message resonated powerfully in the slave-dense parishes of the South Carolina lowcountry. The Union Party, however, was a broad coalition with support throughout the state. It drew its greatest strength from coastal Horry District, from Charleston, and from the upcountry districts along the North Carolina border. In Charleston, the city's economic elite joined the Union Party, along with many federal employees, urban professionals, mariners, and storekeepers. Outside the city, one-third of the lowcountry's slaveholders rejected radicalism, fearing nullification would destabilize society and endanger their "domestic institutions."[9]

In the state's upcountry districts, yeoman farmers formed the backbone of the Union Party. The mountains, they observed, had always fostered patriotism, and they remained the "last refuge of persecuted Liberty." Here, the "small, yes undespairing band of Union men…planted the emblem of their faith—the Star Spangled Banner," and they resolved that "no force shall tear it down." In Greenville and Spartanburg, in the state's northwestern corner, Union men comprised 70 percent of the population. On average, the party's upcountry voters were older and owned fewer slaves than their opponents. Some were veterans of the American Revolution who had fought to establish the Union and refused to see it perish. The largest cohort, however, was

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Embracing Dissent: Political Violence and Party Development in the United States (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

[9] In 1832, for example, the Union Party triumphed in three of the four districts where slaves made up less than one-third of the population. Nullifiers, meanwhile, captured all six districts where slaves comprised more than two-thirds of the population. As Lacy Ford observes, however, a more extensive analysis reveals only a weak correlation between a district's political leaning and its "wealth, incidence of slaveholding, average size of slaveholding, ratio of blacks to whites, or severity of economic distress." The partisan battles of the nullification crisis did not break down along clear geographic or economic lines. Instead, he contends, "the crucial decisions were made on the basis of the ideological and tactical choices presented during the campaign." See Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, 137; J.P. Ochenkowski, "The Origins of Nullification in South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Society* 83, no. 2 (April 1982), 121-153; Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, "The Economics and Politics of Charleston's Nullification Crisis," *The Journal of Southern History* 47, no. 3 (August 1981), 343-345.

born in the 1780s and 1790s. These men were the children of the founding generation, and many had come of age in the nationalist fervor of the 1810s. They had watched the country expand and prospect, doubling in size and quadrupling in population, stretching across the continent and trading around the world.[10]

Some scholars have emphasized the divisions in the Union Party's ranks, declaring them a "motley coalition" and contending that upcountry yeomen and lowcountry planters and merchants had little in common. Undoubtedly, Union men approached the crisis with a broad range of concerns and expectations, and at times these worked at cross purposes. During a few crucial elections, for example, some Union men boycotted the polls, insisting participation would only sanction the proceedings. Others urgently cast their ballots, doing everything in their power to keep their enemies at bay. Despite these tensions, Union men shared many of the same convictions, and they ultimately crafted a strong statewide political network. For seven years, they worked together to preserve the Union, secure the legacy of the Revolution, and safeguard slavery and social order.[11]

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This dissertation builds upon and contributes to four fields of inquiry. First, and most directly, it reinterprets the nullification crisis, highlighting the state's partisan divisions and the

[10] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 22 November 1834; Carroll D. Wright, *The History and Growth of the United States Census, Prepared for the Senate Committee on the Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900), 17,31. The population of the United States increased from 3,929,214 in 1790 to 12,866,020 in 1830. Demographic data for the Union Party was calculated by compiling a list of names from petitions to the state legislature, then searching for each individual in the 1830 and 1834 censuses. See "Inhabitants of Abbeville, Kershaw, Lancaster, Greenville, Pendleton, and Union Districts, Petition Protesting against the Proposed Amendment to the State Constitution," SCDAH; "Inhabitants of Spartanburg District, Petition Opposing the Test Oath and Protesting its Being Included in the Constitution of the State," SCDAH; "Inhabitants of Edgefield District, Petition Protesting the Proposed Alteration of the State Constitution," SCDAH.

[11] William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 237; Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, 129.

strength of Unionist resistance. Historians have largely played down or mischaracterized these divisions. One scholar declares the crisis "essentially a tactical dispute over means, not a philosophical dispute over aims." Both parties, he observes, opposed the tariff and supported slavery, and their political debate revolved "how best to defend republican values of liberty and independence." The state's partisan divisions, however, were far more fundamental. Between 1828 and 1835, Union men and Nullifiers contested the meaning and legacy of the Revolution, the duties of manhood, the relationship between law and liberty, and the nature of the Union itself.[12]

Second, building on the work of Gary Gallagher, Elizabeth Varon, and others, this dissertation demonstrates the ideological power of antebellum Unionism. As these scholars explain, the Union "represented the cherished legacy of the founding generation": a republican government that enshrined political liberty and economic opportunity. Understandably, most of the literature on Unionism focuses on the Civil War era. The nullification crisis, however, provides a rich avenue for research, as it forced Americans to contest their ideals and vividly imagine the horrors of disunion. By the 1830s, the generation that fought the Revolution and founded the country was rapidly passing away, fueling intense anxieties among younger Americans. Union men clung to the symbols of that struggle, hoping to keep the memory of the Revolution—and the promise of the Union—alive. Crucially, the nullification crisis also provided a lexicon of Unionism for all future crises. During the secession winter of 1860-61, Unionists endlessly evoked the words of Andrew Jackson and Daniel Webster, and they prayed that Abraham Lincoln would "prove a second Jackson."[13]

[12] Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, 134n.
[13] *The Cleveland Daily Leader*, 12 January 1861.

Third, this dissertation contributes to the literature on antebellum southern manhood. During the 1830s, Amy Greenberg contends, social and economic changes "reconfigured" the meaning of manhood, creating "two preeminent and dueling mid-century masculinities." Restrained men grounded their identities in family, faith, and financial success, while martial men glorified physical strength, violence, and social and sexual dominance. James Corbett David describes this dynamic in terms of "passion versus self-control." He argues that sectional extremists embodied an inflammatory, uncompromising model of manhood that depended on the "will to physically resist aggression." Moderates in both sections, however, "privileged compromise over confrontation" and believed self-control was essential to preserving the Union.[14]

This dissertation adapts these models, describing a confrontation between *martial* and *moderate* manhood. Many Union men upheld the latter ideal, grounding their identities in reason and restraint. They believed the "unmanly" passions of nullification would destroy the Union and endanger their families. Others, however, shared their enemies' commitment to martial manhood. When Nullifiers called them cowards and "submissionists," these men violently defended their horror. They battled Nullifiers on dueling grounds and village streets, unleashing a wave of small-scale violence with each new election cycle. Then, during the winter of 1832-33,

[14] See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South*, eds. Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004); Charity R. Carney, *Ministers and Masters: Methodism, Manhood, and Honor in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2011); Timothy J. Williams, *Intellectual Manhood: University, Self, and Society in the Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Peter S. Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

they proudly mobilized for war, preparing to fight against their own state's soldiers in order to preserve the Union.[15]

Finally, this dissertation adds to a growing conversation about the transnational context of antebellum American history. In recent years, Edward Rugemer, Timothy Roberts, Adam I.P Smith, and Caitlin Fitz have perceptively explored the relationship between Atlantic World events and American political development. They have traced the hopes and horrors released by the Haitian Revolution, the British abolition movement, and the failed upheavals of 1848. Scholars, however, have largely ignored the impact of Europe's 1830 revolutions, despite the fact that they coincided with a moment of profound political crisis in the United States. France's July Revolution and Poland's November Uprising made headlines across the country, stirring real and power anxieties and forcing Americans to grapple with the Union's fragility.[16]

From the beginning, Union men viewed the nullification crisis against the backdrop of global history. They feared nullification would unleash the social chaos of the French and Haitian Revolutions. The former had triggered a murderous Reign of Terror and engulfed all of Europe in war, while the latter had abolished slavery in Haiti and created a free black republic. Those scenes haunted white southerners' imaginations and provided chilling reference points

[15] Although this dissertation draws on Greenberg's model, it employs the term *moderate manhood* instead of *restrained manhood.* Both ideals promoted piety, morality, and restraint, but demographic and political forces in each section—particularly, the presence of slavery—shaped them in unique ways. A conservative South Carolina planter and a reform-minded Massachusetts merchant, for example, might both idealize the home and promote self-restraint, but they understood those concepts—and themselves—in different ways. Moderate men might strive to treat their slaves "humanely" or to cultivate loving companionate marriages, but they still ultimately endorsed both slavery and patriarchy.

[16] Edward Bartlett Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008); Timothy Mason Roberts, *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009) Adam I. P. Smith, *The Stormy Present: Conservatism and the Problem of Slavery in Northern Politics, 1846-1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016); Ann L. Tucker, *Newest Born of Nations: European Nationalist Movements and the Making of the Confederacy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020).

during moments of political crisis. Significantly, Charleston's French Benevolent Society—comprised mostly of Haitian refugees—overwhelmingly opposed nullification. Having escaped the island's tumultuous revolution, they hoped to preserve the political harmony of their new home. These Union men warned that nullification would release the "horrors of St. Domingo…where infancy and age; women's feebleness and man's strength, were swept away in one vast overwhelming tide of blood."[17]

Then, in 1830, a wave of liberal revolutions swept across Europe, as protestors in France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, and Poland demanded independence or constitutional reform. Like many Americans, South Carolina's Union men celebrated the uprisings and viewed them as proof that their ideals were helping liberate the world. They feared, however, that the conflicts would destabilize Europe and devolve into another "bloody and protracted war." At home and abroad, they championed "regulated liberty"—the triumph of reason over passion, law over licentiousness.[18]

These European revolutions raised the stakes of the nullification crisis. Union men saw America as a "bright example to suffering humanity"—a beacon of hope in a world ravaged by war and despotism. They imagined the "Star Spangled Banner, protecting and carrying the Cross to every portion of the globe…liberat[ing] mankind and establish[ing] the gospel of peace in every nation on the earth." Nullification, however, tested the Union's providential purpose. By

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[17] *The Debate in the South Carolina Legislature in December 1,830 on the Reports of the Committees of Both Houses in Favor of Convention* (Columbia: S J McMorris, 1831), 101; Edward Bartlett Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 41-43; Matthew J. Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 107-146; Pease and Pease, "The Economics and Politics of Charleston's Nullification Crisis," 346.

[18] For an overview of the European revolutions of 1830, see Martyn Lyons, *Post-Revolutionary Europe, 1815-1856* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) and Philip Mansel, *Paris Between Empires: Monarchy and Revolution, 1814-1852* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003).

1832, as the European revolutions faltered, Union men feared America might fail at the very moment the world needed its example the most. In their minds, the crisis in South Carolina assumed global significance, and its outcome—they feared—could determine the fate of human liberty.[19]

[19] *The Camden Journal*, 12 February 1831; *The Charleston Courier*, 9 July 1831; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 4 October 1834.

Chapter One: "Jacobins and Jacksonites": Slavery, Tariffs, and the Rise of Radicalism in South Carolina, 1822-1828

In September 1828, four thousand people gathered at Abbeville Court House in northwestern South Carolina to denounce the "tariff of abominations." For more than a year, lowcountry radicals had been threatening disunion and calling for "open resistance" to the country's escalating tariffs. Their ideas were slowly taking root across the state, and they looked to Abbeville for vindication. Earlier that summer, a meeting there resolved to "draw a wall" around South Carolina and resist northern oppression by "every means in our power." If Congress demanded tribute, they warned, they "preferred paying the price in steel." For many South Carolinians, the "Great Anti-Tariff Meeting" that September served as a bellwether of the state's political future, and they awaited its outcome with anxious uncertainty.[1]

Witnesses marveled at the "grand and imposing" spectacle, declaring it the "largest [meeting] ever held in this State." The massive crowd came from across South Carolina and Georgia and included Senator Robert Y. Hayne and Congressmen James Hamilton and George McDuffie—former nationalists who had turned dramatically toward radicalism. The Rev. William Barr opened the meeting with a fervent prayer, speaking with a "deep-toned piety" that sounded "almost…unearthly." While other ministers denounced him for "preaching political sermons," Barr viewed his presence there as a defense of civil and religious liberty. He proclaimed the tariff unjust and unconstitutional and invoked the Bible to legitimize resistance. McDuffie followed with a powerful three-hour address demonstrating the "unequal and oppressive nature" of the tariff. A local leader then offered a series of firm resolutions, and as the

[1] *The Charleston Mercury*, 3 October 1828; *Daily National Journal*, 5 August 1828; *Aurora & Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), 31 July 1828; *Augusta Chronicle* (Augusta, GA), 8 October 1828.

crowd approved them, an artillery company added a "cannon's roar" to the "loud bursts of applause."[2]

Through these resolutions, the guests reaffirmed their devotion to the Union. For fifty years, they declared, they had rejoiced in its triumphs and shared in its struggles, and they still viewed it as the "lasting security of our liberties." They understood the Constitution, however, as a narrowly-defined compact among sovereign states, and they argued that the Union could only survive if it retained this "original purity." By enacting the tariff of 1828, they insisted, Congress had gone "beyond the limits of its delegated powers" and violated the "fundamental principles of our government." In response, these South Carolinians "look[ed] to our State sovereignty for relief." They argued that the states had formed the Constitution and therefore held the power to declare federal laws null and void. If the rest of the Union upheld an unconstitutional law, a state could "renounce [its] obedience to the Constitution" and proclaim its independence. These resolutions marked a turning point in the state's political history. For the first time, a large group of South Carolinians had publicly endorsed nullification—a principle that would divide the state for the next seven years and bring the country to the brink of civil war.[3]

By the fall of 1828, a small but growing number of South Carolinians became convinced that their state was under attack—that northerners had subverted the Constitution and turned the federal government against them. In the past decade, they observed, Congress had restricted the westward expansion of slavery, extended its program of internal improvements, and passed an escalating series of tariff laws. This system of federal "oppression" coincided with a wave of insurrectionary panics, most notably the Denmark Vesey conspiracy of 1822. The anxieties these

[2] George Howe, *History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, Vol. II (Columbia: W.J. Duffie, 1883), 735-737; *The Charleston Observer*, 23 November 1833; *The Charleston Mercury*, 3 October 1828.
[3] *The Charleston Mercury*, 3 October 1828; Robert Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 94.

events unleashed helped shape the state's political culture. As news of the tariff of 1828 reached South Carolina, political leaders sought to direct and harness the "political excitement" that consumed the state. Moderates counseled patience, trusting the democratic process to resolve the crisis. They petitioned Congress for relief, boycotted northern manufactured goods, and wore homespun clothing as an act of protest.

Radicals, however, insisted these moderate measures betrayed the state's principles. They championed state sovereignty and called for "prompt and firm resistance." In December 1828, moderates defeated plans to nullify the tariff, and they worked to calm the "excitement" and turn back the tide of radicalism. Most South Carolinians maintained hope that the federal government would rescind the tariff and restore the balance of state and federal power. Radicals' ideas, however, had seeped into the state's political consciousness; they soon overshadowed other potential solutions and set the terms for the political debates of the next seven years.

By the 1810s, with the Federalist Party essentially dead, the state's Democratic-Republicans fragmented and struggled for power. After the War of 1812, Congressman John C. Calhoun and his allies embraced a "qualified nationalism," supporting federally-funded internal improvements, a national bank, and a mildly protective tariff in order to ensure the Union's economic and political security. Although these Calhounites opposed the rising tariffs of the early 1820s, they continued to champion "truly national" legislation. Senator William Smith, however, rejected this expansive vision of federal power, insisting Calhoun's policies would erode the state's liberties and devastate its economy. The two men remained in Washington for most of the 1820s, with Smith serving as a congressman and senator and Calhoun as secretary of

war and then vice president. Their allies in South Carolina, however, vied for control of the state government throughout the decade.[4]

Their ideological dispute centered on conflicting interpretations of the Constitution. Strict constructionists, including Smith, Stephen D. Miller, David R. Williams, and Thomas Cooper, believed the federal government only possessed the powers specifically enumerated in the Constitution. Citing the Tenth Amendment, they observed that "all powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution…are reserved to the States." Broad constructionists, such as Calhoun, James Hamilton, Robert Y. Hayne, and George McDuffie, countered that the Constitution empowered Congress to collect taxes to "provide for the common defense and general Welfare," and to enact "all Laws which shall be necessary and proper" to carry out its enumerated powers. They envisioned a more dynamic federal government that could ensure the Union's survival by creatively responding to new challenges.[5]

Broad constructionists controlled the state's General Assembly from 1816 until 1823. In 1820, when upcountry lawyer Pleasant May pronounced a new tariff bill unconstitutional, legislators overwhelmingly opposed him. They observed that the Constitution sanctioned "enlarged and uniform principles" and granted Congress the power to enact "all laws relating to commerce." They warned that May's principles would endanger the Union, and they vowed to uphold the "general welfare of the republic." The following year, a legislative committee insisted

[4] William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 89-133; Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 257-268. Hayne and Hamilton quoted on Freehling, 96-7. As Calhounite James Hamilton later explained, "there was something in the picture of a magnificent government, invincible in war, beneficent in peace…presiding over all, sustaining all, protecting all…[that was] well calculated to fascinate the imagination."

[5] Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 99-101.

the state faced "no danger" from Congress, and in 1822 the General Assembly elected nationalist Robert Y. Hayne to the United States Senate over William Smith.[6]

By the mid-1820s, however, many South Carolinians began reevaluating this optimistic nationalism. An economic downturn hit the state early in the decade, and cotton planters blamed their falling profits on the protective tariff. As Congress debating raising duties in 1820 and 1824, South Carolinians began viewing the tariff as a plot to impoverish the South and enrich the industrializing North. These economic tensions merged with anxieties over the state's demographic decline. Roughly 56,000 South Carolinians left the state during the 1820s, with many seeking economic opportunity in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Another 76,000 followed in the 1830s. In 1790, Charleston had been the country's fourth largest city; by 1820, it was only the sixth largest, and by mid-century it would fall to fifteenth. Sensing this decline, one scholar observes, lawmakers sought to "recreate the economic miracle of colonial South Carolina," which they associated with slavery and plantation agriculture. [7]

South Carolinians' responses to the Missouri Compromise revealed a political culture in transition. Many state leaders still championed nationalist ideals, but the debates stirred anxieties over slavery that hastened the turn toward sectionalism. In 1819, New York Congressman James Tallmadge Jr. sought to amend Missouri's statehood bill to prohibit the "further introduction of slavery" and gradually emancipate its existing slaves. The amendment passed in the House but

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[6] Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina*, 36-37; *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, Vol. I, ed. Thomas Cooper (Columbia: A. S. Johnston, 1836), 226-227; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 101.

[7] Maurie D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 8; Benjamin E. Park, *American Nationalisms: Imagining Union in the Age of Revolutions, 1783-1833* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 199. In reality, market forces rather than tariff policies contributed to this downturn. Cotton prices soared after the War of 1812, and as thousands of white settlers flooded into Alabama and Mississippi they began cultivating the crop. Cotton production increased fivefold between 1814 and 1826, causing the market price to plummet. At the same time, South Carolina's worn-out soil produced smaller yields than the new plantations in the Old Southwest. See Tinkler, *James Hamilton*, 55-56.

failed in the Senate, where southern lawmakers joined ranks to defeat it. A Congressional compromise ultimately paired the admission of slave-state Missouri with free-state Maine and excluded slavery from the remaining Louisiana Purchase territory north of 36° 30'. Many leading South Carolinians supported the compromise. Congressman Eldred Simkins pleaded for resolution, observing that the debates only intensified "bad feelings, jealousies, and [the] spirit of disunion." He urged his colleagues to accept the compromise and "insure the harmony of the country." James Hamilton agreed, and he celebrated the "country as a beautiful whole, not scarred and cut into the selfish compartments of sects and schisms."[8]

A few state leaders, however, rejected the compromise altogether. Congressman Charles Pinckney, who had signed the Constitution thirty years earlier, viewed the Missouri debate as the most series crisis since the American Revolution. If lawmakers could decide the fate of slavery in Missouri, he cried, "where will you stop?" With this precedent, Congress could reshape Missouri's government and society—giving the state a "plural executive," mandating annual judicial elections, or even abolishing marriage. These debates, he warned, would "break the Constitution" and destroy republican government. With so much at stake, he declared, "no compromise ought ever be made!" Resolution brought no relief: Pinckney warned that northerners would reopen the slavery debate in the years ahead and "decide this question as they please"—provoking a "division of this Union and a civil war."[9]

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[8] Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 39-49; William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, *Vol I: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 144-150; *Annals of Congress*, House, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 1127; John C. Calhoun to Andrew Jackson, 1 June 1820, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress; James Hamilton, *An Oration Delivered on the Fourth of July 1821 Before the Cincinnati and Revolution Societies* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1821), 19.

[9] *Annals of Congress*, House, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 1130; *Annals of Congress*, House, 16th Cong., 1st sess., 1328; Marty D. Matthews, *Forgotten Founder: The Life and Times of Charles Pinckney* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 130-135. In the Missouri debates, Pinckney and Senator William Smith began articulating a "positive good" defense of slavery. Pinckney insisted that slaves were "born to obey" and were "happier [as slaves]

In the early 1820s, a series of crises and conspiracies intensified these fears. In May 1822, several enslaved men warned their owners of an impending rebellion in Charleston. Intendant James Hamilton called out the militia to patrol the streets, and the city council convened a Court of Magistrates and Freeholders to try the suspects. They accused Denmark Vesey, a free black carpenter, of organizing a rebellion and recruiting hundreds or even thousands of followers. South Carolinians understood these local events as part of a broader revolutionary world: Vesey allegedly planned his rebellion for Bastille Day and modeled it on the Haitian Revolution. According to rumor, he planned to capture the city arsenal, burn Charleston to the ground, raid the surrounding countryside, and escape to the safety of Haiti. As the court convened, Vesey and his followers went into hiding. By August, however, officials had arrested 135 people for conspiracy and sentenced 35—including Vesey—to death.[10]

Scholars have fiercely debated the nature and extent of the conspiracy, working to untangle historical fact from the fears and fantasies that engulfed the city. Historian Michael P. Johnson argues that the "official record" reveals more about white anxiety than African-American insurgency. White officials, he contends, "expanded the scope of the alleged conspiracy" by forcing slaves and free blacks to make fraudulent confessions. While the truth remains unclear, most white South Carolinians accepted the rumors as facts, and the "evidence" the court uncovered terrified them. Anna Johnson, the daughter of a U.S. Supreme Court Justice,

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than they can possibly be if free." Smith agreed, arguing that "Christ himself gave a sanction to slavery" and that there was "no class of laboring people" in the world who were "better clothed, better fed, or are more cheerful" than southern slaves. See *Annals of Congress*, House, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 1130; *Annals of Congress*, House, 16th Cong., 1st sess., 1328; *Annals of Congress*, Senate, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 259-275.

[10] Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 207-278. The court also convicted four white men of sympathizing with and offering assistance to the African-American conspirators. See Philip F. Rubio, "'Though He Had a White Face, He was a Negro in Heart': Examining the White Men Convicted of Supporting the 1822 Denmark Vesey Slave Insurrection Conspiracy," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 113, no. 1 (January 2012), 50-67.

reported that "our city is now in the most fearful state." If the rebellion had succeeded, she wrote, "the men and Black women were to have been indiscriminately murdered----& we poor devils were to have been reserved to fill their harams." Panic spread across the lowcountry and lingered for months. In November, residents on Johns Island reported bands of "armed fugitive slaves…infesting [the] Parish"—killing cattle, robbing houses, and threatening to murder "faithful domestics." The parish militia pursued them for several days before finally "quelling the insurrectionary spirit."[11]

Hamilton blamed the Denmark Vesey conspiracy on overly-lenient masters and the subversive power of slave literacy and religion. As early as 1820, lowcountry residents had petitioned to close Charleston's black schools and churches, restrict slave manumissions, and banish free African Americans from the state. One petitioner explained that African-American literacy was "impolitick and at variance with slavery," while another denounced northern missionaries for "subverting this state" and preaching insurrection. The slave panics of 1822 seemed to confirm these fears, and lawmakers responded with sweeping new restrictions on the state's African-Americans The General Assembly levied an annual $50 tax on newly-arrived black men, banned free African Americans who left the state from returning, and declared that all free African Americans had to procure white guardians or face expulsion. In 1823, Charleston's civic and economic leaders established the South Carolina Association, an

[11] Varon, *Disunion!*, 51; Michael P. Johnson, "Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators," *William & Mary Quarterly* 58 (October 2001), 915-976; Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 207-237; Anna Johnson quoted in Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 216; Governor Thomas Bennett, Message Providing Information on a Detachment of State Militia Sent to Apprehend Fugitive Slaves, 9 December 1822, South Carolina Department of History and Archives (SCDAH); John Sarvis, Petition and Supporting Papers Asking Compensation for a Slave Executed For Attempting An Insurrection in Horry District, c. 1822, SCDAH; John B. Girardeau, Petition and Supporting Papers Asking Reimbursement for Services Rendered During a Slave Insurrection, 1823, SCDAH; Tim Lockley and David Doddington, "Maroon and Slave Communities in South Carolina Before 1865," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 113, No. 2 (April 2012), 125-145.

extralegal organization dedicated to policing the city's black population. Auxiliary societies soon formed across the lowcountry, organized by many of the same men who later championed nullification.[12]

The General Assembly also passed the Negro Seaman's Act, which detained black sailors while their ships were docked in Charleston Harbor. In doing so, lawmakers hoped to insulate South Carolina's slaves from outside "agitators." Memories of the Haitian Revolution still haunted their imaginations, and they feared that West Indian sailors would "beguile our slaves into rebellion with false hopes." Ship captains protested the law, insisting it violated the Constitution and flouted America's foreign treaties. Unsurprisingly, however, the state's courts upheld the act. In August 1823, officials arrested Henry Elkison, a free Jamaican-born British subject, who immediately requested a writ of habeas corpus. Supreme Court Justice William Johnson—a Charleston planter—denied the request on the grounds that federal courts lacked the power to release state prisoners.[13]

At the same time, Johnson issued an obiter dictum pronouncing South Carolina's law "irreconcilable" with the Constitution. The federal government, he insisted, had the "paramount and exclusive right" to regulate commerce and enter treaties. He declared the Negro Seaman's

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[12] Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 207-237; Inhabitants of Edisto, Petition Advocating Curbing Certain Rights of Free Blacks…, 1820, SCDAH; Inhabitants of Charleston, Petition Advocating A Curtailment of Certain Rights Granted to Free Blacks…, 16 October 1820, SCDAH; Alan F. January, "The South Carolina Association: An Agency for Race Control in Antebellum Charleston," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 78, no. 3 (July 1977), 191-201, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27567452. The votes, however, revealed a sectional divide between the lowcountry parishes, where slaves comprised a significant majority of the population, and the upcountry districts, which were more demographically balanced. Bills to prohibit the importation of slaves from other states, to deport all recently-arrived free African Americans, and to levy a $50 tax on all recently-arrived free African Americans were all defeated, with upcountry districts overwhelmingly opposing them.

[13] Henry William DeSaussure to Joel R. Poinsett, 6 July 1822, quoted in Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 112; Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 285; Carl Lawrence Paulus, *The Slaveholding Crisis: Fear of Insurrection and the Coming of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017), 12-20; Robert Pierce Forbes, *The Missouri Compromise and its Aftermath: Slavery and the Meaning of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 158-160.

Act a "direct attack upon the sovereignty of the United States," because it empowered the state to "throw off the federal constitutional at its will." This principle, he warned, would inevitably tear the Union apart. For Johnson, the greatest threat to the country's survival came not from northern antislavery reformers but rather from proslavery radicals. Within South Carolina, he observed, "Disunion appears to be losing its Terrors," and he feared that these radical principles would soon become "systematic Policy" in the state.[14]

Johnson's decision enraged many South Carolinians and launched a long public debate about the balance of state and federal power. A Charleston writer accused Johnson of betraying the South by adopting the "Northern feeling on the slave system." If the federal government upheld Johnson's decision, he wrote, then the "Constitution of the United States must be altered, or it must be violated." Another writer warned that Johnson's ruling would allow "the brigands of St. Domingo to come here freely and securely." In 1824, when Attorney General William Wirt declared the Negro Seaman's Act unconstitutional, lawmakers responded by denouncing the federal government. The house insisted the Negro Seaman's Act was essential to public safety, and the senate resolved that South Carolina's duty to prevent rebellion superseded "all *laws*, all *treaties*, all *constitutions*." Because the two chambers could not reconcile the language of these resolutions, the legislature never formally adopted them. Nonetheless, the Negro Seaman's Act remained in place for decades in what one historian has called the state's "first nullification."[15]

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[14] William Johnson, *The Opinion of the Hon. William Johnson, Delivered on the 7th of August, 1823* (Charleston: C. C. Sebring, 1823); Irwin F. Greenberg, "Justice William Johnson: South Carolina Unionist, 1823-1830," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 36, no. 3 (July 1969), 307-334, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27771793.

[15] Zeno and Caroliniensis, quoted in Thomas H. Cox, *Gibbons v. Ogden, Law, and Society in the Early Republic* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009); Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 287-289; Richard Campbell, "Patriotism, Poetry, and Personalities: The Politics of John L. Wilson and 'A Pasquinade of the Thirties,'" *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 115, no. 1 (January 2014), 4-34, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/24332770; Alan F. January, "The First Nullification: The Negro Seamen Acts Controversy in South Carolina, 1822-1860" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1976).

William Smith and his lieutenants, sensing the political tide turning, seized the offensive. In 1824, the state senate declared protective tariffs and federally-funded internal improvements unconstitutional. Calhounites tabled the resolutions in the house, and Charleston planter Samuel Prioleau responded with a defiant declaration of nationalism. He insisted that South Carolinians owed a "double allegiance" to the state and Union, which were "equally entitled to [their] love and reverence." The following year, however, the house passed the Smithite resolutions by a two-to-one margin. Voters elected Smithites Joseph Gist and John Wilson to Congress in 1824, and two years later the General Assembly appointed Smith to the U.S. Senate.[16]

By the mid-1820s, many South Carolinians feared they could not longer trust the federal government to safeguard slavery. In 1824, nine states—including the slave state of Delaware—endorsed resolutions calling slavery a national evil and recommending a nation-wide plan of gradual emancipation. In response, South Carolina's lawmakers declared that slavery was "inseparably connected with their social and political existence" and claimed Congress had no power to intervene. The following year, New York Senator Rufus King proposed that Congress use the revenue from federal land sales to finance emancipation, a plan Robert Hayne believed would endanger the "safety of the States…and disturb the peace and harmony of the Union." Soon after, President John Quincy Adams accepted an invitation for the United States to attend the Panama Congress, a meeting of American republics meant to foster unity and cooperation in

[16] *Niles Weekly Register*, 25 December 1824; *National Intelligencer*, 1 January 1825; Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 116-119. As William W. Freehling notes, these results were not an unambiguous endorsement of states' rights over nationalism. In the mid-1820s, the General Assembly elected nationalist Richard Manning as governor and nationalist John B. O'Neall as speaker of the house and came within two votes (83 to 81) of electing Huger to the U.S. Senate over Smith. See Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 120.

the hemisphere. The decision enraged and horrified many southerners, who feared the meeting would promote emancipation and legitimize racially-inclusive governments in Latin America.[17]

Then, in 1827, the American Colonization Society petitioned Congress for funding to support their fledgling Liberian settlement. The organization was an uneasy coalition between northern reformers (who hoped that sending freedmen to Africa would encourage voluntary emancipation) and southern slaveholders (who sought to shore up slavery by removing free African Americans from their states). Although supporters viewed colonization as a safe and conservative course, most South Carolinians saw it as a direct assault upon slavery. If Congress could "legislate in one way on the coloured population," state senators warned, "it may legislate in various other ways." Legislators argued that colonization would ignite "fires of intestine commotion on our borders" and ultimately "consume our country." In response, they championed state sovereignty and worked to restore the federal government to its "first principles."[18]

By 1827, primed by these events, South Carolinians began explicitly linking the tariff and internal improvements to their anxieties over slavery. That February, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to raise duties on imported woolen goods. The Senate was evenly divided, and Vice President John C. Calhoun cast the tie-breaking vote against it. Across South

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[17] *State Documents on Federal Relations: The States and the United States*, ed. Herman V. Ames (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1911); Jervey, *Robert Y. Hayne*, 185; Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 13-14; William J. Cooper, *The Lost Founding Father: John Quincy Adams and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017), 228-229; The other states that endorsed the Ohio resolutions were Pennsylvania, Vermont, New Jersey, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

[18] Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 253; *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, 230-243. A New Englander living in Cheraw observed his neighbors' intense anxiety, noting that the "least stir of a leaf…causes alarm." That August, rumors of a slave rebellion terrified the village, and militiamen patrolled Cheraw for weeks to maintain order. See William C. Gale to Miller and Brewster, 13 August 1827, William C. Gale Letter, SCL.

Carolina, local leaders organized anti-tariff meetings and drafted petitions denouncing the woolens bill. An upcountry militia officer, for example, feared it would "destroy our republican institutions" and return to the country to monarchy. If Congress embraced protectionism, Congressman George McDuffie warned, the Union "cannot exist twenty years." Thomas Cooper, president of South Carolina College, went even further, insisting the state would secede within a year if the government raised the tariff.[19]

In the antebellum era, many statesmen invoked disunion as a prophecy or a threat, often seeking to preserve—rather than destroy—the Union. Their prophecies worked to inspire renewed devotion to the country, while their threats used "fear as a political weapon" to force opponents to back down. During the Missouri statehood debate, for example, Charles Pinckney envisioned disunion and civil war in order to silence anti-slavery activism and avoid compromising constitutional principle. By 1827, however, a few South Carolinians began questioning the Union's utility and imagining disunion as a necessary—and beneficial—alternative. [20]

At an anti-tariff meeting in Columbia that July, Thomas Cooper cast the tariff debate in stark terms. Northern Congressmen, he claimed, were forging a permanent system of economic oppression, transforming the southern states into "colonies and tributaries." While southerners wasted time signing petitions and drafting resolutions, the chains of tyranny were tightening around them. Before long, he declared, the crisis would compel southerners to "calculate the value of our union"—to ask themselves if it was "worth our while to continue this union of states, where [northerners] demand to be our masters." Faced with the choice between

[19] *South Carolina State* Gazette *and Columbia Advertiser*, 11 August 1827; *Columbia Telescope and South Carolina State Journal*, 14 September 1827; Thomas Cooper to Martin Van Buren, 31 July 1827, Martin Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress.
[20] Varon, *Disunion!*, 7-8

submission and secession, Cooper urged South Carolinians to "hold fast to *principle*." If they blindly placed their faith in Congress, then they "trust to a broken anchor, and all that is worth preserving will be irretrievably lost."[21]

That summer, Charleston lawyer Robert J. Turnbull published *The Crisis*, a series of essays that one Nullifier later called the "first bugle-call of the South to rally." Turnbull occupied the vanguard of the state's militant proslavery defense. He served on the court that convicted the Denmark Vesey conspirators, helped found the South Carolina Association, helped write the Negro Seaman's Act, and published articles denouncing Johnson's ruling in the Elkison case. In *The Crisis*, he warned that tariffs, internal improvements, and colonization were part of a larger plot to "trample to dust the Federal Constitution, and with it the hopes and safety of the South." Like Cooper, Turnbull believed petitions and protests were not enough: lawmakers needed to "*embody* that [public] feeling—not simply by resolving, but BY ACTING." He saw "no hope for our domestic safety, or for our agricultural interests, but in RESISTANCE"—and if that resistance led to disunion, then "let Disunion come."[22]

Although most South Carolinians rejected these radicals' solutions, they slowly began to accept the logic of their arguments. In May 1828, Congress passed the "tariff of abominations," dramatically increasing the duties on imported manufactured goods. Voting broadly broke down along sectional lines, with 75 percent of free-state Congressmen supporting the tariff and 79 percent of slave-state Congressmen opposing it. When news reached South Carolina, the state erupted in protest. Ship captains in Charleston Harbor lowered their flags to half-mast, and a

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[21] Thomas Cooper, "'Value of the Union' Speech, July 2, 1827," *The Nullification Era: A Documentary Record*, ed. William W. Freehling (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), 20-25.
[22] James Hamilton, *An Eulogium of the Public Services and Character of Robert J. Turnbull* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1834), 15; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 126; Robert J. Turnbull, *The Crisis, or Essays on the Usurpations of the Federal Government* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1827), 14, 147-152.

Columbia mob burned Congressmen Henry Clay and Daniel Webster in effigy. Governor John Taylor declared the tariff an act of tyranny, and Calhoun predicted it would lead to despotism or disunion. Public meetings across the state condemned the new law and vowed to resist it.[23]

The tariff stunned South Carolina's Congressmen and helped erode the state's old political factions, as Smithites met with Calhounites to discuss mounting a formal protest. At the meeting, Hamilton vented his anger, predicting the new law would lead to secession and civil war. If South Carolina took the first step, he insisted, the other southern states would rally to their cause. Virginia and North Carolina, after all, would never allow federal forces to march through their territory. Even if an invading army reached the Palmetto State, Hamilton expected its "gallant and free" citizens to "meet our invaders like men" and reenact the glorious victories of the American Revolution. Drayton, a fellow Calhounite, sought to calm his former law student, reminding Hamilton of the Union's "immense importance." Although Drayton considered the tariff oppressive and unconstitutional, he viewed disunion as a "more serious calamity." At his urging, the men agreed to return home and discourage radicalism in their state.[24]

True to his word, Hamilton maintained a "sullen silence" through most of the summer. Nonetheless, he did little to stifle popular unrest. In Walterborough on June 12, state legislator Robert Barnwell Smith called for "open resistance to the laws of the union." South Carolinians, he observed, had spent four years pleading and petitioning for relief. They had "done by words all that words can do"—yet tariff duties had only increased. Smith thundered that liberty was

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[23] *Columbia Telescope and South Carolina State Journal*, 14 June 1828, 12 July 1828, and 6 September 1828; William K. Bolt, *Tariff Wars and the Politics of Jacksonian America* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2017), 93. Figures calculated from "House Vote #81 in 1828 (20th Congress)," on http://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/20-1/h81.

[24] Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina*, 86-88; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 22 November 1828.

more sacred than Union, and he urged lawmakers to "follow up your principles wherever they may lead, to their very last consequence." Thomas Cooper agreed, hoping that southern Congressmen would resign en masse and organize "a government for themselves." Henry L. Pinckney, editor of *The Charleston Mercury*, declared that "this Tariff and this Union cannot exist together" and called upon South Carolinians to resist "now—OPENLY—unto BLOOD if necessary."[25]

These radicals appealed to southern honor in order to forge a political consensus. A Columbia writer, for example, insisted that anyone who opposed secession was a "base coward" and a "traitor to the SOUTH." A Georgetown editor agreed, writing that moderates had "no claim to the name of Republican, still less to that of MAN." In Edgefield, a man wearing homespun clothing (a symbol of resistance) confronted Dr. Abner Landrum for refusing to endorse disunion. Shaking his finger in Landrum's face, the man warned him to "beware what he said or did." He urged the doctor to begin "speak[ing] the language of the South"—or face

[25] *Columbia Telescope and South Carolina State Journal*, 28 June 1828; William C. Davis, *Rhett: The Turbulent Life and Times of a Fire-Eater* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 38-42; *Indiana Journal*, 25 September 1828; *Niles Weekly Register*, 20 September 1828. Once again, these radicals framed the tariff as a threat to slavery and public safety. If Congress could impose a protective tariff, one writer warned, it could bring the "soil and territory of all the states under federal jurisdiction" and provoke the "Missouri question" of slavery's expansion. Thomas Cooper agreed that the "Tariff-men rely on exciting a revolt among our slaves." When Boston residents held an anti-slavery meeting that summer, Pinckney raged that northerners—no longer content with "tax[ing] our property" through tariffs—were now waging war "against the property itself." See Thomas Cooper to David J. McCord, 16 July 1828, Thomas Cooper Papers, SCL; *The Charleston Mercury*, 14 July 1828, 14 August 1828, and 22 August 1828. At the same time, some South Carolinians began calling for the creation of southern institutions to maintain political and social orthodoxy. In August 1828, Pinckney supported plans for a school in upcountry South Carolina, arguing that educating "Southern children in a Southern State" would protect them from the "pernicious influence of Northern bigotry, fanaticism, and prejudice." He feared that children educated in northern schools would "contract prejudices hostile to the policy and institutions of the South." See *The Charleston Mercury*, 11 and 12 August 1828.

violent retribution. Edgefield radicals later assaulted a visiting Georgia editor, threatening to destroy his printing press unless he affirmed their principles.[26]

Moderates denounced this violent rhetoric and worked to calm the political excitement. A northern-born doctor, comparing the crisis to the French Revolution, dismissed his neighbors as "hotheaded Jacksonites and Jacobins…panting for a field [of battle]." He feared that South Carolinians, obsessed with their honor, "would not hesitate to open the floodgates of civil war and plunge our land in blood." State Senator David R. Williams agreed, warning that young men would "risk their lives, if not their necks, in a military career, if only for the fun of it." Former governor Richard Manning believed South Carolinians had "every thing to fear from rashness." If they took up arms against the federal government, he explained, the struggle would lead either to chaos or political consolidation—destroying the Constitution and the balance of state and federal power. Manning trusted the "good sense of the people" and hoped that all "discreet, sober minded, or aged" men would work toward compromise.[27]

Despite their shared convictions, moderates disagreed over how best to meet the crisis. A few—concentrated in Charleston—continued to champion protectionism. An essayist calling himself *Hamilton*, for example, insisted the federal government had the power to regulate foreign trade, and he denounced the state's radicals for "rush[ing] into mortal strife." Another writer believed the new tariff would strengthen the country's economy, enriching northern manufacturers and expanding the market for southern cotton. These economic ties, he declared,

[26] *Winyaw Intelligencer*, 9 October 1828 and *Columbia Telescope*, 11 September 1828, both quoted in Erika J. Pribanic-Smith, "Conflict in South Carolina's Partisan Press of 1829, *American Journalism*, *30, no. 3, 385; The Daily National Intelligencer*, 21 August 1828.

[27] Daniel Havens Skinner to Isaac Skinner, 2 October 1828, Daniel Havens Skinner Letter, SCL; Richard I. Manning to [illegible] Cox, 1828, Papers of the Williams, Chesnut, and Manning Families, SCL; *The Camden Journal*, 26 July 1828; *The Mountaineer*, 19 July 1828 and 7 February 1829; *The Charleston Courier*, 19 July 1828 and 27 August 1828; *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser*, 4 October 1828.

would solidify the Union, as "fair and honorable commerce" promoted "candor and justice" between North and South.[28]

Most moderates, however, adamantly opposed the "tariff of abominations." Local leaders drafted petitions, published articles, and hosted anti-tariff meetings. They organized boycotts of northern goods and encouraged South Carolinians to build their own factories. They worked to calm the state's political excitement, assuring voters that Congress would lower the tariff during its next session. Greenville editor Obadiah Wells urged readers to "suffer while evils are sufferable" rather than rush into civil war. If the state tried to secede, he warned, the upcountry districts would "separate from South Carolina" and resume their place in the Union. One lowcountry meeting declared the Union the "best safe-guard of our liberties," and another celebrated the country's "Great Experiment in Government." They denounced "all hasty measures of violence" and pleaded with voters to pursue every peaceable avenue of redress.[29]

The new tariff realigned the state's political factions. Many Calhounites, who had once supported economic nationalism, now sought to out-flank their opponents as the true defenders of state rights. In September 1828, for example, a friend warned Senator Stephen D. Miller that Calhounites were trying to "fight you with your own weapons" by "bring[ing] your attachment to State Rights into dispute." Calhounites, he explained, hoped to present themselves as the "only true Radicals in South Carolina." This political climate encouraged radicalism, and the writer

[28] *The Charleston Courier*, 3 January 1828 through 12 February 1828 and 10 June 1828 through 8 July 1828; Erika Jean Pribanic-Smith, "Sowing the Seeds of Disunion: South Carolina's Partisan Newspapers and the Nullification Crisis, 1828-1833" (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 2010), 31.
[29] *The Charleston Mercury*, 11 August 1828; *The Greenville Republican*, 19 July 1828; *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser*, 4 October 1828; *Niles Weekly Register*, 20 September 1828.

warned Miller that a "fit of extreme moderation…would probably prove fatal" in the upcoming election.[30]

Ironically, although Smithites had championed strict construction for more than a decade, some now condemned the state's radical course. State Senator David R. Williams thought the tariff was unconstitutional, but he insisted the "majority ought to rule…[and] the minority [ought] to obey." If South Carolinians defied the tariff, he warned, they would provoke a war they could never win. They were hopelessly outnumbered, and each of their soldiers would have to "shoot down twenty-three Kentuckians and Yankees" just to even the balance. Another Smithite accused him of betraying his principles, but Williams declared that all "influential" men had a duty to calm political passions and save the state from ruin.[31]

Undaunted, radicals began publicly endorsing nullification in September 1828. Abbeville's "Great Anti-Tariff Meeting" declared that states could judge federal laws unconditional and refuse to enforce them. In Walterborough that October, James Hamilton reaffirmed these principles and looked to history to legitimize their resistance. Thirty years earlier, he observed, Federalists had passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, restricting freedom of the press and empowering the president to imprison foreign residents. In response, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison drafted resolutions declaring the laws unconstitutional. They insisted the states had the power—and the duty—to "interpose, for arresting the progress of the evil." In an early draft, Jefferson described "nullification" as the "rightful remedy," and by reviving the phrase, Hamilton helped give a name to his political movement.[32]

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[30] Thomas Hanson to Stephen D. Miller, 6 September 1828, Stephen Decatur Miller Papers, South Carolina Historical Society (SCHS).
[31] Thomas Hanson to Stephen D. Miller, 6 September 1828, Stephen Decatur Miller Papers, SCHS; *The Charleston Mercury*, 27 August 1828 and 28 August 1828.
[32] *Augusta Chronicle*, 8 October 1828; Robert Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 96.

Hamilton helped mobilize the state behind presidential candidate Andrew Jackson. In 1824, Jackson defeated John Quincy Adams in the popular vote and won a plurality of electoral votes. Because no candidate secured an Electoral College majority, the election went to the House of Representatives, where Speaker Henry Clay helped orchestrate Adams' victory. Adams, in turn, appointed Clay Secretary of State, the traditional stepping stone to the presidency. Jackson denounced the "corrupt bargain," accusing his rivals of subverting the will of the people. His followers, looking ahead to 1828, built political networks in every state, and New York Senator Martin Van Buren worked to weave them together. Van Buren hoped to unite the "planters of the South and the plain Republicans of the North," forming a national coalition that could defeat John Quincy Adams and preserve the Union.[33]

The president enjoyed some support in South Carolina, particularly among the state's newspaper editors. *The Charleston Courier*, the Charleston *City Gazette*, *The Edgefield Hive*, *The Pendleton Messenger*, and the *Greenville Republican* all endorsed Adams. As one writer observed, Adams' followers were "numerous enough in our Cities and Towns to make a great noise." Most South Carolinians, however, sided with Jackson, and Calhoun insisted that only two percent of voters remained loyal to the president. The state's Jacksonians denounced the administration as corrupt and illegitimate, insisting Adams had inflamed sectional tensions and

[33] Martin Van Buren to Thomas Ritchie, 13 January 1827, The Papers of Martin Van Buren, available from http://www.vanburenpapers.org; Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina*, 70-77; Donald B. Cole, *Martin Van Buren and the American Political System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 153-154. Van Buren hoped to revive the two party system that had collapsed after the War of 1812. "Party attachment in former times," he explained, "furnished a complete antidote for sectional prejudice." In its absence, however, northern politicians had begun "clamour[ing] ag[ains]t Southern Influence and African Slavery." By creating cross-sectional partisan coalitions, Van Buren hoped to mitigate the "Geographical divisions…between free & slave holding states." In December 1826, Calhoun and Van Buren agreed to join forces to secure Jackson's election. Hamilton became a leading figure in Congress, helping elect a Jacksonian Speaker of the House and introducing legislation meant to galvanize Jacksonian congressmen—including a proposal that Congress commission a painting celebrating General Andrew Jackson's victory at the Battle of New Orleans.

exposed the country to moral decay. Columbia editor David Sims, for example, declared that Adams' sectional policies "threatened to unfurl the banner of DISUNION." Sims saw Jackson as the country's political savior, destined to restore harmony to the republic. Senator Robert Hayne agreed, writing that Jackson's election was the "cause certainly of the whole country.[34]

One observer claimed that the tariff issue dominated the election of 1828, pitting the state's "moderate men against the *hot* men." In most districts, however, the breakdown of old political factions precluded a clear referendum. In Charleston, for example, voters selected from among the People's Union ticket, the Jackson ticket, the Anti-Tariff and Union ticket, and the Andrew Jackson and State Rights ticket. Several candidates appeared on multiple ballots, blurring the distinctions between them, and moderate Congressman William Drayton ran unopposed in his bid for reelection. The conflict, furthermore, failed to increase voter turnout in the state's largest and most politically-vibrant city. For the past decade, municipal elections had drawn about 2072 voters each year. In 1828, amid the "greatest struggle we have had in this State for many years," that number dropped slightly to 2067—roughly 66 percent of the city's eligible voters. Election results throughout the state confirmed these trends, showing a lack of clear partisan alignment or mobilization. In most districts, political leaders were reluctant to embrace open partisanship, and elections still hinged on candidates' personalities and networks of local influence.[35]

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[34] Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (Hill and Wang: New York, 1990); *The Charleston Mercury*, 3 September 1828, 15 September 1828 and 24 September 1828; *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser*, 27 October 1827 and 19 July 1828; *The Columbia Telescope*, 5 June 1829; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 20 September 1828; Robert Y. Hayne to Andrew Jackson, 5 June 1827 and 3 September 1828, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress (LOC); Jaspar Adams to Sewall Harding, 8 November 1828, Jaspar Adams Papers, SCL.

[35] *The Charleston Mercury*, 10 October 1828, 15 October 1828, and 16 October 1828; *The Camden Journal*, 18 October 1828; David J. McCord to Philip H. Nicklin, 16 October 1828, David J. McCord Letter, New York Historical Society. For South Carolinians' reluctance to embrace partisanship, see Thomas Grimké to Alfred Huger, Grimké Family Papers, College of Charleston (CC); Job Johnston to Stephen D. Miller, 20 August 1828, Stephen D. Miller

Nationwide, Jackson swept to victory, securing 56 percent of the popular vote and 68 percent of the Electoral College. South Carolina's eleven presidential electors—chosen by the legislature—voted unanimously for Jackson. The state election results, however, were more ambiguous. When the General Assembly convened in November 1828, Pinckney confessed that he could only "conjecture the course" it would pursue, and Beaufort legislator William Elliott agreed that "everything is in uncertainty." Most lawmakers opposed the tariff, but they disagreed over how to respond to it. Moderates planned to draft resolutions and petition Congress for relief, while radicals hoped to nullify the tariff altogether. Even men who supported nullification, however, disagreed over its very meaning: some saw it as a revolutionary defense of state rights; others, as a conservative means of preserving their freedom within the Union.[36]

Calhoun, still serving as Adams' vice president, assured northern allies that South Carolinians remained "devotedly attached to the Union." That fall, he drafted an anonymous essay declaring nullification a peaceful and constitutional remedy. This "Exposition" sought to temper the state's extremists while providing a clear legal mechanism for resistance. South Carolina's most radical leaders believed the legislature should immediately nullify the tariff. Calhoun countered that nullification was an expression of sovereignty and therefore required a state convention. He urged lawmakers to give Jackson time to lower the tariff, trusting the president to restore the "pure principles of our government." Nonetheless, Calhoun remained resolute. If Congress refused to back down, he wrote, the state had a "sacred duty…to herself—

Papers, SCHS. For the power of deferential politics, see William D. Martin to Lewis Ayer, 5 October 1826, Lewis Ayer Papers, SCL.

[36] *The Charleston Mercury*, 2 December 1828; Elliott to Anne Elliott, 29 November 1828, 6 December 1828, and 14 December 1828, Elliott and Gonzales Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC Chapel Hill (SHC).

to the Union—to the present, and to future generations—and to the cause of liberty over the world" to call a convention and nullify the tariff.[37]

The General Assembly published five thousand copies of the "Exposition" to distribute throughout the state. As a compromise measure, Edgefield legislator Andrew P. Butler called for a state convention to meet in December 1829—giving Congress time to rescind the tariff while holding out the threat of nullification. The house, however, rejected the resolution by a vote of 40 to 81, and by mid-December it was clear that "Nothing violent…will be done on the tariff." The General Assembly lodged another protest against the "oppressive" law but took no further action against it. As one writer explained, the legislative debate demonstrated a "strong attachment" to the Union and an "unyielding resolution to protect, to the utmost, the constitution of the United States."[38]

Nonetheless, the emerging pro-nullification party was stronger than it appeared. William Elliott, a moderate politician, believed that caution rather than conviction had stayed the Assembly's hand. If lawmakers were "sure of the cooperation of the Southern States," he wrote, they would "proceed to a direct defiance of the Genl Government" and perhaps even risk secession. Without that assurance, however, they "hesitate to go to extremes." Although the convention resolution failed 2-to-1, radicals elected many of their candidates to state office. As

[37] John C. Calhoun, "Rough Draft of What is Called the South Carolina Exposition," *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun*, ed. Ross M. Lence (Liberty Fund: Indianapolis, 1992), 311-365.

[38] Tinkler, 100; *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser*, 6 December 1828. The strongest support for calling a convention came from Butler's own Edgefield District and from coastal St. Bartholomew's Parish, home of Robert Barnwell Smith. All six of Edgefield's representatives and all four of St. Bartholomew's voted in favor of the convention. The General Assembly's protest underscored the connection between slavery and resistance to the tariff. Legislators declared, because of the state's "climate, situation, and peculiar institutions," it was "wholly dependent upon agriculture and commerce, not only for her prosperity, but for her very existence as a state." The "products of her soil" were "among the very few that can be cultivated with any profit by slave labor." If the state lost its foreign commerce, they declared, its economy would collapse and whites would abandon the state. The "whole frame and constitution of her civil polity [would] be impaired and deranged, if not dissolved entirely." See *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser,* 27 December 1828.

Elliott explained, a "private cabal" had "arranged before hand all the play of the machinery" of government. They elected William Harper speaker of the house, Stephen D. Miller governor, and Robert Y. Hayne U.S. Senator—all fiercely committed to nullification.[39]

This political maneuvering underscored the realignment of the state's political factions. Earlier in the decade, Miller had been a Smithite radical, while Hayne had been a Calhounite nationalist; now, they were united in their support for nullification. That August, an anti-tariff meeting in Edgefield had nominated Hamilton for governor, but he had declined the call. In McDuffie's words, Hamilton refused to let his own "personal advancement" stand in the way of "cordial cooperation of the [Calhounite and Smithite] parties." Partisanship, he insisted, should not exist in "such a crisis…when every thing dear to the state is at hazard."[40]

A Columbia editor captured the state's mood as the General Assembly adjourned that December. Legislators, he observed, had worked to "vindicate the rights" of their constituents without jeopardizing the Union's survival. They viewed the tariff as "unconstitutional, unequal, [and] oppressive" but maintained hope that the new administration would secure its repeal. He insisted that South Carolinians preferred peaceful protest and would "suffer somewhat longer, rather than interrupt the success of our grand political experiment." He warned, however, that their patience was wearing thin. If the federal government failed to redress their grievances, they would employ "more decisive" means to secure their trampled liberties.[41]

Moderate lawmakers had temporarily triumphed, committing the state to peaceful petition rather than nullification. The session's speeches and protests, however, revealed that the "tariff of abominations" had irrevocably shifted the political debate. In 1820, the General

[39] William Elliott to Anne Elliott, 24 November 1828, quoted in Tinkler, 99
[40] George McDuffie to Unknown, 9 September 1828, George McDuffie Papers, SCL.
[41] *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser*, 27 December 1828.

Assembly overwhelmingly refused to call a tariff bill unconstitutional, and it affirmed Congress's power to pass "all laws relating to commerce." Four years later, the state senate tabled resolutions declaring internal improvements and protective tariffs unconstitutional. By 1828, however, those sentiments had become widespread, even among moderate South Carolinians. Few accepted Thomas Cooper's call to "calculate the value of the Union," but radical conceptions of state rights had pervaded political discourse. The General Assembly debate centered not on whether the tariff was unconstitutional, but rather on how the state should resist it. That question, however, had already begun to divide South Carolinians in new and unexpected ways, realigning the state's political factions. As radicals regrouped and looked ahead to 1830, they began piecing together a political organization that could carry them to power and perhaps unify the state behind their principles.

Chapter Two: "Party of Principle": Partisanship and Political Realignment in the Election of 1830

In July 1830, Charleston's civic leaders hosted a grand public dinner to honor Congressman William Drayton and Senator Robert Y. Hayne. At least 600 people attended, and Nullifiers carefully choreographed the event to demonstrate their party's power. On a pillar behind the speakers' table, they placed a large eagle with wings outspread, clutching a banner that proclaimed "STATE RIGHTS." Portraits of national figures like George Washington and Andrew Jackson hung alongside those of the state's Revolutionary heroes. A ten-foot-tall transparency hovered above the crowd, depicting a woman—*Liberty*—surrounded by storm clouds and resting on the South Carolina state seal, whose Latin motto read, "*Prepared in Mind and Resources*."[1]

The official toasts to George Washington, the Union, and the Constitution affirmed the crowd's national devotion. The volunteer toasts that followed, however, struck a more radical tone. One guest declared that the "crisis has arrived"—that South Carolina needed the "arms as well as [the] voices" of its citizens. A local doctor argued that disunion was "*our only preservation*," and a city marshal proclaimed the day South Carolina's "second declaration of Independence." If the southern states could not secure their rights within the Union, one planter agreed, they should establish a "Republic South of the Potomac." The crowd greeted these toasts with "deafening and repeated plaudits," especially "those of the most decided State Rights character."[2]

[1] *Proceedings of the State Rights Celebration at Charleston, S.C., July 1, 1830* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1830), 1-3.
[2] *Proceedings of the State Rights Celebration*, 51-56.

When Hayne finally rose to speak, he connected the state's struggle to the nation's Revolutionary past. He insisted that South Carolina was fighting for constitutional liberty—the same principle "for which our fathers fought and bled, and conquered." He argued that the Constitution was a compact among "independent sovereignties," and that states had the power to "interpose" to protect their citizens from oppressive laws. Although he revered the Union, he insisted it could only survive as long as it remained true to the Constitution. Hayne was determined to "stand or fall with *Carolina*," and he believed state unity would show their northern oppressors that they would forcefully defend their freedom.[3]

A few guests, however, pushed back against these sentiments. Planter Henry DeSaussure toasted the United States as "One and inseparable" and called disunion "their only *irreparable evil*." State legislator Hugh S. Legaré declared that, with Andrew Jackson in power, they had "*no right* to despair of the Republic." Another guest called the Union an "invaluable legacy from our ancestors" and prayed that it would endure forever. In his own speech, Congressman William Drayton refused to endorse nullification, insisting it would violate his conscience and his "duty to God." As long as South Carolina remained in the Union, he explained, the state had to obey the nation's laws. He urged the crowd to work within the political system, publishing articles and petitioning Congress in order to reshape public opinion. Ultimately, he declared, he would rather endure the tariff's burdens than witness the Union's destruction, and he delivered a lyrical tribute to the country's power and permanence. He prayed that "our star-spangled banner, so often triumphantly unfurled upon the ocean and the land, [would] ever wave, with undiminished lustre, over free, sovereign, and *United* States."[4]

[3] *Proceedings of the State Rights Celebration*, 10-22.
[4] *Proceedings of the State Rights Celebration*, 5-8, 49-50.

Although they both opposed the tariff, Hayne and Drayton emphasized different values and described conflicting political ideals. Hayne underscored state sovereignty and insisted the Union only had value if it preserved constitutional freedom. This, for Hayne, was the greatest legacy of the American Revolution—the ideal for which their fathers had fought and died. He avoided the word "nullification," instead urging the state to maintain its rights and protect its citizens. Drayton shared many of these convictions, but he prioritized them differently. He emphasized obedience to the law and trusted rational debate to dispel political radicalism. He explicitly denounced nullification and warned that it would provoke disunion and civil war.[5]

Organizers planned the dinner to showcase the state's unity and power; instead, it revealed its deepening divisions. By 1830, two political parties had begun to coalesce in South Carolina. The State Rights Party—the Nullifiers—more readily embraced partisanship, organizing dinners and rallies throughout the state and using the press to shape public opinion. Nullification was an untested idea, and party leaders needed to legitimize it and mobilize support. To that end, they evoked the country's history, debated constitutional intent, and kept voters' attention fixed on the tyranny of the tariff. Their opponents, who coalesced as the Union Party, were slower to organize and often distrusted and denounced partisanship. They equated Nullifiers' local meetings with the Jacobin clubs of the French Revolution and warned that nullification would destabilize the Union. They appealed to South Carolina's anti-party tradition and struggled to restore harmony to their divided state. As one editor explained, quoting the Declaration of Independence, they preferred to "suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing" the Union they had created.[6]

[5] *Proceedings of the State Rights Celebration*, 5-8.
[6] *The Mountaineer*, 7 February 1829.

This process of political alignment, however, remained unfinished in 1830. Most of the men who attended the Charleston dinner that July ultimately joined the State Rights Party and supported nullification. Nonetheless, they greeted Drayton—one of the state's most prominent Union men—with "long and deafening applause" and celebrated his chivalry, honor, and independence. They praised his decision to obey the "dictates of his conscience," and that October they endorsed his reelection for Congress. The election of 1830 thus represented a moment of transition, in which deference and personal politics vied with partisanship to shape voters' actions—and the destiny of the state.

The political storm briefly subsided in early 1829, as South Carolinians looked to President Andrew Jackson and Congress to lower the tariff. One witness reported that "Tariff fever has subsided," and even James Hamilton confessed that the "mass of the people" viewed the conflict with indifference. Hamilton worked to galvanize support for nullification, and he asked Charleston editor Henry Pinckney to "keep up the Fire on the tariff." Columbia jurist David J. McCord agreed that "[w]e must be doing something." Because lawmakers served for two years, the General Assembly was unlikely to call a state convention until at least 1830. In the meantime, McCord hoped to send delegates to a national anti-tariff meeting in Philadelphia that September, planning to "unite the people of this State" and "get some concert with the other States!"[7]

[7] Unknown to Unknown, 14 December 1829, Townes Family Papers, SCL; James Hamilton to John C Calhoun, 10 May 1829, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun: Volume 10: 1825-1829,* ed. Clyde N. Wilson (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977). Because of the structure of the antebellum election cycle, this was the second session of the 20th Congress, which had been elected in 1826. The full 21st Congress, elected in 1828, would not convene until December 1829.

Radical statesmen used racial and gendered appeals to marshal support. Congressman Warren R. Davis, for example, insisted it was unmanly to rely on Congress to lower the tariff. No man, he explained, had "Ever yet obtained justice by whining and whimpering like a great miss from a boarding school…*you cannot respect a thing that creeps and licks the dust*!!!" Instead, he urged South Carolinians to take decisive action against tyranny. If they failed to act, a Columbia editor warned, northern Congressmen would soon strike against slavery itself. Manufacturers, he explained, planned to "revive the excitement of the Missouri question"—restricting slavery's expansion and inciting the "savage, St. Domingo spirit" among their slaves. Governor Stephen Miller celebrated the "peculiar institution" and declared that, if Congress refused to back down, the "Union cannot and ought not to survive."[8]

In Charleston's 1829 mayoral election, radical editor Henry Pinckney defeated moderate jurist Thomas Grimké. Although radicals cheered the results, the contest was not a clear referendum on nullification. Grimké was a deeply principled politician often out-of-step with his own state. He promoted pacifism, temperance, Sabbatarianism, and educational reform. He walked the streets of Charleston in tattered clothing, explaining that "every dollar saved in this way is an additional sum for the poor." In a public letter released shortly before the election, Grimké championed a "vigorous" national government, defended protective tariffs, and expressed qualified support for colonization. His sisters, Sarah and Angelina, would soon become leaders in the national abolition and women's rights movements. Thomas Grimké viewed colonization as a moderate alternative, hoping it would ameliorate African-Americans' lives and de-escalate the divisive debate over slavery. During the campaign, he praised the

[8] Warren R. Davis, quoted in Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 176; *The Columbia Telescope,* 2 January 1829; 11 September 1829; *The Columbia Telescope*, 9 October 1829; *The Winyaw Intelligencer*, 5 August 1829.

American Colonization Society's "philanthropy" and confessed that, if he lived outside the South, he would "take an active part in promoting [its] objects."[9]

Two years earlier, when radical lawmakers declared the Union a compact among sovereign states, Grimké responded with a sweeping vision of the nation's history and purpose. He insisted that the American *people*—not the states—had ratified the Constitution, and that the Union was therefore "one Nation." Its survival, he proclaimed, was indispensable to the freedom, peace, and prosperity of its citizens. Grimké refused to compromise these beliefs, even if they cost him the election. He decried partisanship and insisted that the "only party I shall ever belong to [is] the Party of Principle, the Party of pure, unenlightened, independent Patriotism, the Party of my Country."[10]

Lowcountry radicals condemned Grimké as an "enemy within our gates," warning voters that he would betray the city and state. As one editor explained, Grimké had denied the state's sovereignty, defended the "omnipotence of Congress," and encouraged the "murderous schemes of the Colonization Society." Even some supporters expressed reservations, and one writer feared that voters' hostility to temperance and colonization would doom his campaign. On election day, Pinckney won a comfortable victory, receiving 560 votes to Grimké's 487. Although turnout increased 12 percent over the 1827 election, the results signaled the instability of the political alliances. Charleston's large Irish community turned against Grimké after he denounced grog shops and compared the Irish independence movement to a slave uprising. William Blain, editor of the city's influential *Irishman* newspaper, opposed nullification and

[9] Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 180; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 19 September 1829.
[10] *Speech of Thomas Smith Grimké, Delivered in the Senate of South Carolina in December 1828* (Charleston: W. Riley, 1829); *Daily National Intelligencer*, 16 September 1829.

decried Pinckney's principles. Nonetheless, he threw his weight behind Pinckney and helped ensure his election.[11]

Even that year's General Assembly session failed to create clear partisan divisions. The new Congress would convene in December 1829, and most South Carolinians were willing to bide their time until then. State lawmakers largely avoided divisive debates, and a Greenville editor confessed that they accomplished "very little business of importance." With native sons Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun serving as president and vice president, many South Carolinians hoped the federal government would redress their grievances. Jackson, however, hoped to chart a middle course between free trade and protectionism. Although he called for a "modification" of the tariff, he offered "steady support" to the "encouragement of domestic manufacturers." He selected Pennsylvania jurist Henry Baldwin—a staunch protectionist—as Secretary of the Treasury, but Calhoun ultimately blocked the nomination. Undaunted, Jackson successfully placed Baldwin on the Supreme Court in November 1829. Only two senators voted against his confirmation: South Carolinians Robert Hayne and William Smith.[12]

In early 1830, a congressional debate over public land sales ignited a dramatic rhetorical battle over nullification and the nature of the Union. On December 29, 1829, Connecticut Senator Samuel Foot proposed limiting the sale of public land in order to slow the pace of

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[11] *Daily National Intelligencer*, 16 September 1829; James H. Smith to Frederick Fraser, 7 September 1829, Fraser Family Papers, SCHS; *The Charleston Mercury*, 4 September 1827. In 1827, 936 men voted in the city's election: 655 (70%) for John Gadsden and 281 (30%) for N.G. Cleary. Two years later, 1047 voted: 560 (53%) for Henry L. Pinckney and 487 (47%) for Thomas Grimké.

[12] *The Mountaineer*, 19 December 1829 and 26 December 1829; Andrew Jackson, "December 8, 1829: First Annual Message to Congress," Presidential Speeches: Andrew Jackson Presidency, available from http://www.millercenter.org; William K. Bolt, *Tariff Wars and the Politics of Jacksonian America* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2017), 101. Jackson was born in the Waxhaws region on the border of North and South Carolina. Although scholars dispute his precise birthplace, Jackson believed he was born in South Carolina. See Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and The Course of American Empire, 1767-1821* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

western settlement. When western senators condemned Foot's resolution, Robert Hayne seized the chance to unite the South and West against the Northeast. He entered the debate on January 19, insisting that Foot's proposal would erode the "independence of the States" and "sap the very foundations of the Government itself." Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster responded the next day, accusing Hayne of subverting the Constitution." Webster shifted the debate from land sales to the fate of the Union and delivered a lyrical defense of the Union. He hoped to "strengthen the ties that hold us together" instead of watching America's "fraternal stripes…severed asunder" and its "happy constellation…broken up, and sink[ing], star after star, into obscurity and night!"[13]

Hayne, forced onto the defensive, responded with a forceful address on nullification, state sovereignty, and constitutional construction. He argued that Webster's ideology inverted the Constitution: establishing injustice, ensuring "domestic *discord*," and denying the blessings of liberty. When Webster indirectly criticized slavery, Hayne accused him of "making war" upon South Carolina and seeking to "overthrow her principles and her institutions." If Webster provoked the state, Hayne warned, "he shall have war." The South Carolina senator vowed to meet him at the threshold and "struggle, while I have life, for our altars and our firesides."[14]

Webster's famous "second reply to Hayne" became a touchstone of Unionist rhetoric for the next thirty years, quoted endlessly by statesmen and school children alike. He passionately refuted nullification and delivered a soaring tribute to the Union. While Hayne viewed the

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[13] John R. Van Atta, *Securing the West: Politics, Public Lands, and the Fate of the Old Republic, 1785-1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 156-167; Jon Meacham, *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* (New York: Random House, 2009), 126-127; Christopher Childers, *The Webster, Hayne Debate: Defining Nationhood in the Early American Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018); *Register of Debates*, Senate, 21st Congress, 2nd Session, 31-41.

[14] *Speeches of Hayne and Webster in the United States Senate on the Resolution of Mr. Foot* (Boston: A.T. Hotchkiss and W.P. Fetridge, 1853), 3-36.

Constitution as a compact among sovereign states, Webster declared it "the people's Constitution, the people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people." He argued that nullification would lead inevitably to disunion and civil war. If South Carolina refused to pay its tariff duties, he explained, the customs collector in Charleston would seize all incoming goods. The governor would then call out the militia to defend the state's sovereignty, and these citizen-soldiers would march on Charleston and provoke a "Direct collision" with the federal government.[15]

Despite these forebodings, Webster expressed hope for the Union's survival. The American people, he observed, had preserved the country for more than forty years and watched their "happiness, prosperity, and renown grow with its growth." When the moment of crisis arrived, he believed, Americans would rally to the Union's defense. Webster refused to "look beyond the Union" or imagine the horrors that would follow its destruction. He prayed he would never live to see the states divided or the land drenched in "fraternal blood." Instead, he hoped that his "last feeble and lingering glance" would behold the American flag without a "stripe erased or polluted, nor a single star obscured." He envisioned the flag floating over land and sea and in "every wind under the whole heaven"—an enduring testament to an ideal etched in "every true American heart—Liberty *and* Union, now and for ever, one and inseparable!"[16]

The debate on Foot's resolution continued for another four months, involving sixty-five speeches and nearly half of the nation's senators. As one senator remarked, the discussion essentially transformed the chamber into a committee of the whole "on the State of the Union in all time past, present, and to come." South Carolinians read Webster's and Hayne's speeches

[15] *Register of Debates*, Senate, 21st Congress, 2nd Session, 59-80.
[16] *Register of Debates*, Senate, 21st Congress, 2nd Session, 59-80.

with particular interest, and newspapers across the state devoted entire pages to their arguments. While later generations celebrated Webster's "second reply," most South Carolinians believed Hayne had triumphed in the debate. A Columbia editor applauded Hayne's "triumphant vindication of Southern character" and claimed that nullification was making "daily advances" in Washington. Benjamin Perry, who vehemently opposed nullification, agreed that Hayne's speech was an "able and masterly defence of Southern feelings, principles and character." Although Perry disagreed with its "concluding doctrine," he declared the speech a "complete and triumphant overthrow of the mighty [Webster]." Charleston editor Aaron Willington, however, praised Webster's eloquence and argued that his speech embodied the "true principles of our national government." Willington called the "second reply" an "unanswerable defence of the Constitution," and he urged every American to read it.[17]

After the Webster-Hayne debate, some radicals hoped the whole country would soon embrace nullification. News from Washington that spring, however, underscored the state's growing isolation. The uneasy alliance between Jackson and Calhoun began unravelling almost immediately after their inauguration. They disagreed on many of the era's defining political issues, and Jackson suspected that Calhoun had drafted South Carolina's radical anti-tariff resolutions. The "Petticoat affair" further strained their relationship. In January 1829, Jackson's incoming Secretary of War John Eaton married Margaret O'Neale, a tavern owner's daughter known for flouting social conventions. Her first husband, naval officer John Timberlake, reportedly killed himself over news of his wife's infidelity, and Margaret remarried only eight months after his death. The wives of Washington's political elite—led by Floride Calhoun—

[17] Meacham, *American Lion*, 126; *The Southern Times*, 25 February 1830; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 27 February 1830 and 13 March 1830; *The Charleston Courier*, quoted in *The Newbern Spectator*, 27 March 1830.

ostracized her and refused to receive her in their homes. Their actions enraged Jackson, whose own wife had been the victim of sexual slander during the 1828 campaign, and the impasse deepened the growing divide between the president and vice president.[18]

Tensions came to a head on April 13, 1830, at a public dinner celebrating Thomas Jefferson's birthday. Calhoun's allies controlled the program and invited Hayne to deliver the main address. They drafted toasts sympathetic to nullification—condemning "unequal taxation," defending the "State governments in all their rights," and celebrating Jefferson's 1798 Kentucky Resolution (which Carolina radicals claimed as precedent for nullification). Jackson, aware that the "celebration was to be a nullification affair," came prepared with a stirring response. When the official tributes ended, Jackson raised his glass and delivered the first of eighty volunteer toasts, declaring, "Our Union—It *must* be preserved." Calhoun steadied his shaking hand and responded: "The Union—Next to our liberties, the most dear!"[19]

Three months earlier, Daniel Webster had declared liberty and Union "inseparable." Calhoun, however, imagined a future in which those ideals might become incompatible, and he suggested that the Union was only worth saving if it secured Americans' liberties. Many South Carolinians believed Jackson shared these sentiments. The president, they observed, was a

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[18] Andrew Jackson to John Overton, 31 December 1829, in *The Papers of Andrew Jackson, Vol. VII: 1829*, ed. Danieil Feller et al. (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2007); H. Lee Clark, Jr., *Calhoun and Popular Rule: The Political Theory of the Disquisition and Discourse* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2001); Robert V. Remini, *The Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Harper & Row, 1998), 157-161; John F. Marszalek, *The Petticoat Affair: Manners, Mutiny, and Sex in Andrew Jackson's White House* (New York: The Free Press, 1997).
Jackson and Calhoun disagreed about the tariff, the Bank of the United States, the distribution of the government's surplus revenue, and the balance of state and federal power, among other issues. Both men, however, believed the "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Clay had subverted the will of the people, and that Adams' nationalist policies threatened Americans' liberties. See John C. Calhoun to Andrew Jackson, 4 June 1826, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC.

[19] Jackson intended to toast "Our federal Union" but inadvertently left out the word "federal." Hayne asked him to include the word in the published accounts of the dinner, and the president agreed. Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 120-121; Remini, *The Life of Andrew Jackson*, 195-197;

slaveholder who supported state rights and strict constructionism. When Georgia enacted laws seizing Cherokee land, Jackson sided with the state and called for the Native Americans' removal. Throughout his political career, however, Jackson championed pro-slavery Unionism and majority rule—ideals he viewed as mutually reinforcing. Majority rule, he explained, was the "first principle of our system." As long as Americans remained true to the "spirit of moderation, justice, and brotherly kindness," their collective will would cement the bonds of Union and render it "imperishable." The Union, in turn, would their free institutions and offer an "example of free government" to the world. Decades earlier, Jackson had vowed to "die in the last Ditch" rather than "see the Union disunited," and that militant conviction still guided him through the nullification crisis.[20]

The president's toast enraged some Nullifiers, who believed he had betrayed their trust and endangered their liberty. A Columbia writer viewed Jackson's words as a threat to "enforce unconditional submission," and he defiantly responded, "Be it so." If the Union no longer "answers the purposes for which it was instituted," he declared, then "the sooner it is destroyed the better." Others claimed Jackson's toast as a defense of state sovereignty and minority rights—the only principles that could truly preserve the Union. Editor James Henry Hammond criticized the president for "speak[ing] in ambiguities" and using language open to "opposite constructions." While Hammond still hoped to avoid disunion, he warned Jackson that it was useless to "appeal to our patriotism and generosity any longer." For years, he explained, South

[20] Andrew Jackson, "December 8, 1829: First Annual Message to Congress," "May 27, 1830: Veto Message Regarding Funding of Infrastructure Development," and "December 6, 1830: Second Annual Message to Congress," all available from Presidential Speeches: Andrew Jackson Presidency, http://www.millercenter.org; Jackson to William C. C. Claiborne, 12 November 1806, quoted in Remini, *The Life of Andrew Jackson*, 195. Jackson sided with Georgia in part because he viewed the Cherokee Indians as a barrier to white settlement and white majority rule. Nullification, however, subverted majority rule by giving one state's citizens the power to overrule the rest of the American people. Jackson, furthermore, insisted he had a constitutional duty to preserve the Union, and he viewed nullification as a threat to its survival.

Carolinians had patiently waited for redress. Now, there was "no virtue in any thing but our own firmness."[21]

By the spring of 1830, the state's loose radical and moderate factions had begun coalescing into two distinct political parties. They shared many of the same ideals, including a commitment to the Constitution, slavery, and state rights and a vehement opposition to the tariff. For this reason, scholars have played down these partisan divisions, insisting that the nullification crisis was "essentially a tactical dispute over means, not a philosophical dispute over aims." Debate within South Carolina, they contend, revolved around "how best to defend republican values of liberty and independence." This perspective, however, overlooks significant cultural and ideological differences between the two emerging parties. Although they upheld many of the same principles, they defined and prioritized them differently. Nullifiers and Union men not only disagreed over how best to defend Union, liberty, and independence—but over what those words meant and what forces truly threatened them. Two editorials, published in *The Southern Times* and *The Greenville Mountaineer* in January 1830, help illustrate this point.[22]

In November 1829, two Columbia printers established *The Southern Times*, a newspaper dedicated to the "Constitution of '89" and the "union of our fathers." They chose 22-year old James Henry Hammond as its editor, and his introductory address appeared on January 29, 1830. Hammond, who became one of the state's most ardent Nullifiers, expressed his love and reverence for the Union—an experiment in self-government that provided the American people with unparalleled freedom and prosperity. The Union, he wrote, reflected the states' common

[21] *The Newbern Spectator*, 22 May 1830; *The Charleston Mercury*, 21 April 1830 and 24 April 1830; *The Southern Times*, 3 May 1830.

[22] Lacy K. Ford, *The Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 134. Ford clarifies that the crisis was a debate over "how best to defend republican values of liberty and independence."

heritage and their shared struggle for independence. In carefully-crafted language, he insisted that the South did "not now aim at disunion," and that he would suffer "a thousand times more than we are suffering now" in order to "preserve it [the Union] pure."[23]

In the past decade, Hammond warned, northern and western politicians had advanced ideals that undermined the "whole nature of our government." These corrupt politicians had "mistaken power for liberty" and championed internal improvements, tariffs, and other unconstitutional "schemes of domestic policy." While the majority of Americans supported these policies, Hammond declared, "the minority have not yet yielded." These outnumbered southerners sought to "sustain the Union in its pristine purity and strength." If northerners degraded the Constitution, he warned, a "storm will surely gather over our children, or our children's children, and the republic [will] yet go down in blood." Fueled by this fear, southerners had "taken [their] stand, to avert the impending calamities." Hammond compared the crisis to the American Revolution and warned northerners not to underestimate their resolve. Although they were "not yet" prepared to embrace disunion, they were determined to "stand firmly by the post" and redeem the Revolution's promise of freedom.[24]

Earlier that month, 25-year-old Benjamin Perry took over *The Greenville Mountaineer*, and he quickly established it as one of the leading Unionist newspapers in the state. In his first editorial, published on January 16, 1830, Perry denounced the tariff of 1828 as a "palpable fraud upon the Constitution." Although the tariff followed the letter of the law, he observed, it violated its spirit by giving "one section of this country, the unholy power of destroying the other." Nonetheless, Perry refused to consider the "ultima ratio" of disunion. He trusted the democratic

[23] *The Southern Times*, 29 January 1830.
[24] *The Southern Times*, 29 January 1830.

process, insisting that the "returning good sense and justice of the American people" would peacefully resolve the crisis.[25]

While Hammond defended minority rights against majority rule, Perry expressed his passionate belief in the "divine right of the people." Nothing, he wrote, could extinguish his "deep rooted love of democratic principles." The people were the "only true legitimate sovereigns of every country," and they possessed the "sole power of making, altering, and abolishing the forms of government." He venerated the Union, which the "life's blood of our forefathers" had cemented during the Revolution, and he insisted that anyone who sought to destroy it was "worse than a sacrilegious parricide." Perry argued that disunion would destroy American freedom, and he refused even to consider an "idea so monstrous and so fraught with horrid calamity."[26]

On the surface, these editorials had much in common, including their love for liberty and Union, their celebration of the American Revolution, and their opposition to the tariff. While Hammond baldly declared the tariff unconstitutional, however, Perry expressed greater ambivalence. Both editors accused their opponents of endangering the Union, but they understood that threat—and its source—differently. Hammond attacked northern and western politicians for promoting economic nationalism and eroding constitutional freedom. Perry, however, saw South Carolina's radicals as the greatest threat to the Union's survival, and he prayed that moderate leaders would help avert the crisis. Perry used the memory of the Revolution to counsel patience and moderation. Quoting the Declaration of Independence, he insisted it was better to "suffer whilst evils are sufferable" than to resort to revolution.

[25] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 16 January 1830.
[26] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 16 January 1830.

Hammond, however, used the Revolution to rally resistance, warning that the tariff would inspire "such a stir as has not been in this country since 1776." Although he insisted that he did "not now aim" at disunion, he refused to reject the possibility altogether.[27]

These articles broadly reflected the convictions of the two emerging parties in early 1830. Nullifiers, however, still disagreed about the nature and limits of their doctrine, and the party's more radical members saw nullification as the first step toward more radical action. Edgefield lawyer Francis W. Pickens believed that "Disunion might well be the only means of righting our wrongs," and he preferred "any extreme, even war to the hilt" to life under a despotic government. If Congress refused to repeal the tariff, one Nullifier declared, "there must be blood letting—the Southern States must stand to their arms." Another writer renounced his allegiance to the Union and urged the state to secede—"peaceably if we may, forcibly if we must." Isaac Hayne, a young math tutor at South Carolina College, observed that Charleston's Nullifiers "openly avow that they not only think it time to calculate the value of the Union—but that they *have calculated* it—and with them it has been found wanting."[28]

Led by James Hamilton, Nullifiers seized the initiative in 1830—establishing newspapers, organizing public dinners, and delivering speeches across the state. In doing so, they both built upon and broke with the state's political traditions. As historian Lacy Ford observes, the upcountry had long embraced competitive politics. Throughout the early 1800s, candidates actively campaigned for office by speaking at public barbecues, militia musters, and local meetings. By the 1820s, voter turnout reached 70 percent in most upcountry districts, and

[27] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 16 January 1830; *The Southern Times*, 29 January 1830.
[28] Francis W. Pickens to James Henry Hammond, 8 March 1830 and 13 May 1830, in James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Clariosophic Literary Society Records, Vol. 6, 1826-1831 Minutes, South Carolina Digital Library; *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 1 April 1830; *The Beaufort Gazette*, 28 January 1830; Isaac W. Hayne to James Henry Hammond, 29 June 1830, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.

turnover rates among officeholders averaged 60 percent. Although political campaigns lacked "organizational sophistication," Ford writes, they proved extremely effective, and the region's elections were personal, boisterous, and competitive. In the lowcountry, however, large planters dominated small parishes with few eligible voters, and politics remained highly deferential. The nullification crisis briefly reoriented these political cultures, providing organizational clarity and replacing personal and deferential politics with partisan competition.[29]

Independence Day offered Nullifiers throughout the state a chance to reaffirm their principles and mobilize support. The day's public celebrations followed a familiar script. Each town began the morning by beating drums, ringing church bells, and firing salutes. Militia companies led the community in a grand procession, often to a local church, where a minister delivered a patriotic sermon and an orator read the Declaration of Independence. Afterwards, the community gathered for a public dinner, where organizers delivered thirteen official toasts celebrating the Union, the Revolution, state and national leaders, and the "Fair Sex." Volunteers then offered several dozen additional toasts, and local politicians delivered speeches linking the political struggles of the day to the legacy of the Revolution. These rituals, repeated in towns across the country each year, helped cultivate Unionism and translate the ideals of the Revolution to rising generations. Organizers framed the ceremonies as unifying events and stressed the "order and harmony [that] prevailed."[30]

In reality, however, the events often served as platforms for communities to contest their political convictions. During the nullification crisis, they helped bring the divisions between

[29] Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, 111-113.

[30] Len Travers, Celebrating the Fourth: *Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999); A. V. Huff, Jr., "The Eagle and the Vulture: Changing Attitudes Toward Nationalism in Fourth of July Orations Delivered in Charleston, 1778-1860," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 73 (1974), 10-22; Kimberly R. Kellison, "Men, Women, and the Marriage of the Union: Fourth of July Celebrations in Antebellum Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (Fall 2014), 129-154.

Nullifiers and Union men into focus. In Pendleton, for example, one guest toasted the "Carolina Doctrine" and the "sovereignty and independence of South Carolina." Another prayed that the Union would endure "so long as it is worth preserving, and no longer." In Columbia, organizers declared the Union "Dearer than life, but not dearer than liberty" and warned that republican principles would cease to exist the moment the people "disregard[ed] their own rights."[31]

Greenville's organizers framed the American Revolution as a struggle for "Free Trade and equal Rights." Their fathers, they explained, had endured the "struggles of war and deaths" to secure those principles, and anyone who refused to defend them now was unworthy of that legacy. State legislator Waddy Thompson insisted that Clay and Webster had corrupted the Union so thoroughly that "every Southern Patriot" should pray for its destruction. Other volunteers mourned the "broken Constitution" and threatened to "partition" the Union rather than submit to federal tyranny. They called for unity among all South Carolinians—a "Union of upcountry and lowcountry, district and parish"—and warned northern-born residents to act as "Carolinians, not enemies in our camp."[32]

On July 1, Charleston held a public dinner honoring Robert Y. Hayne and William Drayton. Hamilton organized the event and made it clear that "those who go to the dinner declare themselves in favour of [nullification]." A few guests, including Drayton, rejected that principle and passionately pleaded for the Union's survival. Most speakers, however, embraced radical action—endorsing nullification, arguing that "DISUNION" was the state's "*only preservation*," and calling for a "Republic South of the Potomac." Hamilton hoped the dinner would unify the city and state behind nullification, and he later described it as the "most enthusiastic and splendid

[31] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 7 July 1830; *The Southern Times*, 5 July 1830.
[32] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 9 July 1830.

public festival ever given at the South." As he later realized, however, the dinner instead helped to galvanize Unionist resistance. By voicing "some indiscreetly warm Toasts & sentiments" at the dinner, Hammond observed, Nullifiers allowed their enemies to "raise the war whoop of disunion against us."[33]

The Union Party lacked the organization and leadership that Nullifiers possessed. Many of the state's most prominent politicians opposed nullification, but they proved reluctant to embrace partisan politics. Instead, local leaders and newspaper editors took charge of the campaign in their districts. Editors like Benjamin Perry in Greenville, Constans F. Daniels in Camden, Aaron Willington in Charleston, and Abner Landrum in Edgefield reprinted and commented upon each other's editorials, helping articulate a coherent Unionist ideology. They argued that nullification would undermine, and perhaps destroy, the Union. They counseled patience and urged readers to "wait for the returning good sense of the American people." Already, they observed, their cause was gaining ground in Washington. In the spring of 1830, Congress had lowered import duties on several important items, and Jackson had vetoed funding for Kentucky's Maysville Road. These events gave Union men hope that further tariff reductions would soon follow.[34]

Union men across the state used July 4th celebrations to push back against nullification. Where Nullifiers controlled the official toasts, Union men relied on volunteer toasts to belie organizers' claims to consensus. In Greenville, Benjamin Perry pleaded for "forbearance" and assured the crowd that Jackson would strike down the tariff. When Pendleton Nullifiers insisted their remedy would restore the Constitution, lawyer Samuel Maverick countered that they could

[33] Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 201; *Proceedings of the State Rights Celebration*; James Hamilton to Martin Van Buren, 20 September 1830, Martin Van Buren Papers, LOC.

[34] Several of these Unionist editors were northern born. Aaron S. Willington was born in Massachusetts, while Charles F. Daniels was born in Connecticut.

not "defend it [with] remedies that are in opposition to its provisions." A doctor in the same district described the Constitution as the "ark upon which our liberties rest" and prayed that the "rage of passion [would] never effect its nullification." In Laurensville, Congressman Starling Tucker delivered a two-hour address urging "patience and forbearance." He assured listeners that "Jackson was with us" and warned that nullification would lead to "disunion, war insurrection and bloodshed."[35]

In Spartanburg, where Union men controlled the ceremony, local leaders expressed some of the day's most militantly Unionist sentiments. Lawyer Simpson Bobo viewed nullification rather than the tariff as the country's greatest threat, insisting that the Union was "indeed worthless, if one State out of twenty-four can check the progress of the Government." Other guests agreed, equating nullification with disunion and insisting that the doctrine would "blast our independence and ruin our Constitution." One speaker declared that, if South Carolina seceded from the Union, Spartanburg District should secede from the state and join the neighboring counties of North Carolina.[36]

A public dinner in Greenville on July 28 revealed the shifting state of upcountry politics that summer. Several dozen guests gathered to honor Congressman Warren R. Davis, an ardent supporter of nullification. In a fiery address, Davis dismissed Unionist sentiments as "philosophical abstractions" and confessed that he could not "merge one atom of my affection for South Carolina, in a more extended love for the Federal Union." He declared that South Carolina had to "look to its own energies alone for the preservation of its rights and liberties—indeed for its salvation." Echoing Davis's convictions, district leaders offered six toasts to South

[35] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 7 July 1830; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 9 July 1830; Syd. P. Saxon to James Henry Hammond, 6 July 1830, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.
[36] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 16 July 1830. In the 1830s, some writers still spelled Spartanburg as "Spartanburgh" and Orangeburg as "Orangeburgh." This dissertation uses the simplified modern spelling throughout.

Carolina and two to the "oppressed South" but only one to the Union. If the tariff became settled policy, one guest declared, then "determined opposition" would become the duty of every patriot. Even Benjamin Perry, one of the district's most impassioned Union men, vowed to "go with, to stand by, and to die for my native land."[37]

The dinner, however, helped energize Unionist opposition in the district. On August 2, a public sale day transformed into a political rally, as villagers called upon the district's legislative candidates to explain their political convictions. Incumbents Waddy Thompson and Tandy Walker supported nullification, urging the crowd to "awake, arise, or be forever fallen." Thompson, who had served the district in the General Assembly since 1826, thundered: "call it Revolution, call it Nullification, or whatever other odious and alarming name you please, I call it the right of self-defence." He insisted there was "no hope of remedy but from ourselves." The crowd, however, overwhelmingly rejected nullification, and Thompson and Walker ultimately agreed to withdraw from the race.[38]

Their actions illustrated the messy transition from personal to partisan politics during the nullification crisis. Thompson and Walker were among the most popular men in the district, and each had served two terms in the General Assembly. Before the public dinner on July 28, their reelection had seemed almost certain, and even Perry had endorsed Thompson's candidacy. The district's deferential elections had long hinged more on popularity than on principle or political allegiance, and this system retained a powerful hold. Some Union men, still personally loyal to the candidates, urged them to remain in the race and pledge to vote against nullification—but they refused. Nonetheless, as Perry marveled, a "mighty tumult and revolution" had taken place

[37] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 30 July 1830.
[38] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 6 August 1830.

in the district. Greenville's citizens, he remarked, had risen with one voice to reject nullification, and he had never witnessed "such an excitement in the country."[39]

Even as Nullifiers gained strength, their radical rhetoric kept them from fully unifying the state. Many South Carolinians favored moderate solutions, and Jackson's Maysville Road veto gave them hope that he would work to lower the tariff. In response, some leading Nullifiers began reevaluating their strategy. They sought to reframe the political debate, playing down nullification and emphasizing the need for a state convention. In doing so, they hoped to broaden their appeal and force Union men onto the defensive. If Union men opposed calling a state convention, Nullifiers could accuse them of distrusting the people and denying their sovereign power. As Waddy Thompson explained, Nullifiers insisted "the people should judge for themselves," while Union men refused to trust the "majority of their own people." Edgefield Nullifiers agreed, contending that Union men "oppose a direct appeal to the people, and are afraid to trust them."[40]

In many districts, these tactics successfully blurred the campaign issues and pressured Union men to endorse a state convention. In Pendleton, Unionist leader Jephtha Norton announced his support, praying the convention would choose the "safest" course and avoid conflict with the federal government. In Edgefield, a Unionist meeting denounced nullification

[39] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 6 August 1830 and 27 August 1830; J. Mauldin Lesesne, "The Nullification Controversy in an Up-Country District," *Proceedings of the S.C. Historical Association* (1939). The district's Nullifier minority persuaded Walker and Thompson to reenter the race in late August. Thompson vowed to fight the "torrent of popular prejudice" in order to preserve the purity of the Constitution. The campaign revealed that the state's deferential political culture still held a powerful sway over voters. As one writer in *The Greenville Mountaineer* explained, Walker and Thompson were among the "most intelligent and virtuous citizens" in the district, and they had devoted their lives to public service. Now, "they tell you the Constitution is violated, and all your liberties are about to be taken from you," and the writer insisted that "whatever advice they give is entitled to serious and important consideration."

[40] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 6 August 1830; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 12 August 1830 and 26 August 1830; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 18 August 1830.

but called for a "limited convention" that would petition Congress for relief. Cheraw's Philip Phillips, an ardent Union man, argued that a state convention offered the best hope of holding the country together. Northern editors, he explained, deluded their readers into thinking that the "excitement which pervades every part of our State is confined to demagogues and hair-brained politicians." Phillips realized that almost all South Carolinians opposed the tariff, and he feared that Congressional indifference would drive them toward radicalism. He hoped a convention would calm the political tempest and persuade Congress to lower the tariff.[41]

Other Union men, however, worked to clarify the issues that divided the two parties. Abner Landrum, editor of *The Edgefield Hive*, emphasized that "Nullification is Disunion, and Disunion is War," while an Abbeville doctor reminded Union men that a vote for convention meant a vote for nullification. Judge John S. Richardson observed that Nullifiers had "candidly admitted" that a state convention would nullify the tariff. Because a convention represented the sovereignty of the people, he warned, its power would be "absolute and uncontrollable," and Nullifiers could use it to seize control of the state, establish despotism, and dissolve the Union.[42]

That summer, 51-year-old diplomat Joel R. Poinsett returned to South Carolina after four years in Mexico. He immediately began working to defeat nullification, meeting with local leaders in Charleston and Columbia who shared his convictions. Although many of these men "regarded opposition as hopeless," Poinsett refused to back down. He joined Daniel Huger, James Petigru, and other lowcountry elites in creating a Union Party in Charleston. With the

[41] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 1 September 1830; *The Camden Journal*, 28 August 1830; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 2 August 1830, 16 August 1830, and 9 September 1830.
[42] *The Edgefield Hive*, 3 September 1830; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 2 September 1830; John S. Richardson, *The Argument of the Hon. J.S. Richardson in Reply to Chancellor Harper, and in Opposition to Nullification and Convention* (Columbia: *Times and Gazette* Office, 1830)

city's mayoral elections approaching, they nominated federal customs collector James R. Pringle to oppose radical incumbent Henry Pinckney.[43]

Political excitement mounted as the fall elections approached. James Hamilton observed that the city had "never seen such an animated contest," and another witness declared it the "hottest election ever contested in Charleston." Turnout soared: 1592 men voted in the 1830 election, compared to only 1047 the year before. Pringle captured 53 percent of the city's votes, and the Union Party won control of the city council. Union men viewed the outcome as a rejection of nullification. Editor Aaron Willington declared that the "*People of South Carolina*" had echoed Jackson's conviction that "Our Federal Union must be preserved." Nullifiers, however, remained confident of victory in the October statewide elections. Pinckney urged voters to "organize for another contest," and Hamilton argued that "we have lost the day, but we are not beaten." Pringle, he observed, had carried the election by only 84 votes—a margin that Nullifiers could easily overcome.[44]

Nullifiers called themselves the state's "true Carolinians" and denounced Union men as the "Yankee party." Charleston's Union Party, Hamilton observed, drew its strength from the city's merchants, bankers, and customs agents—many of whom traded with the North or owed their positions to federal patronage. They labelled Aaron Willington's *Charleston Courier* the "Boston Courier published in Charleston" and Jacob Cardozo's *Southern Patriot* the "Northern

[43] Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 23 October 1830, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina*, 116. The party's official name was the State Rights and Union Party. This dissertation, however, will refer to them as the Union Party to avoid confusion with the Nullifiers' State Rights and Free Trade Party.
[44] Stephen Elliott to William Elliott, 27 July 1830, Elliott and Gonzales Family Papers, SHC; Joseph Johnson to Joel R. Poinsett, 17 July 1830, Papers of Joel R. Poinsett, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP); James Hamilton to Stephen D. Miller, 9 August 1830, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS; *The Vermont Courier* (Woodstock, VT), 18 September 1830; *Middlebury Free Press* (Middlebury, VT), 16 September 1830; *The Edgefield Hive*, 8 October 1830; *Southern Times & State Gazette*, 13 September 1830 and 16 September 1830. In 1829, Pinckney defeated Grimké 560 to 487. In 1830, Pringle won the election by a vote of 838 to 754.

Patriot." They accused Camden editor Constans Daniels of being a "hireling Yankee editor" and an "Alien enemy." Even David R. Williams, Daniel Huger, and William Drayton—whose families had lived in South Carolina for generations—were "branded with Northernism" for refusing to endorse nullification. Nullifiers claimed that nearly every federal officer and bank director in Charleston supported the Union Party, and that a "large number of voters from the North" had helped secure their September victory. They attacked the "enemies of Carolina at home and abroad" and urged their supporters to "Rescue Charleston from the imputation of being a Northern city…Wipe off the stain of being governed and controlled by Federal officers."[45]

A few Nullifiers blamed the party's defeat on its tactics, arguing that the "apparent backing out from the question" of nullification had doomed them at the polls. If they had "come out openly for nullification," one writer insisted, they might have defeated Pringle and carried the day. The state's most radical Nullifiers refused to temper their rhetoric. At a "great state right celebration" in Sumter, Governor Stephen Miller declared that the state had three methods of resistance: "the ballot box, the jury box and the cartouch [cartridge] box." If peaceful protest failed, he warned, the state would pursue more decisive action. In Columbia that September, Robert Barnwell Smith raged against the state's passive resistance to tyranny, arguing that South Carolina must "now settle the question of submission, or resistance forever." The Union, he

[45] *Southern Times & State Gazette*, 13 September 1830 and 16 September 1830; *The Camden Journal*, 18 September 1830, 6 November 1830, and 1 January 1833; *The Charleston* Mercury, 11 October 1830 and 14 October 1830; *The State Rights and Free Trade Evening Post*, 4 October 1831. One writer explained that the "rail road party merchants on East Bay, Yankee traders, French, all the U States office holders, and the timid and par excellence moderates of native origin are for Pringle—alias the general government. The resident planters in a proportion of nineteen twentieths, the Irish three fourths, the Germans three fourths, and one half of the Scotch are for Pinckney or in other words, for the state." See Unknown to Stephen D. Miller, 9 August 1830, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS. Both Constans F. Daniels and Aaron S. Willington were born in New England.

thundered, "must be dissolved under its present course of administration," and if that conviction made him a traitor, "then gentlemen, I am a Disunionist!—I am a Traitor!"[46]

These Nullifiers underscored the looming threat to slavery. Hamilton declared the current crisis a "battle at the out-posts": if the state "succeeded in repulsing the enemy, *the citadel would be safe*." If South Carolinians tamely accepted the tariff, however, then Congress would found colonization societies in the state, encourage emancipation, and "erect the *peaceful* standard of servile revolt." Hammond warned that the American Colonization Society was growing stronger every day, and "unless soon put down, [it] must ere long deluge this land in blood." He argued that antislavery radicals were watching South Carolina's elections. If the Union Party triumphed—a party unwilling to "protect the rights and honor of the state"—then these northern fanatics would renew their struggle, destroy the South, and inspire the "midnight horrors of a servile war."[47]

To ensure Nullifiers' victory, party leaders organized Committees of Vigilance in every ward in Charleston, tasked with "defeat[ing] any maneuvers of the opposition party." They urged voters to sacrifice "all personal prejudices and preferences" and support the "whole Ticket without division." Although rural Nullifiers could not match the city's political mobilization, they adopted many of the same techniques. They hosted public dinners, distributed political pamphlets, and published a torrent of essays and editorials. Among the most famous of these

[46] Robert Mackay to George, 9 October 1830, Mackay Family Papers, SCL; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 9 October 1830; *The Charleston Mercury*, 19 October 1830.

[47] *The Charleston Mercury*, 29 September 1830; *The Southern Times*, 7 October 1830. In his speech at the "great state rights celebration" that fall, Governor Miller warned the crowd about the dangers of colonization. Virginia Congressman Charles Fenton Mercer had introduced a bill supporting the American Colonization Society, and Miller argued that without nullification the state would have "no security that the colonization bill will not be matured and sanctioned." See *Niles' Weekly Register*, 9 October 1830. These appeals resonated with at least some voters. One writer observed that the "probable insurrection of the slaves" had drawn the consequences of submission into "full relief." See Robert Mackay to George, 9 October 1830, Mackay Family Papers, SCL.

pamphlets was Maria Pinckney's *Quintessence of Long Speeches*, a "political catechism" that distilled abstract principles into accessible questions and answers. She viewed the federal government merely as an "agent of the Sovereign States" and framed nullification as a peaceful and constitutional measure. The moment the state declared itself free, she insisted, "the General Government must recede." Pinckney denounced Daniel Webster's nationalist vision, insisting that American had fought the Revolution not so "the colonies might be united, but [so] that the colonies might be free."[48]

Union men responded with their own meetings, pamphlets, and editorials. Greenville's Benjamin Perry published a thousand copies of George Washington's farewell address, which celebrated the Union as the "palladium of [Americans'] political safety and prosperity." In Charleston, the Union Party insisted that the "blessings of a Free Government…depend on our happy Union" and urged the "friends of Constitutional liberty and of public order" to fight for its preservation. Similar meetings in Chester, Laurens, Sumter, and Spartanburg overwhelmingly rejected nullification. A Spartanburg writer insisted, with some exaggeration, that fewer than fifty men in the entire district desired a state convention, and only one openly advocated nullification. Upcountry yeomen, he wrote, "yield to *none* in their devotion to the country—their *whole country*," and they refused to destroy a Union that had been "cemented with the blood of their fathers." A large crowd in Laurens declared the Union a fragile experiment and argued that

[48] Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina*, 117-119; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 29 July 1830; Maria Pinckney, *Quintessence of Long Speeches, Arranged as a Political Catechism* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1830). Many Nullifiers cultivated a democratic tone, telling voters that "Government was constituted by and for you." Privately, however, they expressed a deep distrust of democracy. In a letter to Governor Stephen D. Miller, Hamilton insisted that voters expected their leaders to "think for them," and he assured the governor that "they will be prepared to *act* as their leaders *think*." After the election, Hammond observed that universal white manhood suffrage had given many people "power which they are totally incompetent to exercise—if not absolutely unworthy of it." He urged the state to return to *viva voce* voting, in which community pressure could help ensure political orthodoxy. See James Hamilton to Stephen D. Miller, 9 August 1830, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 14 October 1830.

its destruction would prove to the world that a "republic cannot exist…that the people cannot govern themselves."[49]

By October 1830, however, the process of political alignment remained incomplete, and the election results were largely inconclusive. Between 1820 and 1828, turnout in Charleston's legislative elections averaged 2072; in 1830, it soared to 2575. Charleston's Nullifiers, however nominated a senatorial candidate who opposed calling a convention, and both parties endorsed William Drayton's reelection to Congress. In the contest for the city's sixteen General Assembly seats, four men appeared on both parties' tickets, blurring the distinctions between them. Three of these candidates easily triumphed, along with eight Union men and five Nullifiers.[50]

Election results in other districts were equally ambiguous. Many candidates refused to take a stance on the convention issue, and others supported a convention but opposed nullification. At least 18 of the state's 44 districts and parishes elected candidates from both parties. Observers agreed that these results showcased the lingering power of deferential politics. In Greenville, for example, Benjamin Perry insisted that the election was not a "fair test of the strength of the two parties," because many men voted "without regard to the question." Hammond admitted that "many local causes" and "personal considerations" influenced Columbia's election. An Edgefield writer went even further, arguing that most upcountry districts were too large for "any common District feeling" to form. As a result, every "neighborhood goes for itself," and the "election is the result of a combination of the narrow

[49] George Washington, "Washington's Farewell Address," *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, Yale Law School, available from http://www.avalon.law.yale.edu; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 8 October 183, 17 October 1830, and 24 October 1830.

[50] Chauncey Samuel Boucher, *The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), 101-103; "The Nullifiers in Charleston," *Raleigh Register*, 14 October 1830; "The Anti-Convention Party of Charleston," *Raleigh Register*, 4 October 1830; James Hamilton to Martin Van Buren, 20 September 1830, Martin Van Buren Papers, LOC. Unionists averaged 1261 votes, while Nullifiers averaged 1245 votes.

feelings and prejudices of twenty-two neighborhoods." One voter, he claimed, had even told an election official to "put down the name of my neighbor, and then fill up the ticket as you please."[51]

Nonetheless, a subtle but significant change had taken place in the state's voting behavior. In Charleston, where political mobilization was most effective, clear partisan alignments were beginning to emerge. Large gaps still separated each party's strongest and weakest candidates; Unionist leader Daniel Huger received 1306 votes, while John Strohecker polled only 1237. The vote totals for most candidates, however, had clearly converged. At one municipal polling station, for example, seven of the eleven Union Party candidates received between 559 and 568 votes, while most Nullifiers received between 547 and 559 votes.[52]

Election results in other districts mirrored this shift toward partisan politics. While "personal partialities" still played a crucial role, their power was beginning to wane. Both parties urged men to vote based on principle rather than deference, and some voters took the message to heart. In the past three state elections, turnover in the lower house averaged 56 percent; in 1830, it increased to 67 percent. Election returns from Greenville underscored these trends, as Nullifiers' popular candidates lost their bids for reelection. Between 1826 and 1830, Union Party

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[51] *The Charleston Mercury*, 22 October 1830; *The Camden Journal*, 16 October 1830; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 1830; Joseph N. Whitner to James Henry Hammond, 22 July 1830, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 14 October 1830; *The Edgefield Carolinian*, reprinted in *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 28 October 1830. Election returns from individual polling stations confirm these observations. At many stations, candidates from the same party received dramatically different numbers of votes, suggesting that voters either chose not to use party tickets or crossed off some of the candidates' names. District-wide, each party's most popular candidate often received hundreds more voters than their other candidates. In Greenville, the Union Party's Wilson Cobb, who had served in the state legislature since 1824, received 1256 votes, while fellow Union men Micajah Berry and John H. Harrison received 992 and 970 votes, respectively. The district's Nullifiers fared similarly, with Waddy Thompson receiving 716 votes, Tandy Walker receiving 547, and William Butler receiving 515. See *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 15 October 1830; *The Camden Journal*, 16 October 1830; Asylum Plantation Journal, 14 October 1830, SCL.

[52] Analysis drawn from the election returns published in *The Charleston Courier* and *The Charleston Mercury*. This analysis excludes Legaré, Desaussure, Aiken, and Keith, who appeared on both parties' tickets, as well as Hunt and Lowndes, whose party allegiances at this stage are less clear.

candidate Wilson Cobb had gained 321 votes in the district, while Nullifier Waddy Thompson lost 263 votes and Tandy Walker lost 222.[53]

When the General Assembly convened in November 1830, Nullifiers controlled both houses but fell short of the necessary two-thirds majority. The senate voted 23 to 18 in favor of a state convention, and the house concurred by a vote of 60 to 56. Although they were unable to call a convention, Nullifiers easily elected James Hamilton as governor, Stephen D. Miller as U.S. Senator, and Henry L. Pinckney as state speaker of the house. One Union man observed that the "Convention party is well disciplined, and carry almost every election, from that of US Senator down to those for Tax Collectors." Another writer complained that, "if a doorkeeper is to be elected, an enquiry will be made whether he is for or against Convention." While one lawmaker optimistically declared that the "friends of peace and the Union have the majority," he confessed that their party was "not organized and drilled so well as the ultras."[54]

Daniel Huger led the Union Party's resistance in the lower house. On the second day of the session, Nullifiers moved to unseat Charleston Unionist Rene Goddard, whose landholdings

[53] In Richland District, similarly, voters had clearly adopted party tickets by 1830. Two years earlier, polling station returns showed few clear patterns, suggesting that candidates' popularity and "local causes" still determined voting behavior. Now, however, the results displayed unmistakable partisan divisions. At one polling station, the two Union Party candidates received 83 and 84 votes, while the four most popular Nullifiers each received 9 to 10 votes. At another station, the Union men both received 72 votes, while the four leading Nullifiers each received 14. As in Greenville, this shift from personal to partisan politics dramatically changed the number of votes each candidate received. Between 1828 and 1830, Nullifier William C. Preston lost 74 votes in the district (a 12 percent decrease), while the Union Party's David Myers gained 94 20(a 20 percent increase). See *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser*, 18 October 1828; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 14 October 1830.

[54] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 3 December 1830 and 10 December 1830; John Ravenel to Anna E. Ravenel, 6 December 1830, John Ravenel Papers, SCL. Miller's election, in particular, demonstrated the complete breakdown of the old Smithite and Calhounite factions. Throughout the 1820s, Miller had been one of Smith's closest allies. When Smith came out against a convention, however, radical former Calhounites like Francis Pickens began encouraging Miller to run against Smith. As Pickens explained in June 1830, the combined support of the old Calhounite faction and "a part of his own party will elect him. Their party will then be divided, and we will have the power of the state in our own hands." Radical Smithites abandoned their former leader, and Miller eventually agreed to run against him. The General Assembly elected Miller over Smith by a vote of 81 to 77, and Smith left the state the following year. See Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 214-216.

fell short of the legislature's 500-acre requirement. Huger eloquently defended Goddard and lodged similar complaints against several Nullifiers, but to no avail. When Nullifiers proposed creating a standing Committee on Federal Relations, Huger once again objected, denouncing the measure as a plot to promote nullification. Robert Barnwell Smith dismissed Huger's fears as a "mere chimera, conjured up by [his] heated imagination," and he urged lawmakers to ignore him. The house overwhelmingly approved the committee, and Pinckney filled it with his radical allies—including Smith.[55]

The committee drafted resolutions outlining Nullifiers' principles and demanding action. The first three reaffirmed their "warm attachment" to the Union and declared it their duty to "oppose every infraction of [the] principles" upon which the Union depended. These resolutions passed unanimously. The committee then declared that each state could "judge for itself" when the federal government had violated the Constitution and could choose the "mode and measure of redress." This resolution passed by a vote 93 to 31. A final resolution affirmed that, once the state had lost "all reasonable hope of redress" from Congress, it had the "right and duty to interpose in its sovereignty" to stop the oppression.[56]

Huger responded with a set of Unionist resolutions, insisting that individual states lacked the power to nullify federal laws. He reminded legislators that the eyes of the world rested upon them. Their fathers had fought a Revolution to prove that "man might be free, and was capable of self-government." Nullification, however, would demonstrate that "freedom was but a phantom," and that "liberty must degenerate into licentiousness." He defended majority rule and denounced nullification for giving a small minority the power to paralyze the government. The

[55] Davis, *Rhett*, 56-57; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 2 December 1830.
[56] "The Committee on Federal Relations," *Southern Times & State Gazette*, 6 December 1830; Boucher, *The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina*, 104-106.

state, he declared, stood on the precipice: "one step forward, and we are lost—lost forever to the Union." He asked lawmakers if they were willing to abandon the "hope of civilized man"—the Union that had "lighted our steps to prosperity and animated our bosoms to gladness." If so, he concluded, then "our fathers were the last of American patriots."[57]

Camden lawyer William McWillie echoed these appeals and presented a dire vision of the state's future. Nullification, he warned, would dissolve the Union and reduce the state to "utter desolation." It would destroy America's prosperity and political freedom and empower a tyrant to rise over the "ruins of liberty." The glory and heroism of the American Revolution would "no longer be our history," and the American flag—the symbol of the states' unity and strength—would "no longer be our standard." South Carolinians would trample that flag into the dust, and "all that has been said of it in rhetoric, in poetry, and in song [would] be heard no more." McWillie viewed the Union as the "world's last hope," and he prayed its example would inspire humanity to strive for freedom. If America remained true to itself, he predicted, its fields would produce golden harvests, its commerce would spread to every ocean, and its people would "go forward, gloriously and forever, with freedom's soil beneath our feet, and freedom's banner…the banner of the union, proudly streaming o'er us."[58]

As 1830 ended, some Union men expressed hope for the nation's future. Greenville editor Benjamin Perry sought to put the year's political excitement behind him, insisting the

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[57] Daniel Huger, *Speech of the Honorable Daniel E. Huger, in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, December* 1830 (Charleston: W. Riley, 1831). Huger and Smith narrowly avoided a duel during the session. Huger accused Nullifiers of "flinching and concealing their intention [to nullify the tariff] and deceiving the people." Smith, enraged, pointed his finger at Huger and replied that he "scorned and despised the imputation." Huger believed Smith's action had crossed the line from political debate to personal attack, and he promptly challenged Smith to a duel. The Nullifier accepted, naming Governor Hamilton as his second. The other legislators, however, intervened and persuaded both men to back down and withdraw their public attacks. See Davis, *Rhett*, 58-59.

[58] *The Debate in the South Carolina Legislature in December 1,830 on the Reports of the Committees of Both Houses in Favor of Convention* (Columbia: S J McMorris, 1831), 100-110.

election had decided—and defeated—the convention issue. In Camden, Constans Daniels agreed that the election results had vindicated the Union Party and helped ensure the country's salvation. Daniel Huger, however, realized that the crisis was only beginning. He informed a friend that the Union Party "may be permitted to rest for a time, but…if we do not exert ourselves, we shall yet be beaten." The "attacking party," he observed, always had the advantage, because it could bide its time and choose when to strike. The "defensive" Union Party, however, "must always be ready or we may be surprised and beaten."[59]

Many Nullifiers, meanwhile, agreed with Hammond's assessment: they had "lost their leading measure [the state convention], but they have fully and triumphantly sustained their principles." As another writer observed, Nullifiers were "eager for another election." Two years earlier, Butler's convention resolution had fallen 40 to 81; this time, Smith's more radical resolution secured a narrow 60-56 majority. Nullifiers concluded that their party was gaining strength and momentum across much of the state, and they looked forward to 1832 certain of success.[60]

Despite their self-assurance, South Carolina remained bitterly divided. The "tariff of abominations" had shattered the state's political alliances and given rise to loose radical and moderate factions. Men like Hamilton and Pinckney, however, realized that the state's "political excitement" would subside unless they channeled it into a partisan organization. By early 1830, they created the State Rights Party, establishing committees throughout Charleston and

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[59] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 22 October 1830; *The Camden Journal*, 23 October 1830; Daniel E. Huger to James Chesnut, 22 December 1830, Papers of the Williams, Chesnut, and Manning Families, SCL. William Drayton shared these apprehensions. He observed that many of the legislators who voted against a convention "were not against that measure, upon principle, only averse to it at this time." If Congress failed to lower the tariff, he predicted, these men would add their strength to the State Rights Party, giving them the two-thirds majority necessary to call a convention. See William Drayton to Joel R. Poinsett, 29 January 1831, Papers of Joel R. Poinsett, HSP.

[60] *The Southern Times and State Gazette* 23 December 1830; *The Charleston Mercury*, 21 December 1830; David J. McCord to David Bailie Warden, 29 June 1831, David James McCord Papers, SCL.

coordinating with local leaders across the state. Together, they produced a relentless series of public dinners, sale day speeches, pamphlets, and editorials. Slowly, and often reluctantly, moderates responded with their own Unionist organization. The process of political alignment was incomplete in October 1830, and deferential politics maintained a powerful hold. Even so, that election marked a clear turning point in the state's political history. As the General Assembly adjourned that December—unable to call a convention—a few South Carolinians hoped that the crisis had passed. Most, however, looked forward to 1832, realizing that the state's greatest test still lay ahead.

Chapter Three: "The Wreck of European Liberty": Nullification in an Age of Revolution, September 1830-October 1831

On September 23, 1830, Charleston hosted a "Féte Civique" to celebrate the "glorious revolution" in France that summer. In July, conservative King Charles X issued a series of edicts restricting freedom of the press, dissolving the parliamentary Chamber of Deputies, and disfranchising three-fourths of the French electorate. In response, Parisian students, artisans, and retired soldiers erupted in protest and vowed to uphold the country's constitutional charter. France's July Revolution contributed to a wave of nationalist uprisings across Europe and prompted celebration throughout the United States. In Charleston that September, the French Fusilier militia company raised France's tricolor flag over the Battery, and the city's Arsenal fired a twenty-one cannon salute. Fort Moultrie flew the French and American flags side-by-side, merchants dressed their ships with tricolor banners, and aging French veterans wept as they recalled the "glory of their country." Peter Foyelle, a dance master who had fled from France in the 1790s, hosted a banquet for 300 guests, who raised toasts to "La France," "Les Etats Unis," "La Carolina du Sud," and "l'Union des Peuples."[1]

Three weeks before the state's divisive 1830 election, men from both parties gathered beneath France's tricolor flag to honor the "holy cause of Liberty." At Foyelle's banquet, Nullifiers James Hamilton and Robert Hayne dined alongside Union men James L. Petigru and Christopher G. Memminger and together toasted "The French nation" and "The citizens of Paris." For decades, American had imagined the Union as a testament to humanity's capacity for

[1] Féte Civique: Célébrée a Charleston, S.C. en Commémoration de la Glorieuse Révolution Française de 1830 (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1830); John Merriman, "European Revolutions of 1830," in *The Encyclopedia of Political Revolutions*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone (New York: Routledge, 2014), 165-168; Elisabeth Jay, *British Writers and Paris: 1830-1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 11-13; Munro Price, *The Perilous Crown: France Between Revolutions, 1814-1848* (London: Pan Books, 2007), 187-193.

self-government, and many interpreted the European revolutions as proof that their ideals were helping liberate the world. By 1832, however, Russia had overpowered the Polish kingdom, Austria had crushed the Italian provinces, and France and Belgium remained constitutional monarchies. The forces of "tyranny" appeared triumphant throughout much of Europe. The nullification crisis took place amid this transnational upheaval, and for many South Carolinians the crisis in their state assumed global significance. As nullification gained momentum, Union men feared that America might fail at the very moment the world needed its example the most. The struggle in South Carolina, they warned, might decide the fate of republican government not only in America but also around the world.

These revolutions heightened the stakes of South Carolina's crisis and intensified the divisions between the State Rights and Union parties. Although both parties initially celebrated the European uprisings, they understood them in fundamentally different ways, reflecting their own political and cultural ideals. Union men praised revolutionaries' moderation and restraint. They championed order, stability, and "regulated liberty" both in America and in Europe, and they equated Nullifiers with the radical Jacobins who launched the Reign of Terror forty years earlier. Nullifiers, however, emphasized revolutionaries' resolve and their fearless defense of freedom. They called upon South Carolinians to emulate this example—to "rise in their sovereignty" and resist the tyranny of their own federal government.

On July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of American independence, a Camden orator surveyed the condition of the Atlantic world. An absolutist king ruled Spain, and its people lay "prostrate in the dust; too weak to rise, too degraded to complain." In France, King Charles X was steadily amassing power, robbing his subjects of their glory and splendor. The Ottomans—

"the enemies of the cross"—had virtually extinguished Greece's war for independence. The tyrants who reigned in Russia, Austria, and Prussia had conquered and partitioned Poland, and the "sun of liberty that once warmed the bosoms of [Poland's] children, has set behind the dark clouds of tyranny and superstition." The United States, however, remained peaceful, prosperous, and free, and its "great example" was already inspiring Spain's South American colonies to strive for independence. The orator affirmed the universality of America's ideals and envisioned liberty spreading throughout the world.[2]

Four years later, Paris erupted in protest after Charles X curtailed freedom of the press, restricted suffrage, and dissolved the Chamber of Deputies. For three days, beginning on July 27, 1830, craftsmen, students, and former soldiers battled the Royal Guard in the streets. Revolutionaries raised 4000 barricades and quickly captured the Tuileries Palace, the Louvre, the Hôtel de Ville, and the Palais de Justice. On July 29, Charles X fled the city, and revolutionaries began creating a provisional government. The spirit of revolution quickly spread across Europe. In August, riots erupted in Belgium, and the country soon declared its independence from the Netherlands. In October, Swiss protestors began organizing assemblies and marches to demand constitutional reform. Poland rebelled against Russia in November, launching an unsuccessful eleven-month war for independence. Protestors in Saxony and Hanover forced their kings to grant constitutions, and central Italy rebelled against the Pope's temporal power and established the short-lived Italian United Provinces.[3]

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[2] *The Camden Journal*, 12 August 1826. In Paris that day, American travelers and diplomats joined the aging Marquis de Lafayette to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of American independence. The Declaration of Independence, they insisted, "gave freedom to a nation and hopes to mankind." Lafayette agreed, observing that the American Union enshrined "the rights of man, republican virtue, political liberty, plain politics, true representation, and self-government." America's independence, he said, had inaugurated a "new social order" that "cannot fail more and more to enlighten and enfranchise the world." He celebrated the "immense power of republican freedom" and called upon the nations of Europe to follow America's example.

[3] See Lyons, *Post-Revolutionary Europe, 1815-1856* and Mansel, *Paris Between Empires.*

For Americans living in Paris, the outbreak of the violence stirred memories of the Reign of Terror. During the French Revolution forty years earlier, the radical Jacobin society helped establish a Committee of Public Safety that executed more than 16,000 people as enemies of the republic. In July 1830, engineering student Charles Ellet described with horror the sight of "mangled beings" torn apart by cannon balls, and he wondered "how much more [blood] will be [spilled] in the country" before the revolution ended. Ultimately, however, the revolutionary spirit proved irresistible. Ellet celebrated the sight of the "tricoloured banner of the Revolution" flying over Notre Dame, and student Charles Storrow rejoiced that the "cause of the people seems triumphant in Paris at last." Storrow insisted that the July Revolution marked a victory in the global struggle for freedom, and he prayed it would inspire "free men throughout the world" to fight for the "rights of men." A visitor from Charleston marveled that history had no parallel to this "beautiful and admirable drama." He felt "truly overjoyed," predicting the revolution would topple the monarchies of Europe and bring "glory forever to France."[4]

News of France's revolution reached South Carolina in mid-September, only days after Charleston's municipal election. Hammond filled almost half of the four-page *Southern Times* with news of the "transcendently interesting occurrences." The story crowded out news of the Charleston election, which received less than a column in that day's newspaper. Pinckney devoted four columns of *The Charleston Mercury* to the revolution and published daily updates on the French provisional government. Daniels and Perry printed long articles excitedly announcing the "Revolution in France!" Within days, Charleston's French citizens had organized

[4] Charles Ellet, jr., to Charles Ellet, sr., 27 July 1830, 29 July 1830, and 29 July 1830 (evening), in Herbert P. Gambrell, "Three Letters on the Revolution of 1830," *The Journal of Modern History* 1, no. 4 (December 1929), 594-606, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1871102; Peter A. Ford, "An American in Paris: Charles S. Storrow and the 1830 Revolution," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 104 (1992), 21-42, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25081045; *The Charleston Mercury*, 23 September 1830.

a public dinner celebrating the "cause of Liberty" and thanking the citizens of Paris for their courage and moderation.[5]

On September 23, Charleston hosted a "National Celebration" honoring the revolution. The French tricolor flag flew over Fort Moultrie and the city observatory, and hundreds of men—all wearing revolutionary cockades—marched through the streets toward City Hall. Militia colonel John B. Petitval delivered an eloquent French address, frequently interrupted by cheers from the crowd. Hundreds convened at Foyelle's drawing room for a public dinner, and the French Fusilier company sang La Marseillaise—the anthem of the French revolution. Scores of American-born residents joined in the day's celebration, even though many were unable to understand the French speeches and toasts. The day's emotions and ideals, Pinckney reported, transcended this language barrier. The entire crowd honored the heroism that had "redeemed" the French people from the "degrading chains of tyranny," and they shared the "fervid hope that the true liberty they have so nobly won" would endure.[6]

Nullifiers connected their struggle to the July Revolution, encouraging their followers to display the same courage and conviction. A South Carolinian writing from Paris marveled at the city's celerity. The French people, he observed, had risen in rebellion without a "single remonstrance or petition, or Convention." Untrained workers, women, and children had fought with the "constancy of veterans" against a force three times as large as the American army. After witnessing this display of courage, the writer mocked South Carolina's caution: "I do not pretend to say that we, who thank Heaven are republicans, can ever descend to imitating monarchists, boys, women, and parley-vous." While South Carolina had endured an oppressive tariff for more

[5] See *The Southern Times*, 13 September 1830; *The Charleston Mercury*, 11 September 1830 and 17 September 1830.
[6] *The Charleston Mercury*, 24 September 1830.

than ten years, the French revolutionaries refused to wait even a few days. Clearly, he retorted, "[t]hey know nothing about Freedom in Europe. The era of petitions and remonstrances and protests…has not yet dawned upon them." Hammond published the letter, carefully cautioning readers not to "adopt the French mode of redressing grievances." State sovereignty, he insisted, provided a "more peaceful method" of constitutional reform. He hinted, however, that continued oppression could drive the state toward revolution, praising France for the "promptness with which the people flew to the only remedy against oppression left to them."[7]

Hammond insisted that the revolution provided a "solemn warning to the rulers of every nation, that the day of absolute tyranny is past." Any government that imposed a system of despotism on its people would "soon be brought to an awful reckoning." He prayed that the country's leaders would "profit by the solemn lessons" and abandon the "same headlong and infatuated course which brought Charles [X]…to the earth." Many Nullifiers shared these convictions. A Richland militia company declared the revolution a "warning to those who encroach upon the liberties of the people" and a "bright example of what citizen soldiers can do" in the struggle against tyranny. David J. McCord insisted that South Carolina had a "more just cause for rebellion than even the Belgians and Poles, and Georgetown editor James Smith agreed that there was a "striking similarity" between Carolina's struggle and those revolutions.[8]

As news from Europe filtered into the state, Nullifiers worked to consolidate their strength. Hamilton urged Hammond to use *The Southern Times* to galvanize support, warning of the "great peril of permitting public feeling to collapse." Nullifiers, he observed, "must have a rally on some firm ground and then stand manfully to our arms." He hoped to ignite an

[7] *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 16 September 1830.
[8] *United States Telegraph*, 16 July 1831; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 13 September 1830 and 10 January 1831; *Columbia Telescope*, 26 March 1833; *Newbern Spectator*, 28 May 1831; David J. McCord to David Bailie Warden, 29 June 1831, David James McCord Papers, SCL.

"animated discussion" across the state and "effect the closest cohesion of our party." Once Nullifiers had organized, he continued, lawmakers should "take the strongest ground [that] public opinion will justify *but let them not go beyond it*." Although Hamilton privately believed that voters would "*act* as their leaders *think*," he recognized that they needed to work carefully and deliberately to ensure victory.[9]

In the spring of 1831, Nullifiers hosted public dinners across the state to help energize their followers. Organizers choreographed the events to fuse the symbols of the Old and New Worlds, connecting South Carolina's crisis to the broader struggle for human freedom. The regular toasts, for example, often praised European revolutionaries alongside the Union and state sovereignty. At a Pendleton dinner, guests drank to the "Revolutionary spirit in Europe" and celebrated the Marquis de Lafayette as the "hero of two hemispheres." A Columbia volunteer praised the mothers of Poland for their devotion to liberty. Another compared South Carolina's struggle to Ireland's, insisting "there is a period in which the patience of the tamest slave rises into fury and revenge." They endorsed the "principles contained in the *Exposition*" and celebrated the martial legacy of the American Revolution. Columbia editor Algernon Johnson, for example, toasted the "inheritance" of liberty secured by their fathers. If "no other method"

[9] James Hamilton, Jr., to James H. Hammond, 8 January 1831 and 3 May 1831, in "Letters on the Nullification Movement in South Carolina, 1830-1834," *The American Historical Review* 6, no. 4 (July 1901), available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1834178; James Hamilton to Stephen D. Miller, 9 August 1830, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS; James Hamilton to Stephen D. Miller, 25 June 1831, James Hamilton Papers, SCL. As Hamilton's letters suggests, Nullifiers consciously used the press to galvanize public opinion and organize their party. Calhoun informed Hammond that the state's editors would help determine its political future. He urged Hammond to do everything in his power to "unite and strengthen [South Carolina], for on her Union, and firmness, at this time, the liberty of the whole country in no small degree depends." In February 1831, Hamilton observed that *The Mercury*'s political coverage was "still sluggish" but vowed to "put a little fire into its columns." See John C. Calhoun to James H. Hammond, 15 January 1831, *Papers of John C. Calhoun*, Vol. 11: 1829-1832, ed. Clyde N. Wilson (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1978); Hamilton to Hammond, 5 February 1831.

will restore it, he declared, then "it must be regained by us as it was gained by them"—through bloody revolution.[10]

Calhoun, still harboring presidential ambitions, pleaded for moderation. The feud between Jackson and Calhoun had intensified in early 1831, and the vice president believed that three-fourths of Congress was on his side. He predicted that America's major political parties—the Democrats and the National Republicans—would soon collapse, and he imagined himself stepping into the void. Once he became president, he could unify the country and heal its partisan divisions. He would dramatically lower most tariff duties while maintaining a "liberal protection" on "some of the most important articles." At the same time, he would help pass a constitutional amendment authorizing internal improvement spending, which he hoped would satisfy both western expansionists and strict constructionists. He urged South Carolinians to support him, fearing that "disunion [was] inevitable" if his vision failed.[11]

Many Nullifiers, however, found Calhoun's candidacy "impracticable," and they refused to let his ambitions compromise their political movement. At a banquet in Charleston that May, McDuffie warned that "argument and eloquence" were powerless against the "brute force of superior numbers," and he encouraged South Carolinians to stand on their sovereignty. The former nationalist mocked his opponents for "exclaim[ing] in the most patriotic agonies, 'the

[10] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 6 April 1831; *Southern Times & State Gazette*, 23 April 1831. Pendleton lay between Anderson and Pickens districts, both of which were named after Revolutionary War heroes. One guest celebrated those men and vowed that the districts' 'present sons are equally willing to bleed for the Constitution."
[11] Memorandum by James H. Hammond, 18 March 1831, "Letters on the Nullification Movement"; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 221. Calhoun believed that Jackson was "losing the confidence of the [Democratic] party every where." He also insisted that the National Republican Party was breaking apart over the tariff issue. Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and their followers continued to an aggressive tariff policy, while others favored moderation and realized that "push[ing] their policy any further would" create a "desperate movement that would in all probability destroy the whole of [protectionism]." The National Republicans, he predicted, would reject Clay and "unite upon any man" capable of defeating Jackson. This process, Calhoun hoped, would lead both parties to endorse his candidacy.

Union, the Union, the Union is in danger.'" These pleas, he retorted merely served to justify tyranny and oppression. McDuffie declared that the "Union, such as the majority have made it, is a foul monster," and he dismissed the "ridiculous" fear that nullification would lead to civil war. Appealing to the honor and martial manhood of his audience, he asked how South Carolinians could be "terrified by mere phantoms of blood" when their ancestors had braved the "dreadful reality" of revolution. "Great God!" he exclaimed, "are we men—grown men—to be frightened from the discharge of our sacred duty, and the vindication of our most sacred rights, by the mere nursery tales of raw-head and bloody-bones, which even the women of our country laugh to scorn?" [12]

The speakers that followed echoed these appeals and linked the state's struggle to the European revolutions. The first official toast honored the global spirit of reform, declaring: "Its flame has been kindled in the Old World, may it not be extinguished in the New." Hayne celebrated the "Disciples of Liberty throughout the world—not those who profess her principles but who act on her precepts." Several guests insisted that the state's honor and freedom depended on nullification. South Carolina's rights, they declared, were merely "shadows" unless its citizens had the courage to defend them. Lowcountry lawyer Stephen Elliott urged South Carolinians to defend their rights with the cartridge box as fiercely as they had at the ballot box. Another guest called for "Convention, Nullification, Disunion—any thing rather than submission to tyranny."[13]

The Charleston meeting infuriated Calhoun, who observed that it brought "matters to a crisis." Duff Green, a close ally and editor *The United States Telegraph*, asked Hamilton if they

[12] Robert Y. Hayne to James H. Hammond, 29 March 1830, "Letters on the Nullification Movement"; George McDuffie, *Speech of the Hon. George McDuffie at a Public Dinner Given to Him by the Citizens of Charleston, May 19, 1831* (Charleston: A E Miller, 1831).
[13] *The Evening Post* (New York, NY), 30 May 1831.

"were all crazy at McDuffie's dinner" and if they "intended to start into open rebellion." When Calhoun confronted Hamilton, the governor defiantly responded that Nullifiers would "not be diverted for one moment from the prosecution of their cause by the presidential question." The state's Nullifiers threatened to abandon Calhoun unless he publicly endorsed nullification. The vice president had hoped to "keep things quiet," and he strongly opposed "active [party] operations this summer." With Hamilton pushing for action, however, he could no longer remain silent.[14]

On July 26, Calhoun published the Fort Hill Address in *The Pendleton Messenger*, declaring his support for nullification. In a country as vast and diverse as America, he insisted, majority rule was "unjust and absurd." He argued that the Constitution empowered Congress to legislate on national questions but left "peculiar and local" issues to the states. When Congress overstepped its bounds, he wrote, the states had a duty to intervene. Calhoun emphasized the conservative nature of nullification and worked to rein in the party's radical leaders. He celebrated the Union for maintaining "justice, peace, and security" as well with "national power and renown." He still viewed himself as a nationalist and hoped to win the presidency in 1832. If the country "wants an individual to carry on the sectional conflicts," he explained, "I am not their man." Instead, he claimed to "look to the higher considerations of peace, harmony, and liberty," and he vowed to promote those ideals as president.[15]

Across the state, Nullifiers turned their towns' Independence Day celebrations into partisan rallies. In Charleston, 1500 Nullifiers paraded through the streets, carrying flags that

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[14] Hamilton to Hammond, 11 June 1831 and Hamilton to Hamilton to Stephen Miller, 25 June 1831, quoted in Tinkler, *James Hamilton*, 122; Calhoun, quoted in Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 223 and 226.

[15] John C. Calhoun, "The Fort Hill Address: On the Relations of the States and Federal Government," *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun* , ed. Ross M. Lence (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1992), 367-400; John C. Calhoun to Samuel L Gouverneur, 8 August 1831, and John C. Calhoun to Christopher Van Deventer, 5 August 1831, *Papers of John C. Calhoun*, Vol. 11.

declared: “Millions for defence, not a cent for tribute” and “Resistance to oppression, the right and the duty of freemen.” Author Maria Pinckney and two hundred “State Rights Ladies” presented a flag to the procession, symbolizing their devotion to the state’s “prosperity, safety, and honor.” The men then marched to the city’s Circular Church, where Hayne delivered a fiery address defending state sovereignty. At most July 4 celebrations, local leaders read the Declaration of Independence; instead, Charleston’s Nullifiers chose the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, a defiant statement of their party’s principles. In Barnwell, Edisto, Lancasterville, Pendleton, and dozens of other towns, Nullifiers demanded action. They drank to “Disunion rather than submission” and called the Union an “instrument of oppression.” They insisted that patience under tyranny was rebellion against God, and they vowed to resist the “unjust government at any and every hazard.” Nullifiers had grown bolder since the 1830 election, and most meetings explicitly declared nullification the “rightful remedy” against oppression.[16]

Many Independence Day speakers framed the crisis as part of a global struggle for freedom and reform. In Sumter, organizers devoted three of their thirteen regular toasts to the European revolutions, celebrating the Polish patriots for their determination to “live free or die.” Columbia Nullifiers insisted that Poland’s struggle demonstrated how much a “united people” could accomplish against overwhelming odds. A Pendleton Nullifier celebrated the “spirit of Reform” in Europe and prayed it would liberate the “oppressed in the Old and New World.” In a speech in Charleston, Pinckney described the progress of liberty across Europe. Like Congress,

[16] *The United States Telegraph*, 18 July 1831 and 20 July 1831; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 6 July 1831; Harriott Pinckney to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Jr., 1 August 1831, available from http:/www.sparedshared11.wordpress.com; *The Camden Journal*, 9 July 1831 and 16 July 1831; *The Camden and Lancaster Beacon*, 12 July 1831. A few guests at these public dinners resisted nullification. In Pendleton, William B. Martin toasted Henry Clay as a “friend to our Union, and firm in his integrity; may he never cease to rise.” The crowd drank to the toast with empty glasses. In Edisto, a guest toasted William Drayton. While every other toast received at least 6 cheers—and some as many as 15—his received none.

he argued, Charles X had violated his country's constitutional charter—and the French people had risen "in their might and hurled him from [his] throne." Similar acts of tyranny had inspired the revolutions in Belgium and Poland. The evil and oppression those countries endured, however, were nothing "compared with those inflicted upon us."[17]

In the ensuing months, Hamilton worked with district leaders to establish a vast network of State Rights Associations. Charleston's chapter first met on August 1, 1831, and dozens of local organizations soon followed. Hamilton hoped this network would achieve the "concert so essential to effective political action" and "throw a flood of light in every dark corner of the state." Nullifiers distributed thousands of pamphlets and public documents in order to "diffuse correct information" and "promote the blessings of Free Trade." Executive committees managed in each district managed local partisan business and corresponded with other chapters, and twice each year they attended statewide meetings. They established chapters even in districts—like Greenville and Spartanburg—where the party had little chance of success. No matter how "fearful the odds against you now are," one Nullifier insisted, the party's principles would ultimately triumph.[18]

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[17] *The Camden Journal*, 9 July 1831; *The United States Telegraph*, 16 July 1831; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 6 July 1831; *Proceedings of the Celebration of the 4th July, 1831 at Charleston by the State Rights and Free Trade Party* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1831). A Beaufort Nullifier urged the party to refrain from "joyance and festivity of all kinds" on July 4, arguing that "it should be a day, not of mutual congratulation, but of humiliation and regretful remembrance…Let it be a day, not of exultation, but of fasting, humiliation, and prayer." *The Wyoming Herald* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), 27 July 1831.

[18] James Hamilton to Stephen D. Miller, 19 July 1831, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS; Records of the Free Trade and State Rights Association of the Parishes of St. Stephen's, St. John's Berkeley, and St. James Santee, 1831, SCHS; *The United States Telegraph*, 14 September 1831; *The Camden Republican and Lancaster Beacon*, 27 September 1831 and 15 November 1831; Henry H Townes to George F Townes, 4 August 1831, and 3 November 1831, Townes Family Papers, SCL. In August 1831, a Charleston Union man ridiculed the process of party organization: "The big Nullifiers in Charleston have a meeting; organize a club; pass resolutions and huzzah; they then send circulars to the little Nullifiers in the interior and beg them to make haste and kick up a dust at the country Court Houses. The circular arrives; the lawyers at the Court House dash off and bring together the constables, the hangers-on at the taverns, and a dozen others; they meet in the court room and flourish a resolution or two; denounce General Jackson; organize a political club; get some old fellow tot come out; call him a Revolutionary worthy; vote thanks to one another; and send their proceedings to the *Mercury*…And now behold the columns of the *Mercury*, the day

The state's Union men realized with dismay that Nullifiers had seized the initiative. In February 1831, William Smith observed that the "Calhoun party" was relentlessly gaining strength. Abbeville legislator Alexander Speer reported that Nullifiers were "rally[ing] their scattered forces for a new contest in 1832," and he feared that their superior organization would "give them the advantage." The Nullifier "junto" in his district were openly declaring their hostility to the Union and threatening to secede unless the federal government backed down. A Georgetown writer warned that Nullifiers were "rallying [their] forces for a new campaign," and that McDuffie's public dinner that May signaled an ominous "new organization of the party."[19]

Many Union men, however, were still reluctant to openly embrace partisanship. They compared the State Rights Associations to the Jacobin clubs of the French Revolution. Petigru insisted that Beaufort's "Jacobinical" planters sought to destroy the "established order," and Constans Daniels agreed that Nullifiers would consecrate their victory on the "bloody steps of the Guillotine." William Smith declared the State Rights Associations the "germ of a Revolution." He warned that political clubs had brought the "monster Robespierre into power" forty years earlier and soaked the streets of Paris with human blood. If nullification triumphed, he imagined, "remorseless butcheries" would devastate South Carolina and destroy its free institutions.[20]

Union men celebrated the outbreak of revolution in Europe in 1830, but often with some trepidation. Benjamin Perry rejoiced that the spirit of reform was spreading across Europe, and

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after the receipt of the proceedings. Oh, what congratulations! What rejoicings it pretends to make! Pieces appear, headed with the words 'Glorious News,' and 'Interesting Proceedings,' and all that kind of thing, and the people are gravely told that these are evidences of public opinion. See *The Charleston Courier*, 10 August 1831.

[19] William Smith to Daniel E. Huger, 16 February 1831 and Alexander Speer to Joel R. Poinsett, 14 March 1831, in Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; *The Camden Journal*, 4 June 1831.

[20] James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 25 August 1831, James L. Petigru Papers, SCHS; *The Camden Journal*, 20 August 1831; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 10 September 1831; William Smith, *Speech of the Hon. William Smith, Delivered on Monday, August 1, 1831* (Columbia: Office of the Columbia Hive, 1832).

he predicted that "[f]ree principles" would triumph over "absolute despotism." He noted, however, that 5000 people had died in Paris in only three days. "[T]ranquility" is again restored," he observed, "but in all probability for a very short time." In June 1831, he celebrated a Polish victory and insisted there was now "some hope for this oppressed and valorous nation." Nonetheless, he worried that the spread of revolution would "kindle a flame that will involve the whole continent in a war." The July Revolution, Constans Daniels agreed, left France with an "unquiet spirit" that could erupt again into violence. He dismissed Belgium's struggle for independence as a "causeless movement" and hoped the Dutch king would restore harmony and order. As revolution spread to Poland and Prussia, Daniels feared that "bloody and protracted war awaits the continent of Europe."[21]

Most Union men viewed themselves as conservatives defending the social and political order. While they acknowledged the justice of the revolutionaries' cause and welcomed the spread of liberty, they emphasized the need for reason and restraint. Forty years earlier, they observed, the French Revolution began in a "spirit of great moderation" before descending into chaos, and they feared that history would repeat itself. At Charleston's "Féte Civique" in September 1830, James Petigru toasted the French revolutionaries' "moderation in victory" and

[21] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 17 September 1830, 22 October 1830, 4 June 1831; *The Camden Journal*, 18 September 1830, 6 November 1830, 12 February 1831, and 9 April 1831. Some Union men explicitly compared the spirit of revolution to the nullification movement in their own state. In June 1832, French republicans led a short-lived rebellion against King Louis Philippe—a struggle later immortalized in Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*. Hugh Legaré condemned the rebels as "true nullies" and feared it would lead to a "universal conflagration in Europe." To Legaée, Nullifiers in South Carolina and radicals in Europe were both seeking to destabilize their countries, undermine law and order, and destroy constitutional liberty. See Hugh S. Legaré to Isaac E Holmes, 8 April 1833, *The Writings of Hugh Swinton Legaré*, Vol. 1 (Charleston Burges and James, 1845). One prominent exception was William Gilmore Simms, a 24-year-old poet and editor of the Charleston *City Gazette*. Within months of the July Revolution, he published *The Tri-Color, or The Three Days of Blood*, a collection of poetry celebrating the nationalist uprising. Significantly, however, Simms published the book anonymously and gave it a London imprint. Although Charleston publisher James S. Burges printed the book, the title page attributed it to the London firm Wigfall and Davis. See William Gilmore Simms, *The Tri-Color, or The Three Days of Blood* (London: Wigfall and Davis, 1830); James Everett Kibler, Jr., *The Poetry of William Gilmore Simms: An Introduction and Bibliography* (Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, Publishers, 1979), 62-63.

their obedience to the "regulations which the public good required." German immigrant Christopher Memminger followed with a toast to the citizens of Paris and their "courage and moderation in the cause of Liberty." Richard Manning celebrated the triumph of "regulated liberty," and Andrew Jackson—a native South Carolinian—insisted that France's revolution provided a "sure guarantee of rational liberty, and representative Government, to the world."[22]

These Union men believed the world was anxiously watching America's example, and that conviction helped shape their response to nullification. Charleston lawyer Abraham Moise explained that everything the state held dear was at stake: "our bright example to suffering humanity, our invaluable institutions, [and] our homes and our fire sides." The Union, he insisted, was "an asylum to all nations," offering freedom to "every inhabitant of the world." Nullification, however, threatened to destroy these "invaluable blessings" and expose the state to "oppressions…far greater than those we suffer." The crisis threatened the fate of liberty not only in America, but also around the world. Hugh Legaré, a Charleston legislator who became America's first minister to Belgium, argued that nullification did "more to strengthen the thrones of Europe than all the armies and arts of despotism put together." Thomas Grimké added that the tyrants of Europe would "glory and exult" over America's destruction, and their palaces would echo with the "mockery of freedom."[23]

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[22] William Smith, *Speech of the Hon. William Smith, Delivered on Monday, August 1, 1831* (Columbia, SC: Columbia Hive, 1832); Féte Civique: Célébrée a Charleston, S.C. en Commémoration de la Glorieuse Révolution Française de 1830 (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1830); Richard Manning, quoted in Henry D. Capers, *The Life and Times of C.G. Memminger* (Richmond: Everrett Waddey Co., 1893), 86; Andrew Jackson to Hardy Murfree Cryer, 18 October 1830, in *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, Vol. VIII (1830), ed, Daniel Feller, Thomas Coens, and Laura-Eve Moss (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2010), 564-565.

[23] Abraham Moise, quoted in Capers, *The Life and Times of C.G. Memminger*, 78; Hugh S. Legaré to Mary S. Legaré, 4 July 1833, *The Writings of Hugh Swinton Legaré*, Vol. 1; Thomas S. Grimké, *To the People of the State of South Carolina* (Charleston: J.S. Burges, 1832).

Union men arranged their own Independence Day celebrations to push back against nullification. Twelve hundred Union men marched through Charleston that morning, forming a "sublime and imposing spectacle." Twenty-four stewards led the procession, each symbolizing a state in the Union, and two Revolutionary War veterans carried the American flag. A choir sang an original ode celebrating the inspirational power of American freedom: "Even now, while all Europe is wrapt in commotion, / And the brave bleed or conquer, refusing to bow, / [Freedom] Shines forth like a beacon across the broad ocean." Instead of the Declaration of Independence, Daniel Huger read Washington's Farewell Address, which the Union Party had embraced as a statement of party principle. A minister delivered a "manly and prevent prayer," and William Drayton delivered an impassioned two-hour address sanctifying liberty and Union.[24]

At dinner afterwards, at least ten toasts referenced the European revolutions. One guest insisted that America's example was "revolutionizing the world," and he prayed that South Carolina would not "throw an obstacle in the way." They toasted the country's republican experiment as the "world's best hope" and the "last refuge of the persecuted patriot," and they insisted that liberty and Union were inseparable. When the empires of Europe crumbled into dust, they hoped America would "stand unshaken, the home and the refuge of liberty." More than twenty men delivered speeches or letters, affirming their commitment to the party and their devotion to the Union.[25]

The most important of these letters came from Andrew Jackson. Organizers had invited the president to the celebration, hoping his moral force would help rekindle the spirit of Unionism in South Carolina. They warned him that the crisis had divided the state and

[24] Capers, *The Life and Times of C.G. Memminger*, 40-42. Charleston's Union Party leaders carefully arranged the city's procession. They appointed thirteen people to a committee of arrangements and named twenty-four stewards to assist the committee.
[25] Capers, *The Life and Times of C.G.* Memminger, 37-105.

endangered the Union. The "bonds of fraternal affection" were unraveling, they wrote, and South Carolinian children were "growing up…in the dangerous belief that [sectional] interests are incompatible and conflicting." Although Jackson declined the invitation, he offered an eloquent reply celebrating the Union. The previous year, Nullifier Maria Pinckney had boldly declared that the American revolutionaries fought not to unite the colonies but rather to free them from oppression. Jackson, a veteran of the Revolution, responded that his fellow soldiers had pledged their lives to "sustain us a *United*, not less than an *Independent* people." While a few radical Nullifiers imagined peaceful secession, the president countered that disunion would lead inevitably to civil war and "colonial dependence on a foreign power." He invoked Washington's Farewell Address, urging South Carolinians to cherish an "immovable attachment" to the Union as the source of their national prosperity and strength.[26]

Meetings in other districts could not match the size or sophistication of Charleston's celebration, but they still echoed its message. In Camden, a large procession marched to the Episcopal Church, where a "patriot Clergyman" delivered a sermon that fused piety with the "purest patriotism." Several women performed a "national air," demonstrating that "American Ladies can feel their full share of affection" for the Union. The toasts declared that the Union had achieved "Liberty and Order—The bright dream of the ancient world." They celebrated the

[26] Capers, *The Life and Times of C.G. Memminger*, 45-48. Until 1831, both parties in South Carolina had supported Jackson and laid claim to his image. Nullifiers initially called themselves the "State Rights and Jackson Party," while Union men organized "Jackson and Anti-Nullification meetings." The tensions between Jackson and Calhoun prompted Charleston Nullifiers to change their name to the State Rights and Free Trade Party in May 1831, but many still insisted the president was on their side. After July 4, however, Nullifiers denounced the president, and he became a symbol of the Union Party. Lexington physician John Knox observed in August 1831 that Jackson's popularity in the South was plummeting, and Columbia lawyer David J McCord wrote in December that "All attacks upon Jackson [are] much applauded. Our party do not care a damn for him." See John Knox to James N. Knox, John Knox Letter, SCL; David J McCord to Stephen D Miller, 11 December 1831, David James McCord Papers, SCL.

America as a "Great Empire" founded on "friendship and good feeling" and prayed that its flag would "never be sullied by the spirit of Disunion."[27]

In Greenville, Nullifiers controlled the planning committee for the town's celebration, and they drafted regular toasts defending the "principles of '98." Invoking the European uprisings, they urged the crowd to reject passive obedience and defend their freedom. Benjamin Perry insisted that these tributes "breathe[d] not the sentiments of Greenville District," and the Union men in the crowd used the volunteer toasts to retaliate. They toasted "Our country—our whole country, right or wrong" and vowed to "forever ensure the union of these states." Like a "woman's love," Perry declared, South Carolina's Unionism should be too pure to calculate in dollars and cents. Legislator John H. Harrison repeated the president's famous toast—"Our federal Union, it must be preserved"—and prayed that allegiance to the United States would never become treason to South Carolina.[28]

Throughout the state, Union men rallied against nullification. When Nullifiers tried to establish a State Rights Association in Spartanburg, hundreds of Union men attended the meeting and hijacked the agenda. They offered resolutions condemning nullification and calling for Jackson's reelection, and by one estimate those measures passed 700 to 20. A few days later, the district's Nullifiers tried again, calling a party meeting at the court house. Only 32 people attended, many of them women. Although their presence demonstrated women's interest and engagement in the crisis, Union men mocked it as proof of the weakness of nullification sentiment in the district. To complete the Union Party's triumph, Spartanburg's grand jury declared the State Rights Party a public nuisance designed to "mislead the people" and "destroy

[27] *The Camden Journal*, 9 July 1831;
[28] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 9 July 1831.

and subvert the pure principles of Republicanism." One writer gloated that nullification was "literally dead in Spartanburgh," and he urged Union men across the state to follow their district's example.[29]

Union men largely avoided permanent organizations, which they still viewed as "Jacobinical." Nonetheless, they hosted dozens of meetings and dinners and encouraged voters to "come forward in the majesty of their strength." Perry realized that the State Rights Associations were a "powerful engine" that allowed Nullifiers to build support in every corner of the state. If the Union Party failed to "make some show of resistance," he warned, they would cede the ground and allow nullification to triumph. He urged every Union man in the district to gather in Greenville to affirm these five principles: opposition to the tariff, rejection of nullification, support of Andrew Jackson, "sincere regret" at the "high state of party excitement," and enduring devotion to the Union—the "last hope of human liberty."[30]

In August 1831, more than 1500 Union men gathered to endorse Jackson's reelection. William Smith delivered a stirring four-hour address denouncing the "devastating doctrine of nullification." He warned that the State Rights Associations, like the "Jacobin societies," would subvert the social order and engulf the continent in war. During the French Revolution, the streets of Paris streamed with blood, and the "plains of Europe were drenched with human gore." The same fate, he warned, would await South Carolina if they allowed Nullifiers to triumph. Smith celebrated the Union as a symbol of "rational liberty" whose example was inspiring European revolutionaries to destroy the "Despotisms of the old world." He asked the crowd if

[29] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 1 October 1831; *The New York Spectator*, 18 October 1831.
[30] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 10 September 1831.

they were willing to "apply the torch, and demolish in an instant the most splendid political fabric that the human mind ever created."[31]

In coastal St. Luke's Parish the following month, Union men draped the American flag over the court house and passed resolutions condemning nullification. They framed their Unionism as a conservative force, warning that nullification tore at the fabric of the social order: the "ties of friendship are severed—the maternal face is pale with anxiety—and the father trembles for the destiny of his children." Nullifiers were ready, "sword in hand, to rush forward to resist the constituted authorities" and engulf the state in the desolation. At stake, these Union men insisted, was the fate "not only of our posterity, but of the human race." America stood "without parallel or example," securing freedom and prosperity and demonstrating humanity's capacity for self-government. They declared themselves the "constitutional guardians of Liberty" and vowed to "restrain the impulses of discord" and restore harmony to the republic.[32]

As Nullifiers and Union men mobilized that summer, they anxiously analyzed public opinion across the state. A Unionist merchant traveling through the upcountry noted that Nullifiers were "making tremendous efforts to excite the people." Chester and Abbeville, he observed, were "greatly divided," and both parties in Lancaster were "organizing with great activity." Hammond, visiting those same districts, reported that upcountry Nullifiers were growing stronger and more confident, and a Lancaster politician agreed that "nullification [is] rapidly gaining ground." At a meeting in Fairfield, one writer marveled, "the word nullification was electric—the house shook with plaudits, and the speaker was for some moments unable to proceed amidst the cheers." The Independence Day letters between Jackson and the Union Party

[31] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 6 August 1831; *Speech of the Hon. William Smith, Delivered on Monday, August 1, 1831* (Columbia, SC: Columbia Hive, 1832).
[32] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 17 September 1831.

had galvanized Nullifiers, who viewed them as proof that Union men intended to betray the state. Hammond insisted that "Too much cannot be made of them" and encouraged Hamilton to publish and circulate the letters throughout the state. He boasted that the political tide was "setting strongly for us," and the only danger lay in "mismanagement on our side."[33]

Union men, however, were committed to turning the tide and defeating the State Rights Party. When William Smith learned that McDuffie was travelling from district to district delivering speeches, he decided to follow him and meet him in a series of debates. Smith encouraged Union Party leaders to "take up the line of march with them and call meetings of the people ourselves." A Charleston writer observed that Union men were rallying across the upcountry, and local leaders were using their "great influence for the good cause of the Union." Even in Beaufort, a Nullifier stronghold, Union men launched "something like a stump [campaign]" and considered founding a party newspaper. A few districts, recognizing the need for formal organization, established committees of correspondence to communicate with Union Party leaders throughout the state.[34]

Charleston's municipal elections in September 1831 became a test of party strength, and voter turnout once again reached new heights. Both parties ran complete tickets, with Henry Pinckney once again challenging incumbent James Pringle for city intendant. By all accounts, the campaign was the "most animated political struggle" the city had ever witnessed. As one writer observed, the parties held so many public dinners that "a man might have lived comfortably for a week or ten days preceding the election, without being a cent out of pocket."

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[33] *The Globe*, 9 August 1831; James H. Hammond to James Hamilton, 28 July 1831, The Papers of James Henry Hammond, LOC; James E. Reese to Stephen D. Miller, 8 August 1831, and John Gallatin Bowman to Stephen D. Miller, 18 August 1831, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS.

[34] William Smith to Joel R. Poinsett, 24 July 1831, The Papers of Joel R. Poinsett, HSP; *The Globe*, 9 August 1831; James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 25 August 1831, James L. Petigru Letters, SCHS; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 10 September 1831.

The previous year, 1600 men had voted, with Pringle capturing 53 percent and the Union Party gaining control of city council. This time, turnout soared to 1972, and Nullifiers swept to power. Pinckney secured nearly 300 new voters, and his share of the electorate rose from 47 percent to 53 percent.[35]

Nullifiers cheered the election as a triumph of principle, and they looked forward to the state elections the following year. Union men, however, accused their enemies of stealing the election through bribery and fraud. The State Rights Association, they insisted, preyed on poorer voters—the men "least able to assert their independence." While both parties paid men to vote, Petigru complained that Nullifiers bought "those that were sold before"—dishonorably bribing men who had already pledged their votes to the Union Party. Nullifiers also practiced "new and unheard of means," keeping men drunk and locked up until election day or breaking into houses to drag reluctant voters to the polls. They employed men devoted to the "craft of electioneering" who possessed few "scruples of conscience." Even some Nullifiers believed their party had gone too far. Disgusted by his party's tactics, Baptist minister Basil Manly refused to vote in the election, and his church excommunicated one of its members for "act[ing] the part of a violent partizan and bully in the late elections." Petigru viewed the crisis as a struggle between "liberty and licentiousness" and mourned that "passion is openly preferred the reason." He predicted that Nullifiers would only grow stronger as their leaders "play[ed] the part of patriots" and drew "more fools into their circle."[36]

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[35] *The National Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), 13 September 1831; William C. Bee to Frederick C. Fraser, 14 September 1,831, Frederick Fraser Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University (DU); *The Charlotte Journal* (Charlotte, NC), 9 November 1831; *Newbern Sentinel*, 21 September 1831; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 24 September 1831. In 1830, Pringle won the election 838 to 754. In 1831, Pinckney triumphed by a vote of 1040 to 932.

[36] Jacob F. Schirmer Diary, 6 September 1831, SCHS; James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 7 September 1831, James L. Petigru Papers, SCHS; Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, "The Economics and Politics of Charleston's Nullification

Taking stock of the Union Party's defeat, Petigru confessed that Nullifiers "outdid us in maneuvering." A Charleston editor concluded that Nullifiers had "gain[ed] by discipline what they [lacked] in numbers." For the country to survive, he observed, Union men needed to coordinate their efforts, adopting principles of "unanimity, confidence, firmness, and mutual support." Benjamin Perry agreed. He declared Nullifiers the "most indefatigable managers ever known" and attributed their victory to their superior organization. Undaunted by defeat, Perry prayed that the Charleston election would "inspire the Union party with more zeal and activity." Another writer urged Union men across the state to build their own political network. The "violent party," he observed, employed "every sort of machinery" and formed State Rights Associations "in every nook and corner of the State." The Union Party had a duty to the "cause of civil freedom" to respond—to "rouse itself to a concerted and energetic action." He asked Union men to found local organizations and elect delegates to a statewide party convention, allowing them to "harmonise in action and meet the enemy with a concert as united as its own."[37]

As party leaders prepared for the 1832 campaign, they reaffirmed the Union's providential purpose and its role as a beacon of liberty. A Union Party meeting in Greenville declared that the "experiment we are now trying, of the capacity of man for self-government, is the last hope of human liberty, and we are determined to cling to the Union in defiance of all the powers of Nullification itself." In a public letter to the state's Nullifiers, Thomas Grimké called the Union was the "very gift of heaven itself"—a land of freedom and prosperity and a refuge from political persecution. The country's public servants, he insisted, had a duty to preserve the Union and to demonstrate the viability of republican principles. While Nullifiers equated the

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Crisis," *The Journal of Southern History* 47, no. 3 (August 1981), 355. Available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2207798.

[37] James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 7 September 1831, James L. Petigru Papers, SCHS; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 17 September 1831 and 3 December 1831; *The Camden Journal*, 24 September 1831.

state's struggle to the European revolutions, Charleston editor William Gilmore Simms dismissed the comparison. After decades of despotism, he observed, Europeans had to fight to secure the most basic human freedoms. America, on the other hand, was a "Government of the people," and it guaranteed political and economic opportunity for all its citizens.[38]

For decades, Americans had viewed the Union as an unprecedented experiment in self-government and insisted that their example would inspire the world to strive for liberty. The revolutions that swept across Europe in 1830 appeared to confirm those convictions, and South Carolinians of both parties shared in the national celebration. Their responses, however, reflected their conflicting partisan ideologies, as Nullifiers praised the revolutionaries' resolve while Union men emphasized their restraint. Nullifiers viewed their own movement as part of a global struggle between liberty and tyranny. Union men, however, saw a crisis between "rational liberty" and anarchy, comparing Nullifiers to the radical Jacobins of the French Revolutions. Convinced that America's example had inspired the European uprisings, they feared that nullification would destroy republican freedom in their own country and throughout the world. These beliefs fueled the Union Party's reluctance to formally organize their own party and contributed to their defeat in 1832, but they also inspired them to mobilize against nullification and accept—if not embrace—popular politics and partisan competition.

[38] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 10 September 1831 and 14 January 1832; Thomas Grimké*, Letter to the Honorable John C. Calhoun, Robert Y. Hayne, George McDuffie, and James Hamilton* (Charleston: James S Burges, 1832).

Chapter Four: "The War of Nullification Has Already Commenced": Contesting Manhood in South Carolina, August 1831-November 1832

Benjamin Perry paced the dueling ground on August 16, 1832, his mind "constantly kept on the object in view." His opponent, Turner Bynum, was a Charleston Nullifier who had founded a rival newspaper in Greenville less than two months earlier. The two editors' political debates had quickly grown personal, and on August 4, Bynum had accused Perry of "truckling subserviency" to Charleston's Union Party leaders. Perry immediately challenged him to a duel, and their choice of seconds underscored the political nature of the dispute. Perry selected Dr. Andrew Crook and Perry Duncan, two of the district's leading Union men, while Bynum recruited Columbia Nullifier James Henry Hammond. Preparing for death, Perry drafted a farewell letter to the people of Greenville, defending his conduct and accusing local Nullifiers of conspiring to "get rid of me." Too "cowardly to meet me themselves on the field of honor," he wrote, they had enlisted Bynum—a "desperate adventurer without name or reputation…who will fight for any one."[1]

They met on an island on the Tugaloo River, on the border between South Carolina and Georgia. Their seconds measured the dueling ground, handed the men their pistols, and commanded them to take their places. Perry later insisted that he felt "cool, firm, and collected, never more so in my life." At Hammond's word, Bynum fired first, his ball cutting through Perry's coat. Perry returned fire a moment later, striking Bynum just above the hip. The young Nullifier dropped his pistol, reeled backwards, and fell into the arms of his seconds. He died the following evening, and Hammond and his friends carried Bynum's body to the Old Stone Church in nearby Pendleton. Church leaders refused burial to anyone killed in a duel, so

[1] Benjamin F. Perry Diary, August 1832, B.F. Perry Papers, SHC.

Hammond buried him by torch light just outside the cemetery walls. News of the duel quickly spread, and Nullifiers throughout the state mourned Bynum's death with "deep sorrow and regret." Perry defended his conduct, observing that he "could not avoid [the duel] without sacrificing character and usefulness in life." In the honor-obsessed culture of the American South, he had to "fight for my principles or be disgraced." Having survived, however, he returned to Greenville and prayed for "peace and quiet," confident that Nullifiers would never "impose on me again."[2]

For decades, white South Carolinians' commitment to manhood and mastery helped mitigate political tensions and unify the state. In 1830, South Carolina was the only state with an African-American majority, and in some lowcountry parishes, slaves outnumbered whites nine to one. This demographic imbalance fueled whites' fears and underscored the need for harmony. Well into the 1800s, however, social and political divisions endured—between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, between Smithites and Calhounites, between upcountry and lowcountry. In moments of crisis, these simmering political tensions could expose more fundamental divisions, including fractures in the state's gender culture itself.[3]

During the nullification crisis, most Nullifiers expressed a martial conception of manhood. They insisted that true men would fight to defend their homes and their honor, and

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[2] Benjamin F. Perry Diary, August 1832, B.F. Perry Papers, SHC; James Hamilton to Waddy Thompson, 31 August 1832, James Hamilton Papers, SCL; Samuel A. Townes to George F. Townes, 23 August 1832, Townes Family Papers, SCL; James H. Hammond, Plantation Book, 16 August 1832, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Patricia McNeely, "Dueling Editors: The Nullification Plot of 1832," *Words at War: The Civil War and American Journalism*, eds. David B. Sachsman, S. Kittrell Rushing, and Roy Morris Jr. (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008), 30.

[3] See James M. Banner, Jr., "The Problem of South Carolina," *The Hofstadter Aegis: A Memorial*, ed. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick (New York: Knopf, 1974); Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Robert M. Weir, "'The Harmony We Were Famous For': An Interpretation of Pre-Revolutionary South Carolina Politics," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (October, 1969), 473-501; Klein, *Unification of a Slave State;* Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

thousands ultimately volunteered the defend the state against tyranny. They dismissed their enemies as timid "submission men" unworthy of freedom. Union men responded by reaffirming their manhood—but they did so in conflicting ways. Some, like Benjamin Perry, embraced martial manhood, fighting back against nullification and violently defending their honor. Others, including James Petigru, William Drayton, and Constans Daniels, espoused an alternate vision of moderate manhood—an ideal grounded in reason and restraint. These moderate men warned that nullification would destroy the social order and incite disunion, gender radicalism, and racial warfare. They argued that true men would preserve law and order and protect their families from the "horrors of civil war." These contested meanings of manhood were essential to South Carolinians' conceptions of liberty and Union and thus inseparable from the political crisis.[4]

They intensified the state's political divisions even as they hindered the Union Party's ability to mount an effective organizational challenge to nullification. Moderate Union men struggled to restore harmony and feared that founding their own "political clubs" would only escalate the crisis. Martial Union men, however, often embraced partisanship and political violence, insisting they could only defeat Nullifiers by confronting them. As the election of 1832 approached, small-scale violence erupted across the state. Armed mobs roamed the streets of Charleston, intimidating and attacking their enemies. Political rivals dueled, wrestled, and assaulted each other, and the violence led one witness to declare that the "war of nullification has

[4] See Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); James Corbett David, "The Politics of Emasculation: The Caning of Charles Sumner and Elite Ideologies of Manhood in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century United States," *Gender & History* 19, no. 2 (2007): 324-345; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South*, eds. Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

already commenced." Political and cultural tensions reached new heights, as the state's partisan alignments solidified, and both parties warned that electoral defeat would herald disaster.[5]

For antebellum South Carolinians, the home symbolized and solidified the social order. In 1830, a Columbia newspaper described the idealizing domestic world that both parties hoped to preserve. The home, it imagined, was the "castle of sovereignty" and the foundation of "peace, order, harmony, and happiness." It was a refuge, hallowed by faith and sweetened by "Matron chastity" and "infantile innocence." Its patriarch, the independent farmer, maintained the freedom of his convictions and recognized no sovereign except God and the people. The rhythms of his agricultural life instilled virtue and "love of order," while his devotion to farm and family fueled a simple but ardent patriotism. He loved his country with the purity of his faith and the strength of his "affections with the soil," and he defended its honor with "holy enthusiasm."[6]

Nullifiers framed their movement as a defense of his idyllic Jeffersonian world. They warned that the tariff would erode state sovereignty, devastate southern agriculture, and incite slave rebellion. As one writer explained, the crisis involved all South Carolinian men—"as citizens, as owners of the soil—as fathers of families." Greenville Nullifier Waddy Thompson agreed that "every that is dear to us as men, as freemen, and as fathers" was at stake. Robert

[5] Julia M. Brown to Jonathan Ralph Flynt, 12 October 1832, Julia M. Brown Letter, SCL; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 28 April 1832. The few historians who have applied a gendered lens to the nullification crisis have focused exclusively on the Nullifiers, arguing that they embodied a martial manhood rooted in mastery. Stephanie McCurry argues that the state's cultural emphasis on mastery helped unify white South Carolinians, while James Brewer Stewart agreed that nullification reflected white South Carolinians' "affirmation of manhood." Their insightful analyses, however, leave little room for the state's Union men. McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*; James Brewer Stewart, "'A Great Talking and Eating Machine': Patriarchy, Mobilization and the Dynamics of Nullification in South Carolina," *Civil War History* 27, no. 3 (September 1991), 197-220.

[6] *The Southern Times*, 29 January 1830. This celebration of the "American farmer" came from a Louisville address by John Rowan in July 1829, but newspapers throughout the South republished it, implicitly endorsing its arguments. See *Louisville Public Advertiser*, 22 August 1829.

Barnwell Smith thundered that he would rather brave disunion than see his children slaughtered and his house engulfed in flames. At a massive meeting in Charleston, Henry Pinckney warned that northerners sought to transform the state into a "scene of melancholy desolation and decay" and demanded, "is there any gentleman present who can calmly contemplate this picture?" Faced with this impending cataclysm, Nullifiers insisted that anger and action were the only manly responses.[7]

The Nat Turner rebellion underscored the stakes of the political crisis. In August 1831, Turner launched the deadliest slave rebellion in American history, killing about sixty whites in Southampton County, Virginia. Although South Carolinians suppressed news of the uprising, terror quickly consumed the state. Slave panics swept across the upcountry, gripping Greenville, Abbeville, York, Newberry, and Laurens. Marion District organized a vigilance company to serve "under arms, day and night" to prevent another "South Hampton massacre." Spartanburg officials moved a cannon to the court house to protect the village, and Union District arrested fifty slaves for plotting a "general rise." Families across the state fled their homes, hiding in fields or forests or village arsenals, and men and women lay awake at night haunted by fears of insurrection. For southern men, slave rebellions threatened to briefly but violently upend their patriarchal world. They evoked images of houses burned, women assaulted, and children butchered—of the social order destroyed, and white men powerless to defend their homes and families.[8]

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[7] *The Southern Sentinel*, 4 August 1832; *The Columbia Telescope*, 28 August 1829; Henry L. Pinckney speech in *Proceedings of the Celebration of the 4th July, 1831 at Charleston by the State Rights and Free Trade Party* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1831), 60-69; *The Southern Times & State Gazette*, 4 October 1830.

[8] Patrick H. Breen, *The Land Shall Be Deluged in Blood: A New History of the Nat Turner Revolt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Samuel C. Jackson Diary, 17 November 1832, Samuel C. Jackson Papers, SCL; Samuel A Townes to brother, 8 October 1831, Townes Family Papers, SCL; G.S. McLane, Petition for Compensation for a Slave Executed for Attempted Poisoning, 21 November 1831, SCDAH; Cader Hughes, Petition and Supporting Paper Asking Compensation for Supplying Food to The Militia Company, 22 November 1831, SCDAH; Robert A.

Nullifiers projected confidence, insisting their slaves were too loyal to contemplate rebellion. As martial men, they sought to master fear and hesitation. An Abbeville doctor, for example, dismissed his neighbors' "foolish fear," warning that panic could "produce the very thing" they hoped to avoid. Pendleton editor Frederick Symmes agreed, cautioning readers not to "be frightened out [of] our wits at every silly rumor." If "anything could bring about such an event among us," he advised, "it would be the evidence that we fear it." At the same time, they focused their anger on northern "fanatics." By the early 1830s, a few northern reformers had begun calling for immediate abolition, and southerners feared their "incendiary" ideas would inspire slaves to rebel. One writer, for example, urged lawmakers to ban all northern merchants from the state, warning that they sowed the "seeds of discord and discontent." For Nullifiers, manhood and mastery demanded resistance. As one writer declared, South Carolinians would "never give up [their] slaves." The only way for northerners to free them was to "Conquer us—take our house, our lands, and our stock, rob us of our all."[9]

Nullifiers marshaled their ideals of manhood to mobilize South Carolinians against the tariff and emancipation. During the winter of 1831-32, they held a party convention in Columbia with delegates from at least 30 districts and parishes. They formed committees to collect money,

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Cunningham, Petition for Compensation for His Slave, Ned, 22 November 1831, SCDAH; Benjamin Holt et al, Petition and Supporting Paper Asking Compensation for Feeding a Volunteer Company, 24 November 1831, SCDAH; John G. Vernon, Petition Asking for Funds to Repair a Field Piece and Carriage, 1832, SCDAH; Samuel C. Jackson Diary, 17 November 1832, Samuel C. Jackson Papers, SCL; *The Liberator*, 5 November 1831.

[9] Samuel A Townes to brother, 8 October 1831, Townes Family Papers, SCL; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 12 October 1831; *State Rights and Free Trade Evening Post*, 29 October 1831; ; *The Camden and Lancaster Beacon*, 12 April 1831 and 1 November 1831; *The Southern Times & State Gazette*, 4 October 1830. South Carolinians, however, betrayed their anxiety in their petitions to the General Assembly. Abbeville asked for money to build a new arsenal, noting the "peculiar situation of the people of this state, with an enemy at their very firesides, dangerous under any circumstances, but still more so when prompted to mischief by some of our infatuated countrymen." Kershaw petitioned for laws banning African-American mechanics and preachers, and Richland insisted that allowing African Americans to gather for religious services endangered the "peace and safety of the Citizens of this State." See petitions to the General Assembly, SCDAH.

draft a public address, and publish a series of political pamphlets—planning to distribute 10,000 copies throughout the state. The delegates urged South Carolinians to abandon their "childish fears" and manfully defend "all that is dear to our beloved State." While they celebrated their own struggle for freedom, they denounced Union men as traitors and "submission men." In a culture steeped in honor, one scholar observes, the word *submission* connoted "psychological, racial, and social self-destruction." For Nullifiers, Union men's refusal to defend the state reflected their failures as husbands, fathers, and masters. As an upcountry woman explained, "He that will not protect his liberties, will not protect his wife." Greenville Nullifier Waddy Thompson informed his neighbors that their rejection of nullification "degraded [them] as men and freemen," and Robert Barnwell Smith decried Union men for "lov[ing] life better than honor."[10]

Many Union men, however, rejected this martial conception of manhood and pleaded for forbearance and restraint. Men like Richard Manning and David Williams lamented the violent passions dividing the state and insisted that rage and phrensy were unmanly emotions. These Union men viewed nullification as a mental arrangement, calling Nullifiers madmen and fanatics. An Abbeville writer denounced the "feverish state of turbulent excitement," observing that the "paroxysms were too violent for the exercise of reason." Another writer agreed, condemning Nullifiers' "violence and phrenzied impetuosity." Petigru insisted that the two

[10] *Address by the Free Trade and State Rights Association to the People of South Carolina* (Columbia: Office of the Telescope and Times, 1832); Boucher, *The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina,* 125-126; Stewart, "'A Great Talking and Eating Machine,'" 209; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 18 July 1833; *The Columbia Telescope*, 11 September 1832; *The Winyaw Intelligencer*, 10 November 1832; *The Charleston Mercury*, 18 June 1828. In 1838, Smith changed his name to Robert Barnwell Rhett.

parties embodied the "old quarrel between liberty and licentiousness," with Nullifiers "blustering and bawling" while Union men championed manly restraint.[11]

For these Union men, manhood demanded moderation, and honor required reason and restraint. They called themselves "moderate and rational men" and "lovers of peace and good order." They championed "regulated liberty" and placed their faith in the "sober, dispassionate, the reflecting people." A writer calling himself *Moderation* declared Unionism the only "prudent and manly course" and advised readers to patiently await the "returning good sense of the American people." Petigru denounced Nullifiers as a party of passion, and a Charleston meeting agreed that their enemies hoped to "rouse our passions and agitate our minds." The Union Party, by contrast, saw itself as a party of principle and patriotism—a party of reason. When Nullifiers appealed to their passions, for example, a group of Charleston mechanics demanded "rational evidence that our Liberty is invaded."[12]

Union men feared that nullification placed the state, the social order, and their own families in jeopardy. They recognized that few northerners supported the abolition movement, and they trusted moderate men throughout the country to denounce antislavery "fanaticism." For Union men, Nullifiers rather than abolitionists represented the most immediate threat to slavery.

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[11] John S. Pressly to Francis Preston Blair, 18 February 1833, John S. Pressly Papers, SCL; *Address to the People of Chester District, Assembled to Discuss the Question of Nullification* (Charleston: n.p., 1832); James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 7 September 1831, James L. Petigru Papers, SCHS; Daniel H. Skinner to Isaac Skinner, 2 October 1828, Daniel Havens Skinner Letter, SCL; *The Columbia Hive*, 16 March 1833; *The Southern Patriot*, 15 September 1832; *The Columbia Hive*, 16 March 1833; Hugh Legaré to I. E. Holmes, 8 April 1833, *The Writings of Hugh Swinton Legaré, Late Attorney General* (Charleston: Burges & James, 1846); *The Camden Journa*l, 12 October 1832; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 16 July 1830 and 22 September 1832; *The Southern Whig*, 12 July 1832. When Nullifiers claimed to embody southern chivalry, a Greenville writer replied that the ideal did not entail "rashness or empty vaporing." A Sumter editor agreed, writing that Nullifiers' courage and valor were merely "extravagant Quixotism" and "senseless bravado."

[12] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 16 July 1830 and 20 October 1832; J.H.S. to Frederick Fraser, 30 May 1832, Fraser Family Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University (hereafter DU); *The Southern Patriot*, 24 September 1834; *The Irishman and Southern Democrat*, 24 August 1831; *The Camden Journal*, 7 August 1830 and 9 February 1833; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 1 August 1835; *The Southern* Patriot, 4 October 1832 and 3 November 1832

As Thomas Grimké explained, the Constitution protected slavery and provided the "only restraint" against fanaticism. By eroding the Constitution, however, Nullifiers were loosening the bonds of slavery and encouraging "servile insurrection." Camden legislator William McWillie confessed that he had "no apprehensions" of the federal government promoting emancipation, but he "feared the effect of our own madness and temerity." By provoking a civil war, he argued, nullification would destroy slavery and expose the state to the "horrors of St. Domingo."[13]

At least one writer blamed the 1831 insurrection panic on the "discussion of nullification at barbecues, dinner speeches, stump speeches, court yards, and every meeting of a few neighbors." The "high toned language of liberty or death, shouldering of muskets, &c," he explained, had "excited effects in either race bond or free, that might end in serious consequences." On July 4, 1832, hundreds fell violently ill at a Union Party celebration in Bishopville, and guests immediately accused local slaves of poisoning the food. Images of the Reign of Terror fused with nightmares of "another St. Domingo," and Union men feared that their slaves would "take an opportunity in this commotion to cut their throats." They warned that Nullifiers would unleash a "reign of anarchy," leaving the "temples of your religion demolished…your rivers stained with kindred blood, and the chastity of your females violated in their domestic altars."[14]

These Union men viewed themselves as conservative defenders of the social order. By resisting nullification, they hoped to protect their families from the chaos of disunion. A

[13] *The Camden Journal*, 4 September 1830 and 1 October 1831; *The Evening Post* (New York, NY), 4 November 1831; Thomas Grimké, *Speech of Thomas Grimké Delivered in the Senate of South Carolina in December 1828* (Charleston: W. Riley, 1829); *The Debate in the South Carolina Legislature in December 1830 on the Reports of the Committees of Both Houses in Favor of Convention* (Columbia: S J McMorris, 1831).
[14] *The Columbia Hive*, 11 February 1832, 21 April 1832, and 14 July 1832; Samuel C. Jackson to William True, 14 December 1832, Samuel C. Jackson Papers, SCL.; *The Edgefield Hive*, 26 February 1830; *The National Gazette*, 20 July 1832.

Revolutionary War veteran, for example, observed that there was no "manly courage" in "endangering the lives of women and children, and involving in common ruin the safety of [the] country." They denounced Nullifiers as radical "French Revolutionists" seeking to reenact the Reign of Terror on South Carolina's shores. Nullification, they warned, would tear families apart, with "brother arrayed against brother, and the sword of the father plunged in the bosom of the son."[15]

Nullifiers derided them as "submission men," insisting their refusal to fight degraded them as "men and freemen" Moderate Union men, however, redefined submission to celebrate their reason and restraint. Camden editor Constans Daniels boldly declared that "We *are* submission men…We profess to submit to the Constitution of our country. We submit to the laws…We submit to the voice of a majority of the nation." Petigru insisted that patriotism made "obedience honorable," and a Columbia editor celebrated the "patriotic submissionist to the laws of his country." A Georgetown writer observed that Union men were "not ashamed to say that we are submissionists," and he described America's fragile republican experiment as the "most successful effort ever made in the cause of rational liberty." For these men, submission to the Constitution did not diminish their manhood; it confirmed it. As true, moderate men, they upheld the social and political order and obeyed the nation's just laws.[16]

They still trusted the democratic process, insisting the new Congress would ultimately lower the tariff. Although they distrusted partisan politics, many party leaders ardently defended majority rule. David R. Williams, for example, declared it the foundation of America's political institutions, and Richard Manning agreed that, despite "all [its] evils," majority rule was still

[15] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 18 July 1833; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 22 September 1832; *Southern Whig*, 14 June 1832.
[16] *The Columbia Telescope*, 11 September 1832; *The Winyaw Intelligencer*, 10 November 1832; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 25 June 1831, quoting *The Georgetown Union.*

"better and safer" than letting a political faction control the government. Benjamin Perry expressed his "deep rooted love of democratic principles" and defended the "divine right of the people." When the General Assembly reconvened in 1831, Union men pushed for limited democratic reform, hoping to give voters the power to elect local tax collectors and presidential electors. Perry went even further, attacking the state's "anti-republican" structure and urging lawmakers to reapportion and democratize the legislature. Their efforts, however, quickly ran aground.[17]

February 22, 1832—George Washington's one hundredth birthday—gave both parties a chance to reflect on the crisis and contest the country's history, symbols, and ideals. Nullifiers organized a party convention in Charleston, drawing representatives from almost every district in the state. Several thousand people filled the city's amphitheater, which party leaders had adorned with flags, pictures of Palmetto trees, and portraits of the states' political leaders. Women occupied the upper boxes, demonstrating the party's "public virtue" and the "female beauty and patriotism" of the city. Governor Hamilton, addressing the crowd, laid claim to Washington's legacy. He imagined Washington as a paragon of martial manhood, foregrounding his role as a Revolutionary general rather than his time as president. He insisted that Washington's "life [is]

[17] Richard Manning, quoted in Capers, *The Life and Times of C.G. Memminger*; *The Charleston Mercury*, 27 August 1828; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 16 January 1830; *The Greeneville Mountaineer*, 11 June 1830; Cole Blease Graham, Jr., *The South Carolina State Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 22-23; Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 262. The state constitution, for example, required legislators to own 500 acres of land and 10 slaves, excluding all but the wealthiest citizens from office. The General Assembly selected almost all state officials, including the governor senators, and presidential electors, and the political system concentrated power among lowcountry planters. Each district and parish had one representative in the state senate, giving 40 voters in coastal St. Andrew's Parish as much power as 3500 men in upcountry Pendleton District. Perry hoped to make the governorship an elected office and reapportion the legislature on the basis of white population.
Legislators could also qualify by owning 150 pounds sterling of debt-free real estate. The state constitution, furthermore, based representation in the lower house on population and taxable property, which disproportionately favored the slave-dense lowcountry.

our vindication" and prayed that his "invincible spirit of resistance" would guide Nullifiers through the crisis.[18]

Waddy Thompson, speaking that same day, also used Washington's memory as a martial call to arms. He declared that the "last of the trials of our Government, is at hand," and he called on South Carolinians to rise up in defense of their "violated liberty." He still hoped to redeem the Union, observing that the light it kindled was "leading a struggling world to freedom." If tyranny triumphed, however, and the Union served only to "beguile mankind into the quagmires of despotism," then Thompson hoped for its immediate destruction. He urged Nullifiers to meet the crisis manfully. Even if they were "borne down by brute force," he exclaimed, they would die with honor and dignity.[19]

Union men used the day to defend their own conceptions of manhood, liberty, and the country's history. In Charleston's St. Philip's Church, Hugh Legaré delivered an eloquent tribute to Washington and the Union. Jackson had just named Legaré the country's first minister to Belgium, and he would sail to Europe later that year. This speech served as a farewell address—a final plea for South Carolinians to cling to the Union of their fathers. While Hamilton and

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[18] *The Charleston Mercury*, 24 February 1832 and 25 February 1832; John C Schulz to Maria B Schulz, 24 February 1832, "Some Letters from John Christopher Schulz, 1829-1883," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 56, no. 1 (Jan. 1955), 1-7, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27565981. Pendleton, the lone exception, had "not deemed it expedient to form an Association" because of the "unanimity" of its people in support of nullification. On a more practical level, the Nullifiers resolved to increase their political activity in the coming months. They agreed to They resolved to publish two pamphlets each month to "explain and inculcate nullification," planning to distribute 10,000 copies of each issue throughout the state. Reflecting the growing sophistication of their party machinery, they detailed the exact number of pamphlets to send to each district. Local associations would help raise the $4000 necessary for production by drawing money from their members. ." Although Hamilton had helped consciously construct the party's political machinery, he described the State Rights Associations as a spontaneous outburst of republican principle. The organizations, he insisted, had "suddenly…risen up throughout our land like camp fires" to resist the "vast central power" of federal tyranny.

[19] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 24 March 1832. That same day, after the military procession, a Nullifier delivered an address in Charleston's Unitarian church. Militiaman William C. Dukes recorded that, the address was full of "nonsensical bombast against the present government of the Union." See William Christopher Dukes Commonplace Books, SCL.

Thompson made Washington a symbol of martial resistance, Legaré imagined him as a paragon of moderation and statesmanship. After the Revolution, he observed, Washington and his "discontented army" could have plunged the country into civil war. Instead, he helped Americans forge a stable and prosperous government. The years that followed represented one of the greatest eras in human history, because they gave rise to a "people capable of self-government." Legaré urged listeners to embody these same principles of peace and patriotism—to serve the Union and help ensure its survival.[20]

Union men throughout the state shared these sentiments. In the past hundred years, Perry observed, Americans had risen from "Colonial vassalage to the highest pinnacle of national greatness," achieving unprecedented freedom and prosperity. At a Spartanburg celebration, guests warned that nullification would bring "disunion, anarchy and civil war" as well as "ruin, devastation and slavery." One speaker declared the district's uncompromising Unionism the "triumph of the principles of their forefathers." In Charleston that day, Thomas Grimké dedicated a political pamphlet to the American people, expressing confidence in their "good sense, love of order, and unchangeable devotion to the Union." He insisted that the Union "must and shall be perpetual" and urged readers to "cultivate the spirit of peace" and the "law of love."[21]

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[20] Jacob F. Schirmer Diary, 22 February 1832; *Charleston Courier*, 24 February 1832; John C Schulz to Maria B Schulz, 24 February 1832, "Some Letters from John Christopher Schulz." Witnesses hailed Legaré's speech, with one calling it "one of the best orations I ever heard in my life," and even some Nullifiers acknowledged Legaré's eloquence. See *The Charleston Mercury*, 24 February 1832. See also Merrill G. Christopherson, "A Rhetorical Study of Hugh Swinton Legaré: South Carolina Unionist" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 1954).

[21] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 25 February 1832; *The Columbia Hive*, 10 March 1832; Thomas Grimké, *Letter to the Honorable John C. Calhoun, Robert Y. Hayne, George McDuffie, and James Hamilton.* Grimké's pamphlet was a public letter to the state's leaders, written in December 1831. Although the pamphlet was not published until April, Grimké wrote the dedication on February 22, 1832.

In July 1832, Congress passed a new tariff law, lowering average import duties from 50 percent to 25 percent. The bill received a two-thirds majority in both houses, and South Carolina's three Unionist Congressmen—William Drayton, James Blair, and Thomas Mitchell—all voted in favor. Mitchell pleaded for moderation, denouncing Nullifiers and protectionists for letting "abstract principles" endanger the Union. He argued that statesmen had a duty to "soothe, to reconcile, and to satisfy"—to find peaceful solutions to the country's struggles. Drayton compared nullification to the "ravages of a whirlwind" and felt a responsibility to "stop the torrent, which threatens to sweep away the very foundation of social and civil union." He hoped the new tariff would restore harmony and present the "glorious spectacle of a self-governed people, free, powerful, and harmonious"—giving hope to the "friends of rational liberty, in the old and in the new world."[22]

Although the new tariff still protected northern manufacturing, most Union men viewed it as a reasonable compromise. They recognized that ending protection altogether could wreak havoc on the northern economy, and they assured voters that the law heralded the return of peace and "national happiness." Local leaders organized dinners and rallies honoring Drayton, Mitchell, and Blair and praising their "manly" and "fearless" votes. Nullifiers, however, viewed the tariff as an unmanly concession of principle. By voting for the tariff, Greenville's Tandy Walker explained, southerners had "yield[ed] the whole ground" and sealed their region's fate. Congressional Nullifiers drafted an address declaring that all hope of relief had "finally and forever vanished," and Calhoun observed that the "question is no longer one of free trade, but

[22] *Register Of Debates in Congress*, 22nd Congress, 1st Session, 5 June and 7 June 1832; William Drayton to Joel R. Poinsett, 20 December 1830, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

liberty and despotism." Across the state, party meetings denounced the Unionist Congressmen as traitors and defiantly vowed to accept "no compromise."[23]

Officially, the State Rights Party continued to champion nullification as the "great conservative principle"—the only means of safeguarding liberty within the Union. Most Nullifiers still hoped to preserve the Union as they understood it: as a loose confederation of sovereign states. The political center, however, was shifting closer to radicalism. Two years earlier, party leaders tried to broaden their appeal by playing down nullification and calling only for an unpledged convention. Now, Nullifiers in most districts openly demanded nullification, and a growing number contemplated disunion. One lowcountry politician, for example, warned that the "first drop of Carolina blood that is spilt dissolves the Union forever." Robert Turnbull confessed that nullification could lead to civil war and declared that anyone too scared to fight for their liberty lacked "souls big enough for the crisis." Pendleton's Armistead Burt agreed, insisting that anyone who "count[ed] the cost of being free" "deserves to be a slave."[24]

A Columbia writer proclaimed unequivocally that "THIS UNION MUST BE DISSOLVED." Sectional tension, he explained, had grown too intense, and any attempt at compromise would only "prolong the life of tyranny." He looked to France's July Revolution for inspiration. In three days, he observed, France had thrown off its despotic government and

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[23] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 7 April 1832 and 15 September 1832; *The Camden Journal*, 21 July 1832; *Southern Whig*, 29 September 1832; *Newbern Spectator*, 13 July 1832; *The Southern Sentinel*, 4 August 1832; *The Columbia Telescope*, 5 June 1832; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 248-249. Robert Y. Hayne, Stephen D. Miller, George McDuffie, Warren R. Davis, John M. Felder, John K. Griffin, William T. Nuckolls, and Robert W. Barnwell all signed the "Address to the People of South Carolina." The Union Party congressmen—Drayton, Blair, and Mitchell—did not. Editors and local politicians echoed this rhetoric. With the passage of the tariff, a Camden Nullifier insisted, the "destiny of the South is fixed—the alternative is slavery or resistance…the great crisis is at last forced upon South Carolina. She is ready for it—and will meet it in the spirit of a free and chivalrous people." See *The Camden Republican and Lancaster Beacon*, 25 July 1832.

[24] Josiah J Evans, "Address of the Free Trade and State Rights Association to the People of Darlington District," *Columbia Telescope*, 11 September 1832; Robert J. Turnbull, *An Oration Delivered in the City of Charleston Before the State Rights and Free Trade Party* (Charleston: A E Miller, 1832); *The Pendleton Messenger*, 11 July 1832.

secured constitutional freedom, and the same glorious destiny awaited South Carolina. He promised that "Less than three days are sufficient for you to effect all you desire." If South Carolinians rose "in their sovereignty and [spoke] the fiat 'We will be free'" the chains of tyranny would fall at their feet.[25]

Nullifiers' Independence Day toasts and speeches in 1832 echoed these manly calls for revolution. In Charleston, Robert Turnbull prepared his audience to hazard disunion by invoking America's War for Independence. The state's Revolutionary heroes, he observed, had braved every danger in defense of freedom, preferring the "tempestuous sea of liberty" to the "calm of despotism." He quoted Patrick Henry's stirring call for resistance, thundering, "Give me Liberty or give me Death." A Camden volunteer toasted the "Boston Nullifiers" who threw British tea into their harbor and helped launch the revolution, and he assured the crowd that the spirit of liberty would lead them to the "same triumphant results." In Walterboro, the official toasts celebrated George Washington as a "Rebel, a Disunionist, a Revolutionist" and declared the Union a chain binding political slaves to their oppressors. In another lowcountry parish, two guests announced that they preferred disunion and civil war to submission. Seven men in a row offered toasts to "Nullification—the rightful remedy," with each receiving nine boisterous cheers.[26]

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[25] *The Camden Journal*, 1 September 1832, reprinted from *Southern Times & State Gazette*.

[26] Turnbull, *An Oration Delivered in the City of Charleston Before the State Rights and Free Trade Party; The Pendleton Messenger*, 11 July 1832; *The Camden Republican and Lancaster Beacon*, 11 July 1832; *The Charleston Mercury*, 4 July 1832 and 11 July 1832. At the Independence Day dinners in Pendleton and Anderson, for example, roughly one-fourth of the toasts explicitly endorsed nullification. Pinckney clarified that he was not calling for a new revolution. The colonies, he noted, had "no alternative between resistance and absolute submission," and they resorted to arms as the only way to preserve their freedom. As a sovereign state, however, South Carolina had another option: nullification. In Charleston, the Young Men's State Rights and Free Trade Association marched to City Hill. There, the city's "State Rights Ladies" presented them with a flag depicting a drooping Palmetto tree held up by Nullification. The young men then joined the main procession, which Nullifiers estimated included 1400 people.

Both parties redoubled their efforts—hosting meetings, publishing pamphlets, and drafting editorials. Statewide, Nullifiers held more than 300 dinners and meetings between July 1831 and December 1832. In the spring of 1832, Hamilton embarked on a six-week inspection tour of the state's militia companies, turning the reviews into a series of partisan rallies. In every village, huge crowds turned out to watch the militia parade and hear local leaders deliver speeches. Hamilton consciously adopted a "plain style," framing his arguments about liberty and sovereignty in terms every voter could understand. His lieutenants produced monthly pamphlets, and Hamilton advised them to pursue a "more popular and less abstract character…that they may be brought down to the comprehension of every freeman in the South." Nullifiers founded newspapers throughout the state, even in Unionist strongholds like Greenville. Hamilton personally helped Turner Bynum launch *The Southern Sentinel*, hoping to "carry the war into the enemy's country as vigorously as possible."[27]

Union men could not match their enemies' coordination, and some still resisted formal organization. One scholar attributes this failure to the party's conservatism, insisting Union men had "too little faith in the people and too much fear for the South to develop an effective crusade for the principles they professed to cherish." Undoubtedly, moderate Union men's fears of Jacobinism hindered the party's response to nullification. Many agreed with a Pendleton speaker, who warned that "political clubs [are] dangerous to all governments," because they had "deluged in blood so many nations of the world."[28]

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[27] Stewart, "'A Great Talking and Eating Machine,'" 197-220; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 230-231; Patricia McNeely, "Dueling Editors: The Nullification Plot of 1832," *Words at War: The Civil War and American Journalism*, ed. David B Sachsman, S. Kittrell Rushing, and Roy Morris, Jr. (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008), 26; James Hamilton to Waddy Thompson, 8 June 1832, Waddy Thompson Letter, South Caroliniana Library; Robert Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina*, 128.

[28] Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 244; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 18 July 1832.

Since at least 1830, however, prominent voices had called for organization, and by the summer of 1832 they had emulated many of Nullifiers' tactics. They established several newspapers of their own, and editors distributed countless pamphlets throughout their districts. Party leaders urged men to run for office even when they had no chance of success. Petigru, for example, hoped to "run a ticket in every District…to ascertain the [party's] numerical strength" and prove to Nullifiers that "there is a minority." Chapman Levy, a Jewish lawyer and veteran of the War of 1812, reported that Camden's Union Party was "up and doing" and encouraged lowcountry allies to focus attention on "every part of the state." In August, Levy arranged to publish an additional 12,000 newspapers each week to help "disseminate information among the people."[29]

Union men recognized that their opponents were winning the war of words and symbols, and they frantically fought back. In Pendleton, a Union Party meeting denounced Nullifiers for relying on "wretched sophistry" and using fear and passion to drawn out rational discussion. Union men in Claremont also accused their enemies of "railing and bandying epithets," and they refused to allow "sophistry to pass for soundness." At stake, they contended, was the "harmony of society—the security of property—the inviolability of persons—the integrity of the Union—

[29] James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 7 August 1832, 4 September 1832, 28 September 1832, and 3 October 1832, James L. Petigru Papers, SCHS; Chapman Levey to William Elliott, 27 August 1832, Elliott and Gonzales Family Papers, SHC. Newspaper circulation increased dramatically during the nullification crisis. The pro-nullification Abbeville *Whig*'s list of subscribers grew from about 200 in September 1831 to 425 in December 1831 and 600 by June 1832. The Union Party's *Greenville Mountain*'s circulation increased from about 250 in July 1832 to 400 by that December. The impact of these newspapers was far greater than their circulation numbers, as subscribers shared them with family and friends, read them allowed, and debated their ideas. Editors, furthermore, shared excerpts from other newspapers across the state and country. South Carolina's white population was well-read and highly politicized. In one coastal village, all but 3 of the 40 family white families subscribed to at least one newspaper. The average family in the village subscribed to three newspapers and one journal, and one family subscribed to ten. See Samuel A Townes to brother, 13 September 1831; Samuel A Townes to brother, 11 December 1831; Samuel A Townes to George F Townes, 14 June 1832; Village Census, 1832, Thomas P Ravenel Papers, South Carolina Historical Society.

all that we hold dear to ourselves and our children." The destiny of humanity—the "cause of rational regulated liberty throughout the world"—hung in the balance.[30]

Many Union men embraced this moderate conception of manhood and called for compromise and conciliation. Others, however, shared Nullifiers commitment to martial manhood and responded to insult and injury by fighting back. These men rejected the label of *submissionists* and angrily defended their honor. John Chesnut assured his brother James (the future United States Senator) that they were "not submission men by nature," and a Charleston writer declared that, "*so help me God* I never will submit" to nullification. In Columbia, Union men created an effigy of *Nullification* and shot it apart, and one observer declared that they would gladly fire at real Nullifiers when the time arrived.[31]

Political violence had been part of the nullification crisis from the beginning, particularly among editors and politicians. In October 1828, Columbia lawyer David J. McCord reported that at least two duels would take place, "growing out of our elections." James H. Hammond challenged Congressman James Blair to a duel in 1830, and the following year he struck Camden editor Constans F. Daniels in the face with a bludgeon. In October 1830, a large mob surrounded the office of Charleston editor William Gilmore Simms, and several men attacked him with clubs. Benjamin Perry narrowly avoided duels with several upcountry Nullifiers, including Waddy Thompson and Pendleton editor Frederick Symmes.[32]

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[30] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 3 October 1832; *The Southern Whig*, 9 August 1832.

[31] John Chesnut to James Chesnut, 13 January 1833, Papers of the Williams, Chesnut, and Manning Papers, SCL; *The Charleston City Gazette*, quoted in *The Columbia Hive*, 21 July 1832 and 28 July 1832; *Carolina Watchman*, 4 August 1832; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 12 May 1832; *The Charleston Courier*, 22 August 1832; *The Columbia Telescope*, 11 September 1832.

[32] David J. McCord to Philip H. Nicklin, 16 October 1828, David J. McCord Letter, NYHS; *The Natchez Weekly Democrat*, 23 October 1830; James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 7 August 1832, James L. Petigru Papers, SCHS. See Ryan Chamberlain, *Pistols, Politics and the Press: Dueling in 19th Century American Journalism* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2009).

This violence, however, increased in pace and scale in 1832. A Charleston writer reported in September that duels were "frequent in these days," and Julia Brown in Camden confirmed that Nullifiers were "venting their rage in quarrels—and challenges, &c." A New England visitor believed the crisis had gone so far that reconciliation—between the parties, and between the state and federal governments—was impossible. In Greenville, he reported, almost every man carried a dagger and pistols, and "what is worse, they use them." Duels and brawls had become "daily occurrences." In July, after Nullifier William Choice called Benjamin Perry a coward, the young editor caned him in the street. The next day, Choice attacked Perry at the court house, and in the ensuing brawl Perry stabbed him three times in the chest. The following month, Perry killed rival editor Turner Bynum in a duel on the border between Georgia and South Carolina.[33]

In April 1832, trading insults in their newspapers for months, Sumter editors Maynard Richardson and John Hemphill waged a "real club and dirk fight" in the streets. Spectators quickly joined in, and the scuffle devolved into a riot. Richardson stabbed Hemphill three times, and a few other participants suffered "[c]onsiderable injury." Despite Hemphill's injuries, the young Nullifier was undeterred; he continued publishing militantly partisan editorials, and his sister Eliza predicted he would soon "kill some person or be killed himself." Union Party

[33] Ellen to Harriet Davis, 15 September 1832, Davis Family Papers, FU; Julia M. Brown to Jonathan Ralph Flynt, 12 October 1832, Julia M. Brown Letter, SCL; *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, 17 August 1832; Lillian Adele Kibler, *Benjamin F. Perry: South Carolina Unionist* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1946); Benjamin F. Perry Diary, August 1832, B.F. Perry Papers, SHC. On the antebellum code of honor that informed southern dueling practices, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Theodore Gaillard, a Charleston Union Party leader, fought two duels in less than a week after Nullifiers accused him of insulted the governor. He survived the first contested unharmed before taking a shot to the leg in the second. Planter Joseph Manigault reported both duels with the simple note: "Politics." See Joseph Manigault to Gabriel Manigault, 14 September 1832, Peter Manigault Papers, SCL; *Vermont Republican and American Journal,* 29 September 1832.

newspapers across the state reported on the fight, with headlines declaring "the war of Nullification has already commenced."[34]

One Union Party editor, pleading for peace, dismissed this "uproar and excitement" as the product of a few lazy "village politicians." He argued that farmers, merchants, and mechanics spent their peaceful days "unimpeded by political jarrings and contentious disputes about moot points." Many South Carolina voters, however, were deeply invested in the crisis and shared these political passions. Charleston Nullifiers, for example attacked a store belonging to German immigrant (and Union man) John Shachte, throwing bricks through his windows and threatening to tear down the building. When the City Guard refused to intervene, Shachte and his friends fired into the crowd and forced the men to disperse. He blamed Nullifiers for the violence and warned that, if the crowd returned, he would perform his "duty to protect myself & property."[35]

In Williamsburg, one writer later recalled, "many bloody scenes [were] enacted by the fists at the court house, at public dinners and on public highways." In the fall of 1832, the district's parties held public dinners on the same day within earshot of each other. At first, everything went smoothly, with "much talking and joking between the two factions." Before long, however, a Nullifier taunted Unionist Robert Fulton as a submission man, and Fulton responded by punching him. A brawl erupted, as men from both parties rushed to their aid, and

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[34] Eliza Hemphill to William Hemphill, 22 August 1832, Hemphill Family Papers, DU; Robert E. Yates, 9 May 1832, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 28 April 1832; *The Columbia Hive*, 5 May 1832; Timothy S. Huebner, *The Southern Judicial Tradition: State Judges and Sectional Distinctiveness, 1790-1890* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 100-101.

[35] *The Southern* Patriot, 10 October 1832. Shachte unequivocally stated his belief that "I was assaulted because I was a Union man." In September, only days before Charleston's municipal elections, a scuffle broke out between Nullifiers and Union men over the symbols of the July Revolution. A band of young Union men was marching through the city, playing music and waving France's tricolor flag. Nullifiers intercepted and surrounded them, and the two parties wrestled for control of the flag. A city officer intervened, and Union men reluctantly surrendered the flag. Nullifiers accused them of disgracing it, prompting one Union Party editor to publish an appeal "to our French Fellow Citizens" declaring that the flag could never be "disgraced at the hands of true American Citizens." See *The Southern Patriot,* 8 September 1832.

the sound of "cursing, swearing and ranting" soon filled the air. A Unionist militia captain finally broke up the fight by riding his horse through the crowd, swinging a stick and yelling at men to "Get out the way, you d—m sons of bitches."[36]

Both parties looked to Charleston's municipal election that September as a referendum on the crisis. Tensions flared throughout the city, and on election day, armed gangs prowled the streets delivering "broken shins and bloody noses" to their enemies. One resident feared a riot would break out and that "many persons [would be] slain." He resolved to "go to the polls *prepared* and if I am assaulted I shall defend myself to the *uttermost*." Benjamin Gildersleeve, who edited a Presbyterian newspaper, reported with alarm that "bribery, and drunkenness, and perjury, and violence and fraud" had consumed the city. Laws prohibited the city guard from voting, but Pinckney—the city's intendant and an ardent Nullifier—allegedly discharged dozens of guards the day before the election to allow them to vote. Both parties bribed men to support their candidates and locked rival voters to keep them from the polls. The city narrowly avoided a partisan brawl after a drunken Nullifier jumped or fell to his death from the third floor of a Union Party headquarters.[37]

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[36] *The Camden Journal*, 12 March 1831, reprinted from *The Georgetown Union*; Samuel D McGill, *Narrative of Reminiscences in Williamsburg County* (Columbia, SC: Bryan Printing Co., 1897), 69- 74. McGill, born in 1819, was only a child when the nullification crisis occurred, and he published his *Reminiscences* sixty years after the events. The work, however, is highly detailed and contains in-depth recollections not only of the local players involved in the crisis but of their relative strength in each precinct in the district, suggesting he drew upon documentary evidence and conversations with other participants to supplement his memories of the crisis. He also acknowledges moments when his memories are unclear, lending credibility to the remainder of the narrative.

[37] Ellen to Harriet Davis, 15 September 1832, Davis Family Papers, FU; John N. Barillon to John Seibels, 29 August 1832, Seibels Family Papers, SCL; *The Charleston Observer*, 8 September 1832; William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, *James Louis Petigru: Southern Conservative, Southern Dissenter* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 50-52. As one writer explained, both parties kept "open houses," which were "large four story brick houses in the centre of the city, in which were provided refreshments of all kinds, free to all persons." The parties kept these houses open all Saturday night "whilst haranguing &c were carried on without regard to the Sabbath." See *The North Carolina Free Press,* 18 September 1832.

Nullifiers carried the day, electing their entire ticket by about 160 votes. In private, some Union men worried that the "idea that we are the weaker party has great influence in making us still weaker." Publicly, however, they vowed to redouble their efforts and challenge Nullifiers in every district and parish. They organized countless local meetings and hosted a party convention in Columbia with delegates from across the state. The convention appointed men to travel to Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi—hoping to cool the "rage and passion" consuming their state and ensure the Union's survival. They repeated the warnings of Washington's Farewell Address and warned that disunion would "sound the knell of Liberty in the world" and "echo through every clime, that man is unfit for self government."[38]

Nullifiers were even more active. As one writer observed, they held regular meetings to "drill their electioneering corps, distribute their tracts, harangue the credulous, treat the thirsty, and feed the hungry." In Charleston, both parties' leaders struggled to keep the city from erupting in violence. Days before the election, a Nullifier mob gathered outside a Union Party headquarters wielding clubs and bricks. Senator Hayne, hoping to avoid bloodshed, urged the Union men to leave the building along an empty adjacent street. When Drayton put the motion to a vote, however, the men refused to back down. They armed themselves with bludgeons and marched through the angry crowd "amidst every species of insults and abuse." Nullifiers hurled bricks and stones at them, striking Drayton, Poinsett, and Petigru, but the Union Party's leaders refused to fight back. Retaliation, Petigru explained, would only escalate the cycle of violence.

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[38] James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 20 September1832, James L. Petigru Papers, SCHS; James H. Smith to William Elliott, 26 September 1832, Elliott and Gonzales Family Papers, SHC; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 22 September 1832; *The Southern Whig*, 29 September 1832; Boucher, *The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina*, 200-203; *The Fayetteville Weekly Observer* (Fayetteville, NC), 18 September 1832; *Vicksburg Whig*, 10 October 1832; Paul H. Bergeron, "Tennessee's Response to the Nullification Crisis," *The Journal of Southern History* 39, no. 1, (Feb., 1973), 23-44, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable.2206790. The Union Party convention elected Revolutionary War veteran Thomas Taylor as its president, symbolically linking their struggle to preserve the Union with the legacy of the War for Independence.

They might have "cleared the street" and won the battle, but "doubtless the parties would have met the next time with muskets."[39]

Turnout in the statewide elections that October reached at least 74 percent, and it soared as high as 90 percent in some heavily-contested districts. Nullifiers received about 25,000 votes—60 percent of the state's total—and drew their greatest strength from the western districts between Columbia and the Georgia border. They secured at least 89 percent of the votes in Newberry, Orangeburg, Fairfield, and Lexington, and at least 64 percent in every district along the Georgia border. The Union Party, meanwhile, secured about 17,000 votes and polled particularly well in the state's northern districts near the border with North Carolina. The party won at least 58 percent of the vote in Greenville, Spartanburg, Lancaster, Darlington, Kershaw, and Horry.[40]

The state's partisan reorientation, incomplete in 1830, had now solidified. Pendleton editor Frederick Symmes reported that, for the first time in living memory, the election had "turned exclusively on a political question….The compactness of the vote throughout the district proves this to have been the case." In most districts, voters had clearly adopted party tickets; in Richland, for example, the four Nullifiers received between 776 and 783 votes, while three Union Party candidates received between 232 and 237 votes. In Charleston, the parties fielded tickets not only for the General Assembly, but also for local elections like the commissioner of the poor and commissioner of cross roads.[41]

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[39] *The Cheraw Republican*, 13 October 1832; James L. Petigru to Hugh Legaré, 29 October 1832, James L Petigru Papers, SCL; Unknown to Edward Rutledge, 10 October 1832, and H.P. Holbrook to Edward Rutledge, 18 October 1832, Rutledge Family Papers, SCL. A "street battle" broke out in Charleston between Edward Frost, the Nullifiers' leading candidate, and a cooper who belonged to the Union Party. When Frost struck the cooper—"a great sturdy ox of a man"—he retaliated by knocking Frost to the ground. In a fight in Cheraw, one man fell and hit his head on the pavement, dying several hours later. See *The Camden Journal*, 20 October 1832.

[40] See Appendix 3.

[41] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 10 October 1832.

Governor Hamilton wasted little time, ordering a special session of the new legislature to convene on October 22—only two weeks after the elections. On October 26, the General Assembly called for a state convention: elections would take place on November 12, and the convention would come together a week later. The house approved the convention bill by a vote of 96 to 25, and the senate concurred 31 to 13. Four years earlier, less than one-third of the state's legislators had supported a state convention; now, nearly 77 percent approved it. While Columbia's Nullifiers celebrated and fired cannon blasts from the state house steps, Union Party legislators drafted an address to the citizens of South Carolina. They encouraged Union men throughout the state to continue their resistance and to nominate candidates for the state convention. This election, they declared, could "decide the fate of the Union," and they pleaded with voters to "resist the current of public opinion" and "make another determined effort to save their liberty, the Constitution and the Union."[42]

Some Union Party leaders refused even to nominate candidates, fearing their participation would legitimize the state's proceedings. Charleston politicians insisted the convention was illegal, claiming Governor Hamilton had no power to call the new legislature into session until the old members' terms had expired. If the Union Party took part in the convention, they warned, it would "lend [a] sanction" to the meeting and "commit the party to abide by its decrees." They believed Unionist resistance would only strengthen the State Rights Party and seal South Carolina's fate. Others, particularly in the upcountry, insisted on contesting the election. Perry declared that the convention embodied the voice of the people, and it was essential that "the

[42] *The Columbia Hive*, 13 October 1832; Unknown to Jon, 17 October 1832, DeSaussure Family Papers, SCHS; James Hamilton to Patrick Noble, 9 October 1832, James Hamilton Papers, SCL; James R. Ervin to Philip Phillips, 26 October 1832, Philip Phillips Family Papers, LOC; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 3 November 1832; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 260. Hamilton was so confident of success that he drafted the proclamation before the election began.

people, and not a party, be represented." He urged readers not to "give up the contest too soon" and to rally across the state to preserve the Union. Constans Daniels prayed that the "friends of order—the Union party will hold on to their organization," and a Charleston editor called Union men to "hold fast steadfastly to our principles—to our union as a party."[43]

These Union men remained fiercely loyal to South Carolina, and some confessed that they would "fight with her, although in a bad cause" if civil war erupted. Nonetheless, they often embraced a more national conception of the Union, in which the state formed "only an integral part or portion of the United States." A Charleston writer declared that South Carolinians "owe allegiance to the state…only as members of the Union," and therefore citizens had a duty to uphold the Constitution even in defiance of state law. A Union Party meeting in Charleston declared that "our allegiance to these United States is immediate and direct, and of the most sacred obligation." As long as South Carolina remained in the Union, Perry insisted, "our true allegiance is due the United States"[44]

The election for convention delegates took place on November 12, and Nullifiers secured an overwhelming majority. Seven districts elected Union Party delegates, mostly concentrated in the upcountry. Turnout plummeted in most districts, even when both parties contested the election. In Spartanburg, for example, turnout fell by 24 percent. Nonetheless, party discipline remained high: all six of Spartanburg's Union Party candidates received between 1397 and 1410

[43] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 13 October 1832, 20 October 1832, 27 October 1832, and 3 November 1832; *The Camden Journal*, 20 October 1832; *The Southern Patriot*, 11 October 1832; Edward McCrady, Richard Yeadon, and John Phillips to Joshua Teague, 2 November 1832, "Letters on the Nullification Movement in South Carolina, 1830-1834"; Richard G Arnold to Zachariah Allen, 8 November 1832, Richard G Arnold Papers, SCL; *The Southern Patriot*, 25 October 1832; Daniele Huger, quoted in Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 261. The Union Party also objected to the convention's system of representation. Each district received delegates equal to the number of its state legislators. Because house representation was based on total population—not just white population—Union men claimed the convention made "our very slaves elements in the composition of the sovereignty of our State."

[44] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 13 October 1832 and 27 October 1832; *The Southern Patriot*, 8 October 1832

votes. When the convention delegates arrived in Columbia, one writer admitted that the Union Party contingent was "weak indeed" and could probably do nothing to stop nullification. The State Rights Party, meanwhile, "feel their strength and are in high spirits," prepared to "do precisely as they like."[45]

The convention opened on November 20 and immediately elected Governor Hamilton as president. It also appointed a committee of twenty-one delegates to debate and draft an ordinance of nullification. Although only four committee members belonged to the Union Party, fault lines quickly emerged among the Nullifiers. The "lukewarm Nullifiers" hoped to exclude the words *nullification* and *secession* from the ordinance and to delay the process for ninety days to allow Congress to forge a compromise. Radicals like Richland planter Pierce M. Butler, however, wanted nullification to take effect immediately. The committee's Union men strongly opposed a provision requiring state officers to swear an oath of allegiance to the state, arguing that it violated citizens' freedom of conscience. Butler understood—and approved—the implications of the oath and bragged that it "amounts to…a disenfranchisement of the Union people—those for the lost cause."[46]

Although they were hopelessly outnumbered, the Union Party delegates worked to delay or defeat nullification. Former governor Henry Middleton motioned for the convention to adjourn, arguing that it did not accurately represent the people of South Carolina because it was

[45] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 17 November 1832; John Chesnut to Ellen Chesnut, 20 November 1832, John Chesnut Letter, SCHS. The districts were Greenville, Spartanburg, Clarendon, Kershaw, Darlington, Lancaster, Chesterfield, and Horry. Horry was an exception in the nullification-era polarization. Although it was located in the lowcountry, it was remained staunchly Unionist. Geographically, its soil was too poor to support the massive plantations that dominated much of the state, and it was cut off from the other districts by the swamps of the Lumber and Pee Dee Rivers. See Catherine H. Lewis, *Horry County, South Carolina, 1730-1993* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 27.

[46] Pierce M. Butler to James H. Hammond, 22 November 1832 and 23 November 1832, James Henry Hammond Papers, Library of Congress.

apportioned on the basis of "population and of property." He suggested that the General Assembly call a new convention, with representation calculated by districts' white population alone. Union men hoped the inevitable delay would allow tempers to cool and buy Congress more time. The convention, however, refused to consider the resolution.[47]

A few upcountry Union men hoped to use the convention to reform and democratize the state. Samuel Gibson of Lancaster offered a petition to amend the state constitution and reapportion the legislature, but delegates quickly tabled it. Alfred Lowry, a Chesterfield delegate, introduced another amendment to make General Assembly elections annual instead of biennial, making the legislature more responsive to the people. Once again, the convention rejected it out-of-hand. Instead, delegates focused their attention on nullification. When the committee presented its draft of the ordinance, radicals moved to strengthen it—inserting the word *nullify* and striking out an appeal to the other southern states. As Robert Turnbull explained, the state would rely "not on them, but on herself alone."[48]

The convention adopted the Ordinance of Nullification on November 24, 1832, by a vote of 136 to 26. The ordinance declared the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 unconstitutional and therefore null and void within South Carolina after February 1, 1833. It also demanded that all civil and military officers in the state swear an oath to "obey, execute, and enforce this ordinance." If the federal government attempted to enforce the tariff, the people of South Carolina would "henceforth hold themselves absolved" from their allegiance to the Union. The state would declare itself a sovereign nation and proceed to organize a separate government.[49]

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[47] "Journal of the Convention of the People of South Carolina, assembled at Columbia, November 19, 1832," in *State Papers on Nullification* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1834).
[48] Journal of the Convention, November 19, 1832.
[49] "An Ordinance to Nullify certain of Congress of the United States," in *State Papers on Nullification*; James Hamilton, "Governor's Message," 27 November 1832, SCDAH.

Pinckney rejoiced that the "knell of *submission* is rung," and Governor Hamilton proudly observed that the "die has been at last cast." After four years of village meetings and editorial battles, the State Rights Party had nullified the tariff and threatened to destroy the Union. Nullifiers succeeded, in large part, because they organized more effectively and outflanked their opponents in the war of words and symbols. They convinced voters that submission would degrade and dishonor them and destroy "everything that is dear to us as men, as freemen, and as fathers." At stake, they insisted, was their manhood and mastery and the freedom they had inherited from the founding generation. Although often skeptical of partisanship, Union men mobilized to defend the social and political order, and partisan tensions erupted into small-scale violence across much of the state. Nullifiers projected confidence, assuring voters that nullification would peacefully restore the Constitution to its "original purity." During the long "nullification winter," however, many South Carolinians feared the simmering violence could erupt at any moment into civil war.[50]

[50] Davis, *Rhett*, 69; James Hamilton, "Governor's Message," 27 November 1832, SCDAH; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 24 March 1832.

Chapter Five: The Nullification Winter: Imagining Disunion in South Carolina, October 1832-April 1833

The civil war, Joel Poinsett predicted, would begin in Charleston. The governor had called for volunteers to defend the state against federal "tyranny," and 25,000 men had responded. While these volunteers prepared for battle, officials stockpiled arms and built supply depots along the state's major roads. At the governor's word, they would converge on Charleston, overwhelm the small federal garrison, and declare the city a free port. They would confiscate or destroy Union men's property and drive them from the state. The conflict in Charleston would provoke secession and civil war, and the spirit of rebellion would tear the Union asunder. In the ensuing struggle, armies would pillage the southern countryside, brothers would slaughter each other on the battlefield, and slaves would massacre their owners. Great Britain would rush to South Carolina's aid, and the state's "forts would be garrisoned, her soil defended and her harbors filled with British troops and British fleets." The waters would "run red with American blood," and the Union's fragile experiment in self-government would fail.[1]

Poinsett imagined this political apocalypse during the nullification winter of 1832-1833, between the passage of the Ordinance in November and its scheduled implementation in February. Scholars often gloss over these months or play down the possibility of disunion. At the time, however, the prospect appeared terrifyingly real, and South Carolinians grasped for words to make sense of their uncertain future. Charleston lawyer Mitchell King found the suspense intolerable, confessing that the "present uncertain state is almost as bad as an active commotion." A "brave man," he explained, "would often rather rush on danger than live in constant

[1] Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 25 November 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; *Address of the Washington Society to the People of South Carolina* (Charleston: J.R. Burges, 1832), 2.

expectation of it." As the "fatal 1st" of February approached, writer Caroline Howard Gilman observed that it was "utterly impossible" to foresee how the crisis would end. She feared that any small confrontation would "cause the flame to burst out" and consume the state. Artist Charles Fraser agreed, writing that only God knew "how much of what is now wrapt in the gloomy uncertainty of the future will…become sad realities." Writers across the state echoed these observations, and the weeks of waiting stirred anxieties and inspired frantic rumors and premonitions.[2]

Nullifiers depicted the president as a "blood-thirsty monster" leading an army of "hired butchers." These "federal mercenaries," they claimed, were massing along their borders and planning to slaughter innocent South Carolinians. Faced with this looming horror, they argued that nullification was the state's only hope of salvation. By volunteering en masse—by defying federal tyranny—they sought to demonstrate South Carolina's unity and resolve. Publicly, they insisted this show of strength would force Jackson to back down. Privately, however, many believed civil war was inevitable, and they trusted "impartial history" to immortalize and

[2] William Gilmore Simms to James Lawson, 25 November 1832, *The Letters of William Gilmore Simms*: Vol 1: 1830-1844, ed. Mary C. Simms Oliphant, Alfred Taylor Odell, and T.C. Duncan Eaves (Columbia; University of South Carolina Press, 1952); Mitchell King to William Drayton, 15 January 1833, Drayton Family Papers, HSP; Caroline Howard Gilman to A. M. White, 15 January 1833, Caroline Howard Gilman Papers, SCHS; Charles Fraser to Hugh Legaré, 30 January 1833, Charles Fraser Papers, SCL; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 6 April 1833. On the role of fear and rumor in antebellum politics, see Mark Wahlgren Summers, *A Dangerous Stir: Fear, Paranoia, and the Making of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 7-22. As early as 1916, Chauncey Boucher recognized that the nullification crisis "missed being civil war by a narrow margin," and William Freehling also acknowledged the prospect of war. More recent scholars (including Ford, McCurry, and Sinha), however, either neglect to discuss the nullification winter or describe it only in passing. Sinha, for example, writes that an "atmosphere of impending civil war pervaded the state" but devotes only three pages to the tensions, uncertainties, and military preparations that defined the winter. See Boucher, *The Nullification Controversy*, vii; Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 52-54.

legitimize their struggle. The most radical Nullifiers even welcomed the prospect of war and began imagining a future beyond disunion.[3]

The Union Party, meanwhile, blamed Nullifiers for provoking the crisis and imperiling the Union. For years, they had insisted that "Nullification is Disunion, and Disunion is War," and events that winter seemed to confirm their fears. As Nullifiers volunteered en masse to defend the state, Union men warned that any "slight collision" would propel South Carolina toward chaos. They imagined the future in vivid detail, describing disunion in three distinct but overlapping ways: as a political crisis, a military conflict, and a social catastrophe. Fueled by these fears, countless families fled the state; seeing little chance of averting disaster, they hoped only to escape and survive it. Thousands more, however, chose to resist nullification and defend their right to the "soil of South Carolina." These Union men used their fears as a political weapon, galvanizing support by imagining the future that nullification would create. They evoked the "horrors of a civil and servile war" and envisioned the global death of liberty. By contesting the future and imagining the Union's destruction, they hoped to guarantee its survival.[4]

In his final annual message, Governor James Hamilton emphasized the "pacific character" of nullification and prayed for a peaceful end to the crisis. He warned, however, that the "final issue may be adverse to this hope." South Carolina, he observed, had endured years of oppression, and now Jackson was threatening to coerce the state into submission. In response,

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[3] *The Camden Republican and Lancaster Beacon*, 5 March 1833; *The Charleston Mercury*, 13 February 1833 and 14 February 1833; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 24 March 1832.

[4] *The Edgefield Hive*, 3 September 1830; William Gilmore Simms to James Lawson, 19 January 1833, *The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, Vol. 1: 1830-1844*; Joel R. Poinsett to James Campbell, 20 November 1833, Papers of Joel. R. Poinsett, HSP.

Hamilton urged the General Assembly to prepare for war, proposing a 2,000-man "Legionary Corps" to protect Charleston and a "State Guard" of 10,000 additional volunteers. He also encouraged legislators to reinforce Charleston's artillery defenses, reclaim the city's arsenal from the federal government, and pass a bill of pains and penalties to "compel obedience" from the state's Union men.[5]

The General Assembly went even further, authorizing the governor to mobilize the "whole military force of this State." In addition to calling out the militia, he could organize "all free white men" older than sixteen into volunteer companies to repel invasion and suppress insurrection. Legislators allocated $200,000 to help prepare the state for war, allowing the governor to purchase 10,000 guns and as much powder and lead as necessary. They required all civil and military officials to swear an oath to uphold nullification—seeking to purge Union men from power and enforce loyalty to the state. They defended the right of secession and called upon all South Carolinians to "sustain the dignity and protect the liberty of the state." If Jackson tried to intervene, they vowed to "repel force by force" and "maintain [their] liberty at all hazards."[6]

Legislators elected Robert Y. Hayne as the state's new governor and chose Calhoun to replace him in the Senate. In his inaugural address, Hayne swore to uphold the state's sovereign power and defend its soil from invasion. He claimed that Nullifiers hoped to ensure the Union's survival and preserve the Constitution "as our fathers framed it." Nonetheless, he warned, they would rather hazard disunion than endure submission, and they refused to watch the Constitution become an instrument of oppression. In the approaching struggle, Hayne hoped that South

[5] James Hamilton, "Governor's Message," 27 November 1832, SCDAH; James Hamilton, "To the Senate and House of Representatives," 8 December 1832, SCDAH.
[6] *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Passed in December 1832* (Columbia: Miller & Bran, 1832).

Carolina would stand united against tyranny. He denounced Union men as parricidal traitors and insisted that true Carolinians would stay loyal to their "common mother." Let "others desert her if they can," he raged, "let them revile her, if they will—let them give aid and countenance to her enemies, if they may—but for us, we will STAND OR FALL WITH CAROLINA."[7]

South Carolina, however, was dramatically unprepared for war. Upon taking office, Hayne found the state "deficient to a lamentable extent in arms, ammunition, and every description of the munitions of war." The militia was undisciplined and poorly-organized, and after years of peace its "military spirit…was at a low ebb." Losing no time, Hayne dispatched agents across the country to purchase supplies, began building a factory in Charleston to produce cannon balls, and established an armory and ordnance department in the city. Officials across the state began repairing weapons, mounting cannons, and placing their districts in the "best posture of defence." They spared "neither pains nor expense" and ultimately purchased or produced nearly 10,000 rifles and muskets, 70 cannons, 50,000 cannon balls, 40,000 pounds of gunpowder, and "an abundant supply of lead."[8]

On December 21, Hayne appointed 28 aides-de-camp to raise, inspect, and grant commissions to the state's volunteers. He asked these men to "sacrifice all private considerations

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[7] Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 264; Robert Y. Hayne, "Inaugural Address," *Southern Orators: Speeches and Orations*, ed. Joseph Moore McConnell (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), 64-71. In 1832, South Carolina's legislators still chose the state's presidential electors, and they refused to support either Andrew Jackson or Henry Clay. Instead, they gave the state's electoral votes to Virginia governor John Floyd, who sympathized with nullification.

[8] James H. Hammond to Robert Y. Hayne, 8 January 1833, "Letters on the Nullification Movement;" Robert Y. Hayne, "Message Regarding the Mobilization of Volunteers During the Nullification Crisis," SCDAH. An agent offered to purchase 125,000 pounds of gunpowder from the DuPont Company in Delaware for $24,000. E I DuPont responded that, "[t]he destination of this powder being obvious, we think it right to decline furnishing any part of the above order. DuPont, quoted in B G DuPont, *E. I. Dupont de Nemours and Company: A History, 1802-1902* (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1920), 57. Hamilton and other Nullifiers crossed the Savannah River to Augusta in late December with plans to capture weapons from the city's federal arsenal. News leaked out, however, and the United States soldiers carefully guarded the arsenal, forcing the Nullifiers to abandon their plan. See Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina*, 139.

to the public good" and serve the state with "zeal, and energy, and devotion to the cause." Building on Hamilton's plan, Hayne hoped to recruit a 10,000-man "Volunteer force" as well as 2500 "Minute Men," who could respond to sudden emergencies across the state. These soldiers would serve as South Carolina's first line of defense. If war broke out, however, Hayne planned to supplement their numbers by calling out the remainder of the militia—the men who had chosen not to volunteer. He mapped out several routes "from the mountains towards the sea," all converging on Charleston, and he instructed his aides to build supply depots every 30 miles across their districts. He told them to stockpile weapons and secure supplies of corn, bacon, and fodder to feed the marching armies.[9]

These aides travelled across their districts, attending militia musters and local meetings to encourage men to enlist. They appealed to the honor and martial manhood of their audience, urging men to "protect their firesides from the footsteps of the oppressor." At a battalion muster in Pendleton, aide Edward Harleston asked the assembled men to "obey the maternal call of South Carolina" and defend their "firesides from pollution." In Columbia, state legislator William Preston warned that Jackson was raising an army of "hired butchers" to invade the state. The president, he claimed, planned to march through South Carolina slaughtering its citizens and inciting slave rebellion. The other southern states had refused to intervene, and South Carolina's only hope lay in the "moral courage" of its men. Preston appealed to the "party of the state" to enroll their names and pledge their lives to the cause of liberty.[10]

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[9] Robert Y. Hayne to Francis W. Pickens, 26 December 1832, "Letters on the Nullification Movement"; Robert Y. Hayne, Circular, January 1833, The Papers of James Henry Hammond, LOC.

[10] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 9 February 1833; *The Charleston Mercury*, 5 January 1833. After the Pendleton militia muster, a Unionist observer noted that these gendered appeals were a "favorite theme" among Nullifiers. In this instance, however, they failed to resonate with the crowd, and most men chose not to volunteer. As the observer explained, "there is another source from whence our firesides are in danger." Union men feared that Hayne would try to compel them to fight against the federal government—dragging them "from their firesides to aid in a cause" they condemned.

These appeals proved highly successful, and Nullifiers across the state marveled at the rush of enlistments. Within days of Preston's speech, the small state capital had furnished 500 volunteers, all determined to transform the "gallant little state [into] an encampment or a battle field." By early January, a Columbia writer observed that "almost the entire population is volunteering": 1000 men in Laurens, 1200 in Fairfield, and 1200 in Edgefield. An Abbeville doctor praised the "spirit & patriotism" of his district, where Nullifiers had volunteered en masse to defend the state. Barnwell organized an entire regiment, and the widespread excitement amazed one witness, who had never seen "more enthusiasm or unanimity." The "military spirit of the people," he observed, "is beyond all expectation."[11]

These scenes repeated themselves across the state, and by March roughly 25,000 men—50 percent of the state's white military-age population—had volunteered. In the midland districts around Columbia, the proportion was even higher, reaching 75 percent in Edgefield and 79 percent in Fairfield. Even South Carolinians ineligible for service became swept up in the military fervor. Several districts organized reserve units of "Volunteer veterans" too old for active duty. Edgefield enrolled 100 men between the ages of 55 and 80, Richland organized a company of "Silver Greys," and Pendleton accepted 200 "elderly volunteers." One Nullifier admitted that these men were "not very warlike," observing that many carried walking sticks instead of rifles. Still, he viewed them as a powerful symbol of South Carolina's cause, writing that the "fire of liberty…still burns bright and steadily in their noble old hearts."[12]

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[11] William C. Preston to Stephen D. Miller, 24 December 1832, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS; William C. Preston to Stephen D. Miller, 17 December 1832, Stephen D. Miller Papers, SCHS; *The Charleston Mercury*, 3 January 1833, 5 January 1833, 8 January 1833, 14 January 1833, and 29 January 1833; Henry H Townes to George F Townes, 10 February, 1832, Townes Family Papers, SCL.

[12] James H. Hammond to Robert Y. Hayne, 7 February 1833, "Letters on the Nullification Movement"; *Abbeville Whig and Southern Nullifier*, 24 January 1833; Tandy Walker to George F. Townes, 23 February, 1833, Townes Family Papers, SCL.

Thousands of children and adolescents also embraced nullification, often drawn to the movement's spectacle and excitement. They eagerly sported blue cockades and Palmetto buttons—the badges of the State Rights Party. They paraded through towns waving banners, playing music, and singing revolutionary songs like La Marseillaise. The rhetoric and imagery of the crisis infused the culture in which they grew up. As their fathers enlisted in the state army, for example, young boys formed "little regiments" and "marched about the Streets." Henry Tupper, who was 4-years old during the nullification winter, later vividly recalled the "preparing of cockades and sticks, the smuggling in of boxes of arms, the drilling of the boys, the street fights, and the popular songs." Decades after the crisis, the words of these songs still echoed in his mind: "H—is a gentleman, / Who rides in a gig; / P—is a blackguard / That runs on a pig."[13]

By supporting nullification, adolescent boys laid claim to manhood. As historian Jon Grinspan demonstrates, antebellum voting laws "turned age twenty-one into a sharp boundary between youth and adulthood." These young Nullifiers were unable to vote and therefore excluded from "civic manhood." Many still attended school or college, and few had formed independent households of their own. By debating political ideas or enlisting in the state army, however, they could affirm their rights as men. Charleston's adolescents organized a Young Men's State Rights Association and vowed to "march at a moments warning" to defend their freedom. In February 1833, boys ranging from 14- to 17-years old met to offer their services to

[13] William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, *The Web of Progress: Private Values and Public Styles in Boston and Charleston, 1828-1843* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 78; Mary Gallant, "Recollections of a Charleston Childhood, 1822-1836," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 98, no. 1 (January 1997), 56-74, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27570201; Henry Allen Tupper, quoted in George Braxton Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Fifth Series (Lynchburg, VA: J. P. Bell Company, 1915), 14.

the state. They appealed to the "courage and patriotism of youth" and encouraged all boys capable of bearing arms to prepare for the looming conflict.[14]

The crisis also politicized women's everyday actions. Communities organized boycotts to protest the tariff, wore colored ribbons to declare their party loyalties, and attended partisan church services. In this context, the food women served, the clothes they wore, and even the words they prayed served as political statements. Women discussed politics with their families and friends, and a few submitted anonymous toasts at public dinners. Charleston writer Laura Smith boasted that she was "becoming very familiar with military terms," as her family had transformed their parlor into a war room. Rebecca Motte Rutledge confessed that "public affairs have made me overlook private ones entirely," and if civil war broke out she hoped her husband (a naval officer) would return home to defend the state. [15]

Mary Boykin Miller, the daughter of Governor Stephen Miller, was only 9 years old in 1832, and she later declared herself "a rebel born." Growing up amid the nullification crisis, she recalled, she "imbibed" a belief in state rights "before I understood anything at all about it." In her surviving letters, in large, shaky handwriting, the young girl eagerly promised to read the local papers and absorb her father's anti-tariff arguments. In Newberry, a young girl named Ellennor Arnold practiced her penmanship by infusing stock phrases with the political rhetoric of nullification. She began her composition by copying a common phrase: "Ellennor is my name

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[14] Jon Grinspan, *The Virgin Vote: How Young Americans Made Democracy Social, Politics Personal, and Voting Popular in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 8, 61; *The Charleston Mercury,* 2 February 1833. Students at the state medical college organized meetings and insisted that South Carolina was fighting for the "great cause" of state rights and constitutional liberty. Debating societies at South Carolina College discussed the merits of slavery, partisanship, nullification, and secession. They decided in favor of nullification and agreed that the Union would one day collapse like the "Republicks of antiquity." *The Charleston Mercury*, 2 February 1833; Clariosophic Literary Society Records, Vol. 6, 1826-1831, South Caroliniana Library.

[15] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 12 July 1834; *The Charleston Courier*, 7 March 1833; *The Wyoming Herald* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), 31 August 1831; Laura Margaret Cole Smith Diary, 7 January 1833, Brumby and Smith Family Papers, SHC; Rebecca Motte Rutledge to Edward C. Rutledge, 7 January 1833, Rutledge Family Papers, SCL.

and single is my life, and happy will that young man be that gets me for a wife." After a few lines, her writing turned fiercely political. She declared herself a "strong Nullifier" and prayed that the state's patriotic sons would "pour out there blood on the alters of there country for free trade and state wrights." She hoped South Carolinians would "rise up like free men," restoring their freedom or dying "in the last dich in defending her dearest wrights."[16]

As the crisis intensified, these Nullifier women began articulating a more "martial" conception of womanhood, directing their domestic duties toward supporting the impending war effort. They sewed flags and uniforms, raised money, wore partisan ribbons, and pressured the men around them to volunteer. Some women vowed to disown their sons or deny their suitors if they refused to enlist. At a flag presentation ceremony in Darlington, one woman reminded volunteers of the ancient Spartan mothers who bade their sons return from battle with their shields or on them. As "mothers, as wives, daughters, sisters, and friends," she declared, they urged the state's men to "go forth to fight the battles of your Country, and to bleed, to perish if need be, in her righteous contest. And we, on our part, will do all that we may."[17]

Despite this widespread *rage militaire*, however, the state remained desperately short of money and supplies. With some exaggeration, Hayne observed that the "demand for Arms exceeds *five times over*" the number that the state possessed. Barnwell District, for example, raised 850 volunteers—but they needed proper training and at least 500 additional rifles. Hayne appealed to the volunteers' patriotism, hoping Minute Men would serve without pay and asking companies to furnish their own flags and supplies. As Hammond explained, however, many volunteers were too poor to purchase rifles, and the guns they owned were inadequate to the

[16] Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 4; Mary Boykin Miller to Stephen D. Miller, 3 March 1832, Papers of the Williams, Chesnut, and Manning Families, SCL; Ellennor Arnold Pen Practice Verses, SCL.
[17] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 18 July 1833; *The Charleston Mercury*, 6 March 1833.

crisis. They might "skirmish in the woods and harass invaders with their shotguns," he wrote, but without proper weapons they could not "stand a moment in the field before a regular force."[18]

Hammond suggested that Hayne borrow money to equip the army. The moment fighting began, he wrote, "negociations should be set on foot for straining our credit to the utmost." In the meantime, Hammond placed his property at the governor's service and hoped that other Nullifiers would do the same. He debated growing a "large provision crop" to feed the volunteer force. His plantation, however, was located near the Georgia border and surrounded by Union men, and he considered it safer to plant cotton and "furnish the State with the proceeds." He also offered the state the use of his male slaves, "to be employed in ditching, fortifying, building as pioneers &c." Hammond clarified that these slaves should only serve as noncombatants, calling it "dangerous policy" to allow them to bear arms. He hinted, however, that the crisis might drive Nullifiers to the "greatest extremities" and compel them to draft slaves into military service.[19]

While some Nullifiers still insisted the crisis would end peacefully, many began to accept—or even welcome—the possibility of war. As Abbeville Nullifier Samuel Townes explained, the crisis had rendered "peacible arbitrament" impossible, and the "fact is now probably obvious that we must fight." Henry Townes—Samuel's brother—marveled at the "determined spirit of resistance" in his district, insisting Nullifiers would "rally as one man & spill every drop of blood tomorrow if their state called them." A Columbia writer observed that South Carolina was quickly becoming a "military nation," as thousands of men prepared for battle. The volunteers, he insisted, were neither daunted nor afraid by "King Andrew the 1st," and

[18] Robert Y. Hayne to Francis W. Pickens, 7 February 1833 and 12 February 1833, "Letters on the Nullification Movement"; James H. Hammond to William E. Hayne, 24 February 1833, "Letters on the Nullification Movement."
[19] James H. Hammond to William E. Hayne, 7 February 1833, "Letters on the Nullification Movement"; James H. Hammond to Robert Y. Hayne, 7 February 1833, "Letters on the Nullification Movement." When one officer requested $40 to pay regimental musicians, Hayne refused, writing that spending money on "*Music*, when we want every cent for *Arms* is out of the question."

they would ensure that "no United States Blackguard soldiers…set a foot on our soil." If the president dared to invade the state, an upcountry doctor agreed, "he never would get back again."[20]

Throughout the crisis, Nullifiers had condemned Union men as traitors and Tories, and those labels assumed greater meaning as civil war loomed. Hammond encouraged the governor to "annihilate instantly the first show of resistance to our laws," whether from federal tyranny or Unionist treason. If fighting broke out, a Camden writer swore, Nullifiers in his district would "deal first with our enemies at home." At a public dinner in Charleston, one guest prayed South Carolina would exile Union men and "no longer permit them to pollute its soil," and a Georgia visitor assailed the "traitorous enemy within your borders." An upcountry Nullifier vowed to "subdue the yankeys" in his own district, explaining that he considered native-born "submission men" the same as northern invaders. If the "Tory party" dared to fight against the state, another writer agreed, "we will *crush* them in the dust."[21]

Hayne and his aides devised a flexible military strategy to respond to threats along the state's borders and coasts. He kept volunteers in their own districts, built supply depots across the state, and organized companies of mounted minute men to respond to emergencies. Wherever the conflict broke out, he could have 1000 soldiers ready within twenty-four hours, and "at least 1000 more every day afterwards for twenty successive days." Nullifiers remained confident that

[20] Samuel Townes to George Townes, 13 January 1833, and Henry H. Townes to George Townes, Townes Family Papers, SCL; James L. Clark to Stephen D. Miller, 19 January 1833, and John L. Miller to Stephen D. Miller, 10 January 1833, Papers of the Williams, Chesnut, and Manning Families, SCL. Writing to a third brother, Henry Townes articulated the duties of martial manhood in the crisis. He encouraged George to "Seek eagerly military command," writing that the brothers had been "among the foremost in talking" and now needed to be "foremost in fighting."

[21] James H. Hammond to Robert Y. Hayne, 20 December 1832, "Letters on the Nullification Movement"; J. Canty to Stephen D. Miller, 4 January 1833, Papers of the Williams, Chesnut, and Manning Families, SCL; *The Columbia Telescope*, 26 March 1833; A. and Sarah McClurken to John A. Cooper, 18 February 1833, Papers of the Cooper-McClurken-Nisbet Families, SCL; John W. Burbidge to Rosina Mix, 28 January 1833, Rosina Mix Papers, SHC.

the South would rally to their cause. Hayne reported receiving "liberal offers of assistance from other States, of men, money, and even of vessels." A Columbia editor assured readers that thousands of volunteers from Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia would rush to the state's aid, and another writer declared that two-thirds of Georgia's men would "fight for us tomorrow."[22]

Most Nullifiers imagined the looming war—and its aftermath—in only the vaguest terms. Rebecca Motte Rutledge, for example, confessed it was "impossible to guess at the result of the crisis." Even if the country avoided war, she wrote, the North and South could "never return to their former harmony…we shall be no longer brothers, but rivals." Many writers recognized that their resistance might fail, and they looked to history to vindicate their struggle. A Charleston woman observed that, "successful or not, [nullification] will form a noble page in History," and Waddy Thompson declared that "impartial history will say of us, that we did not make the crisis, but met it." Lucretia Townes, the niece of John C. Calhoun, agreed that Nullifiers' names would "live forever" and hold a proud place in the pages of history. Their "children's *children*," she exclaimed, would read the Ordinance of Nullification and "know that their ancestors were not *voluntary* slaves."[23]

While Samuel Townes could not imagine the struggle itself, he remained confident that South Carolina's volunteers would triumph. From the beginning, Nullifiers had insisted that liberty and Union were *separable*, and Townes reaffirmed that conviction. Glimpsing a future beyond disunion, he declared that "our *liberties* at all events will survive this conflict of arms &

[22] Hayne, "Message Regarding the Mobilization of Volunteers," SCDAH; Robert Y. Hayne to Francis W. Pickens, 11 January 1833, "Letters on the Nullification Movement."; *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 11 January 1833; Henry H. Townes to George Townes, 10 February 1833, Townes Family Papers, SCL.
[23] Rebecca Motte Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, 30 January 1833, Rutledge Family Papers, SCL; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 24 March 1832; Lucretia A. Townes to Eliza P. Blassingame, 5 December 1832, Townes Family Papers, SCL.

the dissolution of this Union." Legislator William Preston dared the president to invade the state. Nullifiers, he insisted, would emerge triumphant even if the entire South abandoned them and Jackson's "hireling soldiery" flooded their borders. In his final annual message, James Hamilton declared that South Carolinians would "rather have every house on the fair surface of our territory razed to the ground and every blade of grass burnt than surrender to the despotism and injustice" of the federal government.[24]

President Andrew Jackson, however, remained determined to crush nullification and preserve the Union. In September 1832, he began working with his cabinet to monitor the growing crisis. He asked navy secretary Levi Woodbury to "keep a steady eye to the South" and "*have all things ready*" in case the state tried to secede. Concerned that Nullifiers had compromised the military officers in Charleston, Jackson replaced them with "men who cannot be corrupted." In November, he sent his private secretary to Charleston to uncover the "real intentions of the nullifyers," assess the condition of the city's forts, and meet with Union Party leaders. Poinsett responded with a bleak assessment of the garrison's defenses. The forts were designed to protect Charleston from foreign invasion, not to resist an assault from the city itself. Fort Johnson contained "no works at all," while the sand hills towering over Fort Moultrie left it vulnerable to attack. Castle Pinckney was in "fine order," but it contained "no works in the rear, as all the defences are Seaward."[25]

[24] Samuel Townes to George Townes, 13 January 1833, Townes Family Papers, SCL; *The Charleston Mercury*, 1 January 1833 and 5 January 1833; James Hamilton, "To the Senate and House of Representatives," 8 December 1832, SCDAH.

[25] Andrew Jackson to Levi Woodbury, 1 September 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Andrew Jackson to Andrew J. Donelson, 17 September 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Andrew Jackson to George Breathitt, 7 November 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 24 November 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC.

In 1832, the entire federal army contained about 6300 soldiers. Less than half belonged to the Eastern Department, which stretched from Florida to the Michigan Territory. Nonetheless, Jackson acted quickly and decisively to maintain federal authority in South Carolina. Between September 1832 and January 1833, he increased the Charleston garrison from 180 men to 635 men—10 percent of the American army. He also ordered the *Natchez*, the *Experiment*, and a small fleet of revenue cutters to patrol the city's harbor. Major General Alexander Macomb commanded the officers in Charleston to remain on guard day and night and defend the forts "to the last extremity." Treasury Secretary Louis McLane ordered James Pringle—still serving as Charleston's customs collector—to display "unshrinking firmness and fidelity in the discharge of your duties." McLane authorized him to move the custom house into the forts and use the revenue cutters to enforce the tariff.[26]

By November, Jackson recognized that a "crisis is about to approach, when the Government must act." Hesitation would destabilize the country and destroy the "best hopes of the freedom of the world." He viewed the Union as the source of America's prosperity and the safeguard of its liberty, and he vowed to preserve it—or die in its defense. Many Americans shared these convictions, and thousands offered to help crush the incipient rebellion. Letters poured in from "officers[,] commanders[,] [and] volunteer corps" from across the Union, and the "tender of volunteers" exceeded 150,000 men. Within two weeks, Jackson estimated, he could

[26] Andrew Jackson to Joel R. Poinsett, 2 December 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Alexander Macomb to J.F. Heileman, 29 October 1832, in "Military Orders," *Niles' Weekly Register*, 23 February 1833; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Armed Forces and Veterans: Military Personnel on Active Duty: 1789-1957," *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 737; "Report of the Major General for 1831, accompanying the Report of the Secretary of War for 1831," *Congressional Serial Set*, 22nd Congress, 1st session; U.S. Returns from Military Posts, 1806-1916, Charleston Harbor, September 1832 and January 1833, available from http://www.ancestry.com; Louis McLane to James R. Pringle, 6 November 1832, quoted in Gautham Rao, *National Duties: Custom Houses and the Making of the American State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 199.
Among the revenue cutters patrolling Charleston Harbor were the *Jackson*, *McLane*, *Gallatin*, and *Crawford*.

send 15,000 well-organized troops to Charleston and another 30,000 men into the South Carolina upcountry. After forty days, he predicted, he could march every volunteer southward to defeat "every insurrection or rebellion that might arise to threaten our glorious confederacy."[27]

On December 10, Jackson delivered his Nullification Proclamation, articulating a powerful nationalist vision of the Union's nature and purpose. The Union, he insisted, predated the Constitution. It was forged in the colonial era, strengthened during the American Revolution, and cemented by the nation's founding documents. While Nullifiers viewed the Constitution as a revocable compact among sovereign states, Jackson argued that the American *people* had ratified it to perfect and perpetuate the Union. South Carolina's leaders looked to history to legitimize nullification, invoking the Revolutionary struggle against "unjust taxation." For Jackson, however, American history repudiated nullification and affirmed the permanence and supremacy of the Constitution. Had nullification "been established at an earlier day," he observed, "the Union would have been dissolved in its infancy"—torn apart by the Whiskey Rebellion or the War of 1812. The Revolutionary generation instead created a "permanent constitutional compact," forged through "mutual sacrifice" and "formed for the benefit of all." Jackson declared that "disunion, by armed force, is TREASON" and swore to preserve the Union even at the cost of war. If South Carolinians persisted, he warned, they would endure the "misery, of civil strife" and soak the state's fertile fields in blood.[28]

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[27] Andrew Jackson to Joel R. Poinsett, 7 November 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Andrew Jackson to John Coffee, 14 December 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Andrew Jackson to Martin Van Buren, 15 December 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Andrew Jackson to Joel R. Poinsett, 24 January 1833, Papers of Joel R. Poinsett, HSP; Andrew Jackson to Amos Kendall, 7 October 1844, Amos Kendall Letters, DU. In his letter to Kendall in 1844, Jackson observed that readers would "not find any notice of this in my official papers," because he destroyed the tenders after the crisis ended. During the nullification winter, he placed the number of volunteers at 200,000; in 1844, he remembered it as 150,000.

[28] "President Jackson's Proclamation Regarding Nullification," 10 December 1832, *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, Yale Law School, available from http://www.avalon.law.yale.edu. Nullifiers denounced Jackson's proclamation, calling it the "edict of a dictator" and an act of "absolute despotism." Henry L.

Jackson placed his confidence in the state's Union men, hoping they would "put down this rebellion themselves." The crisis, however, placed tremendous strain on these men, bringing their loyalties to state and nation into conflict. Some responded by renouncing South Carolina altogether. If Nullifiers triumphed, a lowcountry orator declared, "Carolina was no longer his country, and not entitled to his allegiance." Former governor Richard Manning insisted that his loyalty to South Carolina "consisted only through her free Institutions, and when those are destroyed I owe my allegiance to none but the Gen[era]l Government." Another writer agreed that South Carolinians "owe[d] allegiance to the state…only as a member of the Union" and had a duty to obey the federal Constitution in defiance of all state laws.[29]

Between 1820 and 1860, roughly 200,000 white South Carolinians left the state—most pushed by soil exhaustion and pulled by the promise of cheap land in the Old Southwest. The nullification crisis, however, contributed to the trend by driving some Union men from the state. In 1833, an Arkansas editor reported tens of thousands of South Carolinians fleeing from "political violence," and a North Carolina writer agreed that "thirty or forty thousand have left the State during the reign of terror." Although these reports vastly exaggerated the number of political refugees, they captured the experiences of countless South Carolinians. Poinsett observed many Union Party leaders wrestling with the decision to leave the state, and William

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Pinckney considered Jackson's words a "declaration of war" against South Carolina, and he called upon the other states to denounce its principles. If they refused, he warned, the "Union is not worth preserving, and will not be preserved." Governor Hayne issued a counter-proclamation urging South Carolinians to pledge their lives in defense of state sovereignty and the "rights of man." See *The Charleston Mercury*, 17 December 1832; Robert Y. Hayne, "Proclamation by the Governor of South Carolina," 21 December 1832, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, Vol. 1, ed. Thomas Cooper (Columbia: A. S. Johnston, 1836), 370.

[29] Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 16 January 1833, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; *The Charleston Courier*, 12 January 1833; Richard Manning to James Chesnut, 15 January 1832, John Chesnut Papers, SCHS; *The Southern Patriot*, 8 October 1832. William Gilmore Simms confessed that he considered himself "now rather a visitor in the state than a citizen." See William Gilmore Simms to James Lawson, 25 November 1832, *The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, Vol. 1: 1830-1844.*

Gilmore Simms insisted that nullification would drive Union men to "arms or emigration en masse." Many families carried out these plans, and an upcountry writer described a "great many people moving to the Ohio [River]" to escape political persecution. Another reported entire families "emigrating to the western wilds" to escape nullification. In December 1832, a Camden writer remarked that he had never witnessed such "rapid and increasing migration from the state."[30]

For many men, the decision to leave was an affirmation of moderate manhood—a desire to protect their families from civil war and slave rebellion. When Charleston merchant John Ravenel's wife left to visit her family in New Jersey, for example, he encouraged her to stay there until the crisis had passed. He began making arrangements to move their family "*ultimately north of the Potomac*," explaining that "Troubles await this Land—from which I hold it my duty to protect my Children." Charleston lawyer John W. Mitchell's relatives encouraged him to leave the state, warning him that the "doomed land" was no longer safe for his three young children. He resisted for months, reluctant to leave his home and his ailing father, but he finally moved the family to New York in 1833.[31]

Thousands of Union men, however, chose to stay in South Carolina and contest the state's future. While Nullifiers condemned them as traitors and Tories, these men defended their rights as South Carolinians. Judge John B. O'Neall, for example, declared himself a "freeman

[30] Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 276. *Arkansas Times and Advocate*, 9 October 1833; *Newbern Spectator*, 8 March 1833; John C. Nisbet to John A. Cooper, 17 March 1832, Papers of the Cooper-McClurken-Nisbet Families, SCL; James Hemphill to Andrew Murrett, 24 December 1833, Hemphill Family Papers, DU; J. Carter to William Drayton, 25 December 1832, Drayton Family Papers, HSP; Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 29 November 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; William Gilmore Simms to James Lawson, 27 November 1833, *The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, Vol. 1: 1830-1844*.

[31] John Ravenel to Anna Elizabeth Ravenel, 6 December 1830, John Ravenel Papers, SCL; Timothy Green to John W. Mitchell, 4 December 1832 and 15 December 1832, John Wroughton Mitchell Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC Chapel Hill (hereafter SHC);

standing on the soil of his birth," determined to protect the "safety and honor of the State." Charleston legislator Daniel Huger observed that his family had lived in the state for four generations, and the "recollections of the past, entwined with the hopes of the future, bind me to Carolina." He distinguished between the state and its government, insisting that Union men did not view the "Nullification Party as South Carolina, but [rather] as her oppressors." In Abbeville, Union men declared that they owed allegiance to South Carolina but not to the demagogues "now wielding her sovereignty." Declaring their devotion to the state, they refused to let Nullifiers strip away their rights and reduce them to "aliens in the land of our birth."[32]

On December 10, 1832, Union men held a party convention in Columbia, with more than 180 delegates from across the state. Divisions quickly emerged between moderate and martial Union men: while delegates like Richard Manning preferred "more silent and moderate measures," martial men like Joel Poinsett and Christopher Memminger favored decisive action. The delegates ultimately denounced nullification as a revolutionary conspiracy and a threat to Union men's homes and families. The General Assembly, they observed, had empowered Hayne to call out the militia to repel federal invasion, "forc[ing] the citizens of the State from their firesides, and their homes, to take up arms and incur the pains and penalties of treason." At Memminger's urging, they began preparing for armed resistance to nullification. They called for Union men in every district to create para-military organizations, with a network of local branches spread throughout the countryside. While Nullifiers' volunteer companies were

[32] Daniel E. Huger, *Speech of the Honorable Daniel E. Huger, in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, December 1830* (Charleston: W. Riley, 1831), 40; S*peeches Delivered in the Convention of the State of South Carolina, Held in Columbia, in March 1833* (Charleston: E.J. Van Brunt, 1833); Daniel Huger to William Drayton, 17 December 1832, Drayton Family Papers, HSP; *The Globe*, 9 March 1833; *The Charleston Courier*, 28 February 1833. Appealing to moderate manhood, Huger insisted that the honor of the state was "not that of a duellist." It "demands nothing rash," instead requiring South Carolinians to act with "reason, judgment and prudence." Huger accepted the title of submission man, observing that it "has been the pride of my life, to submit to the laws of my country."

explicitly military organizations, these "Washington Societies" or "Union Societies" were hybrid civic institutions. They allowed Union men to communicate, coordinate, and begin preparing for war. The moment fighting began, however, commander-in-chief Joel Poinsett could convert them into military companies.[33]

Charleston established its Washington Society in early December, and other districts quickly followed suit. Benjamin Perry observed that Nullifiers had stormed to power through "concert and union of action," and he urged Union men to "fight the Nullifiers with their own weapons." He encouraged Union men across the upcountry to organize societies to protect their families and preserve the "Government of our fathers." Jackson called upon the state's Union men to work together and prepare for "every emergency." He reminded them that they were waging a global struggle for liberty, defending not only the American Constitution but also "free institutions throughout the world." At least 9000 South Carolinians joined these para-military societies—18 percent of the state's white military-age population. In Charleston alone, almost 1500 men enrolled. Outside the city, the Union Societies drew their greatest strength from the districts along the North Carolina border, with fifty percent of military-age men in Lancaster, Marlborough, Greenville, and Spartanburg enrolling. In Horry District, where Nullifiers failed to organize a single company, 78 percent of white men volunteered to defend the Union.[34]

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[33] Samuel C. Jackson to William True, 14 December 1832, Samuel C. Jackson Papers, SCL; Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 17 December 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; James O'Hanlon to Andrew Jackson, 20 December 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 29 December 1832.

[34] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 19 January 1833 and 9 February 1833; Andrew Jackson to Joel R. Poinsett, 2 December 1833, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 22 February 1833. In February, Poinsett estimated the Union Societies' strength at 8400, including 1000 men in Greenville, 1500 in Spartanburg, 800 in York, 750 in Chester, 500 in Cheraw, 700 in Lancaster, 487 in Horry, 300 in Chesterfield, 450 in Marion, 1457 in Charleston, and a "very respectable force" in the "minority districts" dominated by Nullifiers. The specific numbers he listed produce a total of 7944. Newspaper records, however, reveal about 300 Union Society members in Edgefield, 150 in Colleton, 262 in Abbeville, and between 200 and 400 in Pendleton. Another writer reported Chester's total at 900 rather than 750. Darlington, Kershaw, Union, Williamsburg, St. Luke's, and other districts and parishes also held Union Party meetings during the nullification winter, so the number of Union Society members was likely even higher. Enrollment statistics reveal that some districts were deeply divided. In York District, for

As local Union Societies spread across the upcountry, they adopted increasingly militant resolutions. The Spartanburg chapter drew 1500 members, who declared that nullification would subvert the Constitution, provoke anarchy and civil war, and ultimately "destroy our Republican Institutions." They vowed to take any measures necessary to preserve the Union, insisting that "it shall *never* be dissolved…*it shall last forever*." In Greenville, Union men swore never to fight beneath the "bloody flag of Anarchy" or the "single star" of South Carolina. They declared themselves the "disciples of Washington" and resolved that "we are FREE, and will be FREE." Meetings in the district's northern mountains rejected moderation and embraced the possibility of war. The Paris Mountain Union Society, for example, warned that "argument is exhausted—the period of action is arrived." The region's Union men had "drawn our swords and flung away the scabbards," and they vowed to preserve the Union or "perish in the attempt." When Nullifiers called them cowards and submission men, they offered only two words in response: "Come on."[35]

Dozens of meetings adopted identical resolutions, denouncing the tyranny of nullification and refusing to fight against the federal government. In February 1833, roughly 150 Union men met in Pickens to raise a "Hickory Pole" and fly the American flag. They insisted that they would rather "live one day under the Stars and Stripes which now wave over us, than to live a long life without union and liberty." Horry District held a similar ceremony that winter, as Union men raised a 57-foot pole and flew the "starry Flag of their Country." In Abbeville, a militia colonel unfurled the American flag and asked his men to rally around it "as a test of principles

example, 43 percent of military-age white men joined the Nullifiers' volunteer force, while 37 percent enrolled in Union Societies. Most districts, however, clearly mobilized behind one party or the other. See *The Charleston* Courier issues for January and February 1833.

[35] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 12 January 1833, 9 February 1833, and 16 February 1833; *The Charleston Courier,* 17 January 1833.

and patriotism." All but five men stepped forward and circled the "glorious emblem of Union and Liberty," vowing pointedly to defend it against all "foreign and domestic enemies."[36]

Some Union men were reluctant to take up arms without the official sanction—and protection—of the federal government. If they failed, they feared, Nullifiers would hang them as traitors, confiscate their property, and perhaps target their families. If Jackson called them into service, however, they were "willing to take the field in defence of their liberties at a moment's notice." Novelist William Gilmore Simms reported that Charleston's Union men were eagerly preparing for war. Years of partisan tension, he wrote, had produced a "deep & deadly hostility & hate" between the parties, and Union men now raged with the "manful desire" for vengeance. He warned that the slightest provocation would lead to a merciless hand-to-hand struggle and the "utter extermination of one or the other party." Another writer actively desired civil war, insisting that only military intervention could resolve the crisis and restore "permanent peace and tranquility."[37]

Union men described the looming crisis in vivid detail—envisioning disunion as a military, political, and social catastrophe. Nullifiers often portrayed it as a clear sectional conflict, with the Potomac River forming the boundary between North and South. A Columbia writer, for example, appealed to the "States south of the Potomac" to resist the tyranny of their "Northern masters." Union men, however, imagined the crisis as a political apocalypse that

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[36] *The Charleston Courier*, 8 January 1833, 12 February 1833, 15 February 1833 and 28 February 1833; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 2 March 1833. On the contested meanings of liberty poles in the early republic, see Shira Lurie, "Politics at the Poles: Liberty Poles and the Popular Struggle for the New Republic" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2019).

[37] William Gilmore Simms to James Lawson, 25 November 1832, and 19 January 1833, *The Letters of William Gilmore Simms*: *Vol 1: 1830-1844*; Jonathan Mickle to Thomas Shivers, 11 February 1833, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 16 January 1833 and 27 January 1833, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC. Acting without federal sanction, they realized, could expose them to charges of treason against the state, and they could face execution if their resistance failed. Joel Poinsett encouraged Jackson to call out the militia, assuring Jackson that South Carolina's Union men were "ready to act whenever called into the field."

would shatter the Union. As diplomat Hugh Legaré explained, America would "go to pieces…no two parts will hold together." An upcountry writer agreed that the Union would be "torn to pieces and its fragments [would] be scattered to the four winds." Like the Latin American republics, another writer predicted, the states would fragment endlessly, and "regulated liberty" would disappear from the world.[38]

While the Union guaranteed Americans' liberty and independence, these "disunited States" would be powerless to protect them. The political chaos of disunion would destroy America's republican institutions and ensure the rise of tyranny. In order to survive, legislator William McWillie imagined, the fragmented states would ultimately form stronger governments, raise larger armies, and levy higher taxes. Inexorably, these small republics would become monarchies, and "all the beauty of our institutions would gradually fade away." A meeting in Pickens agreed that nullification would dissolve the Union and replace the "mild and rational system of government" with a military despotism. Another writer insisted that disunion would destroy and discredit the global cause of liberty: "with the dissolution of our Union, must perish our prosperity and the hopes of rational Liberty throughout the world."[39]

Union men also imagined disunion as a military conflict—a civil war both *within* South Carolina and *between* the state and federal government. A Greenville orator confessed that the "very word [nullification] had horrors for him, that it would produce disunion, civil war, bloodshed, revolution and every calamity that the imagination can conceive." William Gilmore Simms predicted the federal government would ultimately overrun the state, blot its "name &

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[38] *The Southern* Times, 8 February 1830; Hugh S. Legaré to I. E. Holmes, 2 October 1832, *The Writings of Hugh Swinton Legaré*; *The Southern Whig*, 15 March 1832; *The Charleston* Courier, 12 August 1832.
[39] *The Charleston Courier*, 26 January 1833; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 26 January 1833; *The Debate in the South Carolina Legislature in December 1,830 on the Reports of the Committees of Both Houses in Favor of Convention*, 107; *The Southern Whig*, 9 February 1832.

star place" out of existence, and divide its territory among the "contiguous and more loyal states." Thomas Grimké envisioned South Carolinians becoming a "band of Parricides, [fighting] a war of rebellion against their lawful Rulers." The world would condemn them, God would forsake them, and they would receive only the "reward of the Sword, cruel, remorseless, insatiable." Gazing into the future, Grimké saw the state's coastline blockaded, its towns burned and abandoned, and its soldiers slaughtered on the "battlefield of brothers,"[40]

They warned that South Carolina would have to ally with Great Britain to achieve its independence. The kingdom purchased much of South Carolina's cotton and—Union men claimed—had a political and economic incentive to weaken the Union. As early as 1830, Union Party writers accused Governor Stephen D. Miller of sending agents to Britain to secure an alliance "in a war with the Northern states." According to one rumor, the British were sending a fleet with 10,000 soldiers to defend South Carolina from the federal government. Although few Nullifiers expected or desired British aid, Union men eagerly accused them of betraying the country. If the British intervened, one lowcountry planter warned, the kingdom would "recolonize us" and "dismember the [American] empire." South Carolina, dependent on British protection, would become a "smuggling mart" for British goods and a staging ground for its wars. British ships would patrol the state's harbors, and British soldiers would occupy its forts—a direct assault upon South Carolina's sovereignty and independence.[41]

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[40] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 3 October 1832; Thomas Grimké, *Speech of Thomas Grimké, One of the Senators from St. Philip's and St. Michael's, Delivered in the Senate of South Carolina, in December 1828* (Charleston: W. Riley, 1829), 97; William Gilmore Simms to James Lawson, 25 November 1832, *The Letters of William Gilmore Simms*, *Vol. 1*: 1830-1844; Thomas S. Grimké, *To the People of the State of South Carolina, December 1, 1832* (Charleston: J.S. Burges, 1832), 12.

[41] Moses Benbow to Stephen D. Miller, 15 September 1830, Stephen Decatur Miller Papers, SCHS; David J. McCord to David B. Warden, 29 June 1831, David James McCord Papers, SCL; William Elliott, *Address to the People of St. Helena Parish* (Charleston: William Estill, 1832), 13; Joel R. Poinsett, *Address of the Washington Society*, 2.

This British alliance, Union men imagined, would also ensure slavery's destruction. Britain was on the verge of emancipating its West Indian slaves, and one planter insisted it was "utter insanity" to entrust the state's "peculiar interests" to British protection. Another writer, signing himself *A Slave Holder*, warned that Great Britain would impose abolition on South Carolina as a condition of their alliance. Poinsett agreed, writing that Britain's Parliamentary debates would transform the West Indies into an "Archipelago of free blacks." If South Carolina placed itself under British protection, the kingdom's abolitionists would soon focus their "philanthropic projects" on the state. Faced with "servile war and destruction," their small army would be powerless to "preserve our property and maintain domestic tranquility."[42]

For many Union men, these visions presaged the most chilling consequences of nullification. They repeatedly evoked the "horrors of a civil and servile war," fearing that disunion would unleash a social and racial apocalypse. Images of the Haitian Revolution still haunted their imaginations. One writer accused Nullifiers of inciting another "Santa Domingo Massacre," and legislator William McWillie agreed that nullification would expose the state to the "horrors of St. Domingo." Disunion and civil war, they feared, would present even greater challenges to the institution. By drawing men away from their homes, the war would leave wives and children more vulnerable to the "ravages" of an insurrection, and the presence of an invading army would encourage slaves to seek liberation. Union men viewed slavery as an "inherent weakness" in the event of war, and they feared slaves would seize the opportunity to "cut their throats." An upcountry writer even feared that Nullifiers would "arm the slaves and put them forward in the front of battle."[43]

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[42] Elliott, *Address to the People of St. Helena Parish*, 14; *The Southern Patriot*, 17 November 1832; Poinsett, *Address of the Washington Society*, 3.

[43] John Fenwick, quoted in Sarah Rayser Ragonese, "A Drayton Leads th'Embattled Line: Colonel William Drayton and the South Carolina Nullification Controversy," (MA Thesis, Temple University, 2000), 61; *The Debate in the*

In these visions of disunion, slave rebellion reflected a broader breakdown of social order. As Jackson explained, disunion "reduces every thing to anarchy & strikes at the very existence of society." A writer in Sumter agreed that nullification would sound the "death-knell to all law, all government, all restraint." Union men warned that nullification "strikes at the very root of social order" and threatened to "sweep away the very foundation of social and civil union." Already, they observed, nullification had turned friends and brothers against each other and thrown open the "flood-gates of anarchy." Benjamin Perry insisted that "friendship, love of country, the ties of kindred and the feelings of religion have withered." Nullifiers, he lamented, had "substituted discord for peace, not only in the halls of legislation, but in the family circle, and the very sanctuary of God!"[44]

Union men blended political and religious imagery in an apocalyptic vision of South Carolina's future, imagining "war, famine and pestilence" consuming the state. Grimké, adopting the Bible's rhythm and rhetoric, warned that the state's wives and mothers "shall have for their portion, weeping, and lamentation, and griefs," and the "gray hairs of her aged men, shall be brought down with sorrow, to the grave." Nullification would tear families and friendships apart and devastate the countryside. The Union's prosperity would evaporate, one writer imagined, and "you will behold your fields untouched by the hoe or by the plough, your threshing floor gaping with emptiness." The "mangled corpse[s]" of parents and friends would haunt their

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South Carolina Legislature in December 1830, 101; Robert Y. Hayne, *Speeches of the Hon. Robert Y. Hayne, and the Hon. Daniel Webster, Jan. 21 and 26, 1830* (Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1830), 25; Hugh Legaré to Isaac Holmes, 8 April 1833, *The Writings of Hugh Swinton Legaré*; Samuel C. Jackson to William True, 17 November 1832, Samuel C. Jackson Papers, SCL; Jonathan Mickle to Thomas Shivers, 11 February 1833, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP.

[44] Andrew Jackson to Maunsel White, 22 December 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; *The Southern Whig*, 29 March 1832; *The Charleston Observer*, 9 August 1832; William Drayton to Joel R. Poinsett, 20 December 1830, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; *The Camden Journal*, 6 November 1830 and 29 September 1832; *The Columbia Hive*, 18 February 1832;

"blood-satiated imagination," and their vacant houses would serve as cruel reminders of the "by-gone days" of happiness.[45]

Joel Poinsett provided one of the most detailed visions of the impending conflict. Rumors swirled that Jackson planned to seal off the state, blockading its ports and stationing soldiers along its borders. Poinsett warned the president that such a blockade would provoke a "desperate and protracted" war between the state's political parties. The Union would ultimately survive, but only after "great loss of life and the total destruction of the property of the State." Nullifiers, he wrote, would occupy Charleston almost immediately, and it would "cost much blood to dislodge them." Union men owned many of the city's most elegant houses, and they feared that Nullifiers would burn the town rather than surrender it. Poinsett admitted that Charleston's Union men were too weak to defeat the Nullifiers alone, and in many inland districts they could do little more than protect themselves.[46]

Instead of sealing off the state, Poinsett urged the president to invade South Carolina at once and overwhelm Nullifiers' scattered recruits. The "blustering volunteers," he wrote, "ought to be stopped at the threshhold." Jackson should reinforce the 600 soldiers in Charleston with enough men to "take and hold possession" of the city. At the same time, he should march volunteers through North Carolina into the state's northwestern districts, which remained staunchly loyal to the Union. Union men in Charleston and across the upcountry would rally to these liberating armies, and together they would "suffocate this rebellion" with one blow. The state's Union men would then "take upon themselves the civil government of the State" and restore harmony to the country.[47]

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[45] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 23 February 1833; Thomas Grimké, *Speech of Thomas Grimké*, 97; *The Charleston Courier*, 27 February 1833.
[46] Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 27 January 1833, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC.
[47] Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 27 January 1833, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC.

American observers around the world warned that the global cause of liberty hinged on the outcome of the crisis. Writing from Belgium, Hugh Legaré reported that European monarchs rejoiced at the Union's "approaching downfall," viewing nullification as proof of the failure of self-government. James Buchanan, the American ambassador to Russia, agreed that the "advocates of despotism throughout Europe beheld our dissentions with delight." If Nullifiers triumphed, Buchanan informed Jackson, "constitutional liberty throughout the rest of the world would receive a blow from which it might never recover." By striving to preserve the Union, Daniel Webster declared, Americans were acting "not for ourselves alone, but for the great cause of Constitutional liberty all over the globe." The failure of the European revolutions gave greater urgency to America's mission. Among the "desolated fields and still smoking ashes of Poland," Webster explained, "prayers are uttered for the preservation of our Union."[48]

Fueled by these convictions, most states—including Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi—passed resolutions denouncing nullification. Maryland insisted the federal government had a duty to protect South Carolina's Union men and stop the state from seceding. Mississippi declared the Union "precious above all price" and vowed to sustain Jackson in striking down nullification. Alabama lawmakers observed that nullification would produce "anarchy and civil discord" and "make shipwreck of the last hope of mankind." They called for the "instant exertion" of patriotism and forbearance, insisting that the affection of the American people represented the "only bonds of our Union, and the sole preservatives of rational and constitutional liberty."[49]

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[48] Hugh S. Legaré to Mary Legaré, 27 December 1832, in Shirley Carter Hughson, "Excerpts from the Correspondence of Hugh Swinton Legaré," SCHS; James Buchanan to Andrew Jackson, 29 May 1833, *The Works of James Buchanan*: Vol. 2: 1830-1836, ed. John Bassett Moore (Philadelphia: J B Lippincott Company, 1908); *The National Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), 24 October 1832.

[49] *State Papers on Nullification*, 219-225, 229-231, 289-292,

As a "last resort," Alabama proposed a "Federal Convention" to meet in Washington in March 1834. The yearlong delay, legislators hoped, would allow tempers to cool and give the nation's leaders time to forge an equitable compromise. Georgia, similarly, called for a "Convention of the people" and suggested eleven constitutional amendments to define the balance of state and federal power. Its legislators also called for a southern convention to determine the most effective means of preserving state sovereignty within the Union. Significantly, Mississippi lawmakers rejected the proposal, insisting it was "madness to expect…calm deliberation" amid the political crisis. Despite the "turbulent spirit of the times," they observed, the Constitution still guaranteed "freedom of laws, of order, of security and peace." If they tried to amend, it however, they would unleash "malignant passions" that might transform the country's "peaceful freedom" into a state of "fraternal wars, of bloodshed and desolation."[50]

Virginia governor John Floyd sympathized with South Carolina's resistance and vehemently denounced Jackson's Nullification Proclamation. If the president tried to coerce South Carolina into submission, Floyd swore, he would "oppose him with a military force." Although he expected to die in the looming civil war, he vowed to "do the best I can to save the liberty of my country." Other prominent Virginians shared these sentiments, and meetings across the state's eastern tidewater declared their support for South Carolina. The state legislature, however, struck a moderate tone, urging South Carolina to rescind the Ordinance of Nullification

[50] *State Papers on Nullification*, 222-223, 237-239, 277-280. Among these proposals were amendments to define the powers delegated to the federal government, determine the "power of coercion by the General Government," settle the principle of protectionism, establish an equal system of taxation, decide the "jurisdiction and process" of the Supreme Court, create a "tribunal of last resort" that could adjudicate disputes between the federal government and the states, determine the constitutionality of internal improvement appropriations, secure the election of the president and vice president "to the people," limit presidents to one term, and settle the "rights of the Indians."

and calling upon both sides to back down. It also appointed Richmond lawyer Benjamin W. Leigh as a commissioner to South Carolina to help mediate the crisis. Nullifiers welcomed him and "feast[ed] him sumptuously," but they rejected his offer of assistance. Hayne assured Leigh that the state's preparations were "altogether defensive," and that Nullifiers had no desire to "disturb the tranquility of our country."[51]

Isolated and divided, South Carolinians now faced the prospect of defying the federal government alone. Despite Nullifiers' herculean efforts, the state remained unprepared for war, and Hayne confessed that the supplies he procured were "insufficient for the defense of the State." On January 21, party leaders held a public meeting in Charleston and agreed to "pause with honor," postponing nullification until March to give Congress more time to lower the tariff. As William Freehling observes, this decision was a "strategic retreat rather than a final surrender." Poinsett warned that the delay gave Nullifiers more time to galvanize their followers and consolidate their strength, and a Charleston writer agreed that it gave them "a chance to proclaim disunion" and "find favour with the other Southern States."[52]

At the Charleston meeting, Nullifiers affirmed the right of secession and swore to "volunteer *en masse*" in the state army. Hamilton had ordered a shipment of sugar from Cuba, and he agreed to let it sit in the custom house rather than "produce unnecessary collision" with the federal government. If Congress refused to lower the tariff, however, he hoped South Carolinians would "*go even to the death with him for his sugar*." The crowd—several thousand "free-born men"—greeted his words with "overwhelming acclamations." One Nullifier insisted that the entire state was up in arms, prepared to "pour in a torrent into Charleston" and "*die*

[51] Floyd, "Diary of John Floyd," 19 December 1832 and 26 December 1832; *State Papers on Nullification*, 195-197, 332-333.
[52] Hayne, "Message Regarding the Mobilization of Volunteers"; James L. Petigru to Hugh Legaré, 6 February 1833, James Louis Petigru Papers, SCL; *The Charleston Courier*, 26 January 1833.

honorably if we did not conquer." Another writer agreed that South Carolinians were "armed and in the trenches for the support of liberty, and we coolly and fearlessly await the blow."[53]

As the "Fatal First" of February dawned, Union Party writers rejoiced that the country remained at peace. Samuel Cram Jackson observed that "all is calm—no bloodshed—a beautiful day." Mary Chesnut reported that things stood "just as they were" and hoped the Union Party would "yet save the state." A meeting in Pickens joyfully declared that the "1st of February, 1833, has arrived! We are yet Americans!" The district's Union men swore never to "submit to secession" or take up arms against the United States, and they denounced Nullifiers as the state's "true Submission men." Jasper Adams, president of the College of Charleston, marveled that the tenuous peace still held firm, and that "no one is yet harmed." A rush of rumors, however, suggested that civil war remained imminent. Throughout the state, Adams heard, Union men were building a "complete military organization," while Nullifiers were still preparing for war.[54]

The State Rights Party continued to hold meetings and enroll volunteers. At a militia muster in Sumterville in early February, for example, 600 men volunteered to defend the state, including several disillusioned Union men. A lowcountry parish celebrated February 1 as a milestone in the state's resistance to tyranny—an event "sacred to constitutional liberty." Villagers marched to a local Liberty Tree and shared a public dinner, where they swore to support "Carolina—the whole of Carolina—and nothing but Carolina." That evening, students from South Carolina College paraded down Main Street in Columbia with an effigy of King

[53] *The Evening Post* (New York, NY), 30 January 1833.
[54] Samuel C. Jackson Diary, 1 February 1833, SHC; Mary Chesnut to James Chesnut, Jr., 3 February 1833, Papers of the Williams, Chesnut, and Manning Families, SCL; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 9 February 1833; Jasper Adams to Sewall Harding, 16 January 1833 [postscript dated 6 February 1833], Jasper Adams Papers, SCL.

"Andrew the First." They carried it to a Union Party newspaper office, where they triumphantly shot and burned it.[55]

As tensions escalated in South Carolina, politicians in Washington worked frantically to forge a compromise. In January, New York Congressman Gulian Verplanck proposed lowering the tariff to its 1816 levels over the next two years. The bill met widespread opposition: protectionists opposed any reductions, northern Democrats desired specific protections for local industries, and southern radicals denounced the bill for maintaining the principle of protection. Its failure, Webster confessed, left congressional moderates "heartless & desponding," uncertain of the Union's survival. In early February, however, Calhoun and Clay set aside their bitter political rivalry to attempt to avert civil war. Clay introduced a bill to gradually lower the tariff over the next nine years, after which Congress would levy duties only to raise revenue for the federal government. While a few senators objected, Calhoun immediately rose to support the plan. Amid tumultuous applause, he declared that anyone who "loves the Union must desire to see this agitating question brought to a termination."[56]

While Jackson encouraged tariff reform, he also asked Congress to empower him to use military power to enforce the laws. The resulting "Force Bill" enraged many southerners, and fifteen senators voted unsuccessfully to table its discussion. Nullifiers denounced it as a "bill to dissolve the union" and threatened to secede immediately if it passed. Many congressmen, however, viewed it as an essential element of compromise. As Clay explained, the two bills

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[55] *The Camden Journal*, 9 February 1833; *The Charleston Mercury*, 12 February 1833; *The New York Spectator*, 13 February 1833. Calhoun counseled moderation, advising Hamilton and Hayne "not [to] think of secession, but in the last extremity." He proposed suspending the Ordinance for a year to give Nullifiers time to consolidate their strength and build momentum in other states. See Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 289-291.

[56] Ellis, *The Union at Risk*, 98-101; Merrill D. Peterson, *Olive Branch and Sword: The Compromise of 1833* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 68-69; John C. Calhoun, *Register of Debates*, Senate, 22nd Congress, 2nd Session, 477-478.

represented an "olive branch" and a "flaming sword," offering South Carolinians the choice between peace and war. By tempering power with mercy, Clay hoped to save the country from his own vision of disunion: cities looted and burning, fields devastated by marching armies, and "streams of American blood shed by American arms!" When Congress passed the bills, on March 1, 1833, Clay celebrated it as "perhaps the most important congressional day that ever occurred."[57]

Although the compromise tariff fell short of their demands, most Nullifiers ultimately accepted it and claimed it as a victory for the state. A Columbia editor rejoiced at the "glorious triumph of Nullification," and an upcountry writer agreed that "we have gained a great and glorious victory." Robert Barnwell argued that Nullifiers had attained the "substantial object of [their] resistance" by forcing Congress to lower the tariff, and Hamilton assured supporters that "there is neither dishonor nor inconsistency in our acceptance of this compromise." They claimed the crisis as a vindication of martial manhood, insisting they had defended their freedom in the face of overwhelming odds. A woman in Sumterville, presenting a flag to the local regiment, observed that South Carolina had struggled "almost alone" against the tyranny of the federal government. Hamilton agreed that Nullifiers had contended against "tremendous odds." If war had broken out and the state's volunteers had "retired from the field, with nothing more than the credit of a drawn battle, we should not have been dishonored."[58]

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[57] Henry Townes to George Townes, 10 February 1833, Townes Family Papers, SCL; *The Charleston Mercury*, 28 January 1833; Clay, quoted in Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 230-231. The House passed the tariff by a vote of 119-85 and the Force Bill by a vote of 149-48. The Senate voted 29-16 in favor of the tariff and 31-1 in support of the Force Bill. Several southern senators, however, abstained from the latter vote. John Tyler cast the lone dissenting vote in the Senate.

[58] *Speeches Delivered in the Convention of the State of South Carolina, Held in Columbia, in March 1833* (Charleston: E J Van Brunt, 1833); *Southern Times and State Gazette*, 22 March 1833; *Pendleton Messenger*, 31 July 1833; *Sumter Gazette and Constitutional Advocate*, 20 April 1833; James Hamilton, *An Eulogium on the Public Services and Character of Robert J. Turnbull* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1834). Hamilton argued that, "If we had been united at home—if the South had been true to herself, our victory would have been overwhelming and complete,"

The state convention met again on March 11 and voted 153-to-4 to rescind the Ordinance of Nullification. Nonetheless, delegates remained unbowed and unrepentant. Robert Turnbull proudly observed that Nullifiers had "tamed the pride of this arrogant Federal Government" and "foiled the barbarian fury of General Jackson." McDuffie viewed the compromise as a temporary victory, warning that slavery—the state's "deeper cause"—remained in jeopardy. He argued that South Carolina had more to fear from northern abolitionists than from foreign armies, and that a "thorough system of defence" was indispensable to their safety and freedom. The state's militia, he insisted, should be as highly-trained as Napoleon's armies, and its citizens should always act "as if the day were at hand, when they must defend their freedom." Robert Barnwell Smith agreed that slaveholders were "worse than mad" if they "do not hold their destinies in their own hands." Although Nullifiers had momentarily "beaten back" their northern oppressors, they would soon "pour upon you, with thicker numbers, and redoubled fury."[59]

They denounced the Force Bill as an assault on constitutional freedom and voted 132-to-19 to nullify it. While scholars have viewed this as a "purely symbolic gesture," many Nullifiers were deeply committed to resisting the law. A month after the compromise, Hammond reported that the military spirit in his district remained as strong as ever, and a Columbia orator urged listeners to stay armed and "ever ready" to resist the "bloody bill." At a public dinner that July, an upcountry guest condemned the law and declared that only the "spirit that animated the Nullifiers" could save them. Calhoun warned that the Force Bill heralded the end of liberty and limited government, and he viewed nullification as the state's only salvation. The federal

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and the region would never again have to fight the "battle for Free Trade and State Rights." Stephen Miller confessed that the "position of South Carolina forced us to concur." Because the rest of the country had rejected nullification, the "question was become…one of Union or Disunion, of War or Peace," and Nullifiers had accepted peace rather than risk the dangers of war.

[59] *Speeches Delivered in the Convention of the State of South Carolina*; Davis, *Rhett*, 75.

government, he declared, could never enforce the law in South Carolina. The other states "may live under its reign, but Carolina is resolved to live only under…the Constitution. There shall be at least one free state."[60]

On March 27, Charleston's Nullifiers hosted a military ball at the Arsenal to celebrate their "victory" over federal tyranny. Organizers lined the square with cannons and palmetto trees and draped the state flag from muskets above the crowd. Transparencies celebrated the state's radical leaders and declared "paramount allegiance to the state." Several thousand guests attended, and one witness compared the ball to the medieval "days of chivalry and romance"—a sight that had "never been seen in America." The spectacle and symbolism "inspire[d] the spirit of patriotism in every heart" and "excite[d] the warmest devotion to the rights of man."[61]

Five days later, 1300 state volunteers gathered on Meeting Street and marched to the Arsenal, where the artillery greeted them with a 124-gun salute. As a "glorious array of ladies" looked on, Governor Hayne presented the men with a flag and delivered a proud and defiant address. The other states, he observed, had abandoned South Carolina, leaving it to confront the "colossal power" of federal tyranny "unaided and alone." Despite their isolation, Nullifiers had rushed to defend their freedom, and in doing so they had saved the state and the Union from destruction. Hayne warned, however, that the crisis had only begun: until Congress repealed the

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[60] Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 296; Davis*, Rhett*, 74-75; *The Columbia Telescope*, 26 March 1833; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 17 July 1833; *Niles Weekly Register*, 20 April 1833; John C. Calhoun to Christopher Van Deventer, 24 March 1833, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*: Vol. 12: 1833-1835, ed. Clyde N. Wilson (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1979). Some Nullifiers, including Calhoun, worked to repeal the Force Bill for at least a year. In December 1833, Calhoun wrote with frustration that there was "at present but little prospect of repealing the force bill," and in March 1834 he promised to "take up the Bill to repeal the force act [at] the first fair opening." Thomas Cooper refused to vote for Martin Van Buren in 1836 because he believed no South Carolinian should vote for "an advocate of Gen. Jackson's Force Bill." See John C. Calhoun to Francis W Pickens, 12 December 1833; John C. Calhoun to James Edward Calhoun, 26 March 1834; Thomas Cooper to unknown, 2 March 1837, Louisa S. McCord Family papers, SCHS.

[61] Maurie D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 80; *The Camden Journal*, 6 April 1833; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 20 April 1833. Significantly, organizers chose not to include the American flag, and one guest reportedly remarked that "that is not our flag."

Force Bill, "there can be no safety for the rights of the states." He urged the volunteers to stay vigilant and prepare to defend their rights at "any and every hazard."[62]

Union men, meanwhile, celebrated the country's survival and enjoyed a brief moment of political peace. Camden writer William Blanding marveled at the "first quiet Saturday I have seen in months," observing young men playing ball on the field where Nullifiers had drilled the week before. Benjamin Perry rejoiced that the "Union is safe for the present," and he prayed that partisan strife would finally give way to harmony. He resigned as editor of the *Greenville Mountaineer*, and his successor promised to devote less time to politics. Charleston's Union Party organized an elegant ball for the American officers stationed in the city. Twelve hundred guests gathered at a plantation north of the city, where the scent of spring flowers and the sound of patriotic music filled the air. The *USS Experiment* lay at anchor in the river nearby, and the American flag—the "holy banner of our union"—floated triumphantly above the crowd.[63]

Most Union Party writers, however, still feared for the future. Blanding warned that "this quiet may last but a few days," and Perry predicted that another crisis lay ahead. Nullifiers had threatened to pass a treason law and a new oath of allegiance. If they succeeded, Perry wrote, Union men would have only three options: "fight, quit the state, or become the vassals of the nullifyers." Poinsett reported that Nullifiers still hoped for secession, and Petigru agreed that the State Rights Party was laying the groundwork for a southern confederacy. These fears for the country's survival, however, only fueled Union men's resolve. John Chesnut declared that they

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[62] *The Charleston Mercury*, 3 April 1833.

[63] William Blanding to James Blanding, 24 March 1833, William Blanding Papers, SCL; Benjamin Perry to Joel R. Poinsett, 24 March 1833, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; J. Mauldin Lesesne, "The Nullification Controversy in an Up-Country District," *The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association*, ed. Robert L. Meriwether and Arney R. Childs (Columbia: South Carolina Historical Association, 1939), 22; Jacob M. Bailey to William M Bailey, March 1833, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Charleston Library Society, on microform at SCHS; Levin M. Powell, quoted in Howard H. Wehmann, "Noise, Novelties, and Nullifiers: A U.S. Navy Officer's Impressions of the Nullification Controversy," in *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 76, no. 1 (January 1975), 21-24.

remained "as firm in support of their principles as ever," and if another crisis arose, they "will be more united in action." Although the immediate danger had passed, the future remained uncertain, and the Union remained in peril. With new conflicts looming over the nature of loyalty and the fate of slavery, Union men despaired that "we are not yet to have quiet."[64]

[64] William Blanding to James Blanding, 24 March 1833, William Blanding Papers, SCL; Benjamin Perry to Joel R. Poinsett, 24 March 1833, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; James L. Petigru to William Elliott, 15 April 1833, James L. Petigru Papers, SCHS; Joel R. Poinsett to Daniel Webster, *The Papers of Daniel Webster*, Correspondence, Vol. 3: 1830-1834, ed. Charles M. Wiltse (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1977); *The Camden Journal*, 4 May 1833.

Chapter Six: "Faithful and True Allegiance": The Test Oath Controversy, 1833-1835

The compromise tariff of 1833 defused the national crisis and helped avert secession and civil war for a generation. Within South Carolina, however, partisan tensions simmered for another three years, and the state remained on the verge of war. Nullifiers still dominated the state legislature, and they enacted a series of laws meant to consolidate their power and unify the state. They condemned their opponents as traitors and demanded that all public officials swear an oath to bear "true allegiance…to the State of South Carolina." When the state's Court of Appeals ruled the oath unconstitutional, they amended the state constitution and threatened to abolish the court itself. Preparing for the next sectional crisis, they strengthened and reformed the militia and removed Unionist symbols from their flags and uniforms.

The Union Party fiercely resisted these "reforms," challenging Nullifiers at the ballot box, in the courtroom, and in the streets. Their responses, however, exposed the unresolved divisions between martial and moderate Union men. Lowcountry moderates like James Petigru and Thomas Grimké hoped to work within the political system, trusting court rulings and legislative discussion to restore harmony. They parsed and reinterpreted "allegiance" to reconcile the oath with their political convictions. Martial Union men, including a young William Lowndes Yancey, grew increasingly impatient with these abstract legal debates. In a series of massive Union Party meetings, thousands of men rejected the test oath and resolved to "die [as] freemen" rather than "live [as] slaves." South Carolinians shifted their anxious attention from Charleston to the upcountry—to the rebellious "state of Greenville"—where martial Union men prepared to resist oppression with the very stones of their mountains.[1]

[1] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 4 October 1834; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 5 February 1834.

Nullifiers taunted them as hypocrites and opportunists. After opposing nullification for five years, they observed, the Union Party now called for open resistance to their own state's laws. Union men's principles, however, remained consistent, and their actions demonstrated the nature and strength of their Unionism. Nullifiers insisted that sovereignty ultimately—essentially—resided in the states, and that South Carolina therefore demanded the "paramount allegiance" of its citizens. Most Union men, however, believed in dual sovereignty. They understood themselves, fundamentally, as South Carolinians *and* Americans, viewing the bonds between state and nation as mutually reinforcing. As one writer explained, "true patriotism" entailed devotion to *both* the state and federal constitutions, because "the State is made up of those two Governmental compacts." This belief fueled their resistance to nullification and the test oath. Convinced of the Union's transcendent, liberating power, they refused to sever its bonds or to allow Nullifiers to "drive them from the land of their birth."[2]

The spring of 1833 brought a brief and anxious peace to South Carolina. Congress had approved the compromise tariff, and Nullifiers had rescinded their ordinance. The *Natchez* and *Experiment* left Charleston in April, and the army quickly reassigned most of its soldiers. By July, only three artillery companies—158 men—remained. After months patrolling the harbor, the revenue cutters rested off the city's wharves, where men and women from both parties could tour them. Union men throughout the state rejoiced that partisan strife had given way to "quiet and harmony." As a Charleston writer observed, the "demon of discord has been stayed," and the "God of peace reigns triumphant." The Union Party indefinitely postponed its statewide

[2] *The Charleston Courier*, 9 March 1833; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 4 October 1834.

convention, and local leaders held few meetings or public dinners that spring. Many sought to put the crisis behind them and heal the state's political divisions.[3]

Harmony, however, remained elusive. Although the immediate danger had passed, one writer explained, the "germ of discontent" had "struck deeply, very deeply, into the public mind." Enraged by the Force Bill, Nullifiers encouraged this disaffection and continued to rail against federal tyranny. They argued that the law was "incompatible with freedom": it effectively abolished the states, tore apart the Constitution, and turned the president into a despot. While South Carolina had nullified the "Bloody Bill," it remained in force throughout the country, and only constant vigilance and military preparation could ensure liberty's survival. Nullifiers called upon South Carolinians to resist the law at all hazards, ominously insisting that "Any thing is better."[4]

Most Nullifiers still viewed the Congressional compromise as a glorious victory, insisting the state had forced the federal government to back down. Party radicals, however, rejected the settlement and denounced their own allies for accepting it. A lowcountry writer, for example, judged the new tariff "*a Defeat*," observing that the state's Congressmen and convention delegates had compromised away their liberties. South Carolina's volunteers, he insisted, were more radical and resolute than their leaders—ready to fight to "sustain the State." Thomas Cooper agreed. Geographer George Featherstonhaugh visited Columbia shortly after the crisis and found the college president unrepentant. Cooper believed Nullifiers were "quite in the wrong to make peace with the Union men," insisting they had surrendered everything they "might have

[3] *The National Gazette*, 29 April 1833; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 13 April 1833; *The Charleston Courier*, 13 March 1833; *The Charleston Courier*, 22 August 1833.
[4] Mitchell King to Hugh Legaré, 5 May 1833, in Shirley Carter Hughson, "Excerpts from the Correspondence of Hugh Swinton Legaré," SCHS; *The Columbia Telescope*, 26 March 1833 and 2 April 1833; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 10 April 1833.

brought forth at a future day." Instead of compromising, Cooper argued, South Carolinians should have "taken the field against General Jackson" and "fought all the power he could have brought against them."[5]

In March 1833, a week after the Nullification Convention adjourned, Poinsett observed that Nullifiers were still "animated with the zeal of fanatics." They maintained their partisan organization, and they were working tirelessly to "disseminate their doctrines and destroy the Union." A New England editor visited Charleston that month and found Nullifiers still wearing their blue cockades and "nullifying badges" as "proudly and fearlessly" as ever. Nullifiers marched through Columbia carrying effigies of William Drayton, James Blair, and Thomas Mitchell—the state's Unionist Congressmen. They displayed the figures throughout town, playing music and huzzahing wildly, before ultimately hanging and burning them. Charleston's Irish Volunteers celebrated St. Patrick's Day that year with speeches and toasts demanding resistance. The company enlisted to serve the state during the nullification winter, and Nullifiers celebrated the men as the champions of constitutional liberty throughout the world. Captain William P. Finley toasted the "Palmetto and the Shamrock," praying they would "flourish forever…on shores unsoiled by the footsteps of tyranny."[6]

When Robert Turnbull died on June 15, 1833, Nullifiers across the state hosted meetings and delivered tributes—serving both to honor his memory and galvanize the party. They wore

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[5] John Edwards to Richard Cralle, 29 May 1833, Richard K. Cralle Papers, CU; George William Featherstonhaugh, *Excursions Through the Slave States* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1844), 157. Featherstonhaugh observed that Cooper and his fellow professors expressed "ultra opinions" on religion and politics. When the geographer asked one man if he considered himself an American, he responded, "No, sir, I am a South Carolinian." Featherstonhaugh reflected that, if the children of these Nullifiers were "brought up in the same opinions…here are the fine elements for future disunion."

[6] Joel R. Poinsett to Daniel Webster, 25 March 1833, *The Papers of Daniel Webster: Correspondence*, Vol. 3: 1830-1834, ed. Charles M. Wiltse (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1977); *The National Banner and Daily Advertiser* (Nashville, TN), 24 April 1833; *The Charleston Courier*, 16 March 1833; *The Charleston Mercury*, 22 March 1833.

black crape armbands for a month as a sign of mourning and vowed to uphold Turnbull's constitutional principles. They viewed his death as a "national calamity," lamenting the irreparable loss to the cause of human freedom. In Charleston, a large crowd escorted his body to the cemetery of St. Philip's Episcopal Church, where a military company fired a salute. That November, Governor Robert Hayne laid the cornerstone for a grand monument to Turnbull's memory. Hamilton delivered a riveting eulogy, declaring Turnbull's 1827 pamphlet *The Crisis* the "first bugle-call to the South to rally." He celebrated South Carolina's glorious triumph, observing that "six weeks of impending nullification" had accomplished more than ten years of idle petitioning. Although Nullifiers had accepted the compromise, Hamilton said, they had not abandoned their principles. The moment Congress trampled their liberties, they would return to the trenches and nullify the law again. South Carolinians remained in the Union "under an act of permanent nullification," and they would resist the tyrannical Force Bill until Congress tore it from the statute books.[7]

Nullifiers' Independence Day meetings reaffirmed their partisan resistance. At a military festival in Columbia, guests toasted South Carolina as "Our only Sovereign" and proclaimed the Union worthless without liberty. If Congress refused to repeal the Force Bill, they insisted, then South Carolinians would tear down the American flag and "cease to celebrate this day." In Lexington, the *Richland Nullifiers* militia company declared that nullification had stemmed the tide of tyranny, and if it ever failed, they would respond with fixed bayonets. The *Calhoun Hussars* swore to dissolve the Union rather than submit to tyranny, while an officer in the *Hayne*

[7] *The Charleston Mercury*, 17 June 1833 and 20 June 1833; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 3 July 1833 and 10 July 1833; *The Camden Republican and Lancaster Beacon*, 25 June 1833; *The Columbia Telescope*, 6 August 1833; James Hamilton, "An Eulogium on the public services and character of Robert J. Turnbull," *The Examiner*, 10 June 1835; Maurie D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 78.

Riflemen urged the state's volunteers to remain in arms indefinitely. Throughout the state, Nullifiers equated the Ordinance of Nullification with the Declaration of Independence and declared February 1, 1833, as sacred and significant as July 4, 1776.[8]

Union men, meanwhile, used their Independence Day meetings to celebrate the country's survival. Some foregrounded their own party's role in defeating nullification, insisting that Union men would always fight to sustain "liberty, order, and good government." A Greenville resident vowed never to forgive or forget Nullifiers' treasonous actions, while a Charleston orator declared that anyone who sought to "obliterate one star" from the American flag deserved a traitor's death. Most speakers, however, prayed that the spirit of partisanship would rapidly fade away. A Sumter artilleryman, for example, hoped that "party strife will soon be forgotten, and peace and harmony again reside among the sons of South Carolina." Charleston editor Aaron Willington rejoiced that America's "glorious experiment of rational liberty" survived and continued to give hope to the world.[9]

They recognized, however, that the Union remained vulnerable. To ensure its permanence, they needed to foster patriotism and cultivate a spirit of compromise and conciliation. Union Party leaders in Chester and York arranged for local women to sew American flags and present them to militia units. Charleston painter Susan Belcher presented Greenville District with a flag depicting an eagle encircled by twenty-four stars and soaring above the "transient clouds" of partisanship. A Charleston writer encouraged "Union ladies" across the upcountry to return the favor by sewing a flag for the city's "Union soldiers," who "stood firm at their post" in the hour of crisis.[10]

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[8] *The Columbia Telescope*, 9 July 1833 and 16 July 1833; *The Charleston Mercury*, 12 July 1833 and 16 July 1833.
[9] See issues of *The Charleston Courier* for July 1833, especially 4 July 1833, 17 July 1833, 25 July 1833.
[10] *The Charleston Courier*, 4 July 1833 and 24 July 1833; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 2 March 1833

At the same time, Charleston's Union Party began raising money to commission a painting glorifying the American flag. In the late 1820s, while Joel Poinsett served as Minister to Mexico, General Vicente Guerrero marched on Mexico City after a disputed election. Many residents took refuge in Poinsett's house, which became a target for Guerrero's army. As the rebels gathered outside the building, Poinsett appeared on the balcony and unfurled the American flag, demanding protection for everyone inside. The soldiers reportedly "cheered the standard of our Union" and placed guards outside the house to protect it from attack. Union Party leaders insisted that the story had no parallel in human history, and they sought to preserve its "moral beauty and grandeur…on the page of the historian and the canvass of the painter."[11]

For Union men, this painting was part of a much larger vision. With "sectional excitements" eroding the state's devotion to the Union, they hoped to create a series of paintings, songs, and celebrations to "excite and perpetuate National enthusiasm." The mind, they confessed, sometimes struggled to comprehend the Union's sacred significance, but great artwork could express it "at a single glance." These national paintings would remind Americans—and teach the "rising generation"—of the "unseen but highly moral" power of the Union. By mass producing engravings of these scenes, every family in the country could display it in their home, and children could "learn before they can read, to love and reverence the

[11] "At the period of the Revolution of the Acordada," Union Party Circular, William Drayton Papers, CC. Union Party leaders sent this circular to prominent men throughout the country. An aging James Madison believing the painting would be a "touching" appeal to the "love and pride of country," and he hoped it would hang in some "National Depository." See James Madison to James F. Pepoon, 13 April 1833, James Madison Papers, LOC. They asked Washington Allston, a South Carolina-born Romantic artist, to paint the scene. Although prior commitments forced Allston to decline, he shared the Union Party's "pride and patriotism towards our common country." See Washington Allston to William Drayton, Daniel E. Huger, and Benjamin F. Pepoon, 1 May 1833, in *The Correspondence of Washington Allston*, ed. Nathalia Wright (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2014), 327.

emblem of our country's power." Newspapers as far away as Vermont, Louisiana, and Ohio reprinted this appeal, and subscriptions soon poured in from across the country.[12]

Despite their pleas for "vigilance and firmness," Charleston's Union Party leaders decided not to contest the Congressional election of 1833. As Poinsett explained, they were only willing to challenge Nullifiers for power when the Union's survival hung in the balance. They believed "no sacrifice [was] too great" to sustain the "majesty of the laws" and save the country from anarchy. The Congressional compromise, however, had achieved those goals, and now they sought to "restore order and harmony" to the community. By contesting the election, they feared, they would only heighten the political excitement—degrading the state's political institutions and tarnishing the city's character and credit. Nonetheless, Poinsett insisted, the party was "unbroken in spirit [and] in numbers," and it would never waver in its devotion to the Union.[13]

Just before the election, a group of Union men and disaffected Nullifiers formed an Independent Ticket, headlined by James Petigru and Daniel Huger. While some residents viewed the ticket as a symbol of reconciliation, others saw it as a cynical attempt to prolong partisan strife. The Union Party's Central Committee disavowed the ticket and refused to enter the fray. Only 1537 people voted in the municipal election that September—down from 2070 the year before. Turnout among Nullifiers fell 17 percent, but party discipline remained strong, and most voters submitted straight-party tickets. Although the Independent Ticket framed itself as non-

[12] "At the period of the Revolution of the Acordada," Union Party Circular, William Drayton Papers, CC; *Brattleboro Messenger* (Brattleboro, VT), 1 June 1833; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 11 May 1833; *North Carolina Constitutionalist and Peoples' Advocate* (Raleigh, NC), 28 May 1833.

[13] *The Charleston Courier*, 12 July 1833 and 26 August 1833. Another Charleston writer echoed these arguments. While the Union was in danger, he wrote, they had "toiled cheerfully in its behalf." Now, however, they were "desirious of peace and quiet." They had "done all that duty and a love of country demands, and are willing to leave the spoils of office to their opponents." Pinckney's election "cannot injure the Union, and while this is safe, they feel indifferent about the movements of their opponents." See *The Charleston Courier*, 12 August 1833.

partisan, it drew most of its candidates—and voters—from the Union Party. Nonetheless, turnout among Union men plummeted 38 percent, and Nullifiers swept the municipal elections.[14]

Statewide, the Congressional elections demonstrated both the strength and the ambivalence of Unionist partisanship. Party leaders in three Congressional districts chose not to contest the election. In Charleston, editor Aaron Willington observed, Union men were "almost entirely passive and inert;" he had never seen them "more listless than on this occasion." Lancaster Unionist James Blair, however, ran unopposed, and elsewhere the party fielded candidates even in districts where it was hopelessly outnumbered. In the northwestern corner of the state—Pendleton, Greenville, Spartanburg, and York—both parties contested the elections with as much urgency and excitement as ever. Turnout in these districts *increased* from the previous year, and one editor declared it the "most exciting and animated" election he had ever witnessed. Nullifiers won both elections in this part of the state by razor-thin margins: 51 percent in one district and only 50.6 percent in the other. Nullifiers captured eight of South Carolina's nine Congressional seats, and they insisted that Union Party strength had collapsed throughout the state. The results, however, were deceptive, and overall both parties remained healthy and vibrant. In the five contested Congressional districts, Nullifier turnout fell by 4 percent from the previous year, while Union Party turnout declined by only 2 percent. As the Yorkville editor

[14] *The Charleston Courier*, 17 August 1833, 20 August 1833, and 4 September 1833. Among Nullifiers, party discipline remained strong, despite the lower turnout. In September 1832, the party's municipal candidates all received between 1102 and 1116 votes. In September 1833, they received between 904 and 937 votes (with the exception of three candidates who appeared on both parties' tickets). The Independent Ticket's party discipline was reasonably strong, as well, as most of its candidates received between 586 and 600 votes. Of its 12 candidates, at least 7 were Union men and 4 were Nullifiers (the party allegiance of one candidate—George Hervey—could not be determined). Editors calculated that only 79 of the Independent Ticket's voters were former Nullifiers; while the exact number cannot be determined, the ticket clearly drew most of its strength from Union men.

explained, the "friends of Union though beaten are not discouraged—theirs is the cause of truth, and will at least prevail."[15]

In these Congressional elections, nullification itself was rarely at-issue, although memories of the previous winter still bitterly divided communities. Instead, the political contests often focused on the test oath and the nature of allegiance. The Ordinance of Nullification required all civil and military officers in the state to swear an oath to "obey, execute, and enforce this ordinance." Although the Nullification Convention rescinded the ordinance in March 1833, Nullifiers immediately debated enacting a new oath of allegiance. One proposal—ultimately rejected—required all state officials to declare South Carolina a "Free and Sovereign State" and renounce "all other allegiances." Union men in the convention vehemently opposed the test oath, insisting it would prolong and intensify the political crisis. Nullifiers, however, argued that it was necessary to unify the state. They ultimately pushed through an act requiring officers to swear allegiance to South Carolinian and "obedience only" to the federal government. When it passed, by a vote of 90 to 60, a Union Party judge advised Benjamin Perry to "go home and convert your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears, for we shall have to fight."[16]

Some Nullifiers initially opposed the oath, recognizing that it would galvanize Unionist resistance. Most party leaders, however, insisted that they could not afford to wait. As a Columbia editor explained, Union men had betrayed the state during the nullification winter, and

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[15] *The Charleston Courier*, 5 September 1833, 7 September 1833, and 14 September 1833. Election returns drawn primarily from *The Charleston Mercury* and *The Charleston Courier* for September 1833. In the 7th Congressional District, composed of Spartanburg, Union, Chester, and York, Nullifier William K. Clowney defeated Unionist Thomas Williams by a vote of 4564 to 4339. In the 8th Congressional District—Pendleton and Greenville—Nullifier Warren R. Davis defeated Joseph Grisham 2938 to 2869. Analysis of voter turnout is drawn from a comparison of 14 districts and parishes with contested elections for both 1832 and 1833: Marion, Darlington, Horry, Spartanburg, Union, Chester, York, Edgefield, Abbeville, Pendleton, Greenville, St. Luke's Parish, St George Dorchester, and St. Helena Parish. For these 14 sites, Nullifier turnout fell from 12,377 to 11,931, while Union Party turnout declined from 10,199 to 10,021.

[16] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 6 April 1833; Kibler, *Benjamin Perry*, 155.

Nullifiers needed to bring them "into the line of patriotism and duty." The Force Bill still hovered over the state, empowering Jackson to tear South Carolina apart. A "storm is rising in the political horizon," and "every officer and seaman must be faithful in his post." South Carolina had to ensure the loyalty of its citizens, and anyone who swore allegiance to another power was unsafe and unworthy of the state's service. A Charleston writer agreed, insisting it was essential for the state to "ascertain its friends from its foes" as soon as possible. With civil war still looming, South Carolina could not allow its weapons to fall into the hands of its enemies.[17]

Although the state convention had approved the oath, the General Assembly still needed to codify it into law. The legislature reconvened in November 1833, and Nullifiers quickly moved to consolidate their control. They still held commanding majorities in both houses, and a former Congressman observed that the party now *was* the state. In his annual message, Governor Hayne asked lawmakers to ensure South Carolina's "permanent protection and security." He proposed reorganizing the militia, bolstering Charleston's defenses, and stockpiling 10,000 muskets and rifles to meet "any sudden emergency." South Carolina, he observed, had made great strides during the nullification winter, and they could not afford to "lose all the ground we have gained"[18]

[17] *The Southern Times and State Gazette*, 6 December 1833; *The Charleston Mercury*, 5 December 1833.
[18] Hayne, "Message Regarding the Mobilization of Volunteers During the Nullification Crisis," SCDAH. Hayne celebrated the state's 25,000 volunteers as proof of the "peculiar strength of the Southern States." No free state, he insisted, could have "supported so large a force in the field with greater security to the people, or less interruption to the ordinary pursuits of life." Military experts, he explained, assumed that a country could mobilize only one-third of their military-age men without sacrificing their economic production. The presence of slavery, however, enabled the southern states to mobilize almost their entire white male population. Hayne insisted that military mobilization actually strengthened the institution by bringing thousands of men into the field to crush foreign invasion and "domestic insurrection." See *The National Intelligencer*, 5 December 1833.

Nullifiers drafted an amendment to enshrine the test oath in the state constitution. After days of debate, the house approved it by a vote of 90 to 21, and the senate concurred 30-to-13. Union Party senator Alfred Huger tried to alter the wording, clarifying that South Carolinians could swear the oath without renouncing their national allegiance. The senate rejected this construction by a vote of 30 to 13. The amendment, however, would not take effect right away. In order to alter the constitution, two successive sessions of the General Assembly needed to ratify an amendment—delaying action until the following year.[19]

Undeterred, Nullifiers added the test oath to a bill reorganizing the state militia, which they passed on December 19. The Militia Bill immediately removed all generals from command and empowered the legislature—dominated by Nullifiers—to appoint their successors. All other officers would lose their commissions in April 1834, and their companies would hold elections to replace them. Every officer would then have to declare "true allegiance" to South Carolina. Anyone who refused would face court martial and forfeit his commission, and his commanding officer would appoint someone to take his place. In a symbolically-rich gesture, the bill replaced the American eagle on the militia buttons with the state Palmetto tree. Legislators also appropriated almost $70,000 for the governor to publish manuals of military tactics, reinforce Charleston's arsenal, and purchase 14,000 guns fit for "immediate use."[20]

Union men fiercely resisted these "reforms." They insisted that the oath violated their freedom of conscience and forced them to choose between their allegiance to state and country. If another crisis erupted, and an officer remained faithful to the Union, the state could execute him for treason. If, instead, he stayed true to his oath and sided with South Carolina, he would

[19] *Columbia Telescope*, 10 December 1833 and 17 December 1833.
[20] *The Globe*, 31 December 1833.

become a traitor to the United States. With the oath in place, no Union man could conscientiously hold military office—a dilemma that effectively disenfranchised every Unionist militiaman.[21]

In response, some Union men left South Carolina altogether. In one upcountry village, the "triumph of nullification" prompted several prominent families to abandon the state. In another community, soil exhaustion and the "prevalence of nullification" drove countless Union men westward, until "scarcely a single family" remained. Other moderate Union men favored peaceful protest, hoping to work through the state courts to overturn the militia bill. Some even argued that Union men could swear the oath without violating their consciences. A lowcountry writer calling himself *Walterborough* insisted the oath was "perfectly harmless." South Carolina's constitution already required officers to swear to uphold the state and federal constitutions, and *Walterborough* claimed the new oath was essentially the same. By taking the oath, he merely swore allegiance to the State "as known and recognized by my country."[22]

Martial Union men, however, rejected these passive responses and organized massive meetings in protest. In York District, the militia bill caused an "unprecedented uproar," and one observer feared "there will be blood shed yet." Adopting a "high chivalric tone," a local leader threatened to wage war against every Nullifier in the state. In Chester District, the oath "roused the indignation of the whole union party," and 700 men assembled in the rain to declare their

[21] *The Globe*, 31 December 1833.

[22] Unknown to William R. Hemphill, 5 January 1834, Hemphill Family Papers, DU; James Hemphill to Unknown, 24 December 1833, Hemphill Family Papers, DU; *The Charleston Courier*, 15 January 1834. Others—including Joel Poinsett—refused to leave the state. Poinsett insisted that nothing on earth could drive him from South Carolina; he was "addicted to obstinacy, and the more [Nullifiers] want me away, the more I won't go." When upcountry militiamen contemplated leaving, Poinsett urged them to "*stand fast*," insisting that they had a "right to the soil" of South Carolina. See Joel R. Poinsett to James Campbell, 20 November 1833, James Butler Campbell Papers, SCHS; Joel R. Poinsett to Daniel Webster, *The Papers of Daniel Webster: Correspondence*, Vol. 3: 1830-1834.

opposition. They refused to obey anyone who swore the test oath and resolved to elect their own officers regardless of the consequences. They would "maintain the supremacy of the law at the point of the bayonet," and if the Constitution "must perish they too will perish with it." Spartanburg's Union men supported "a revolution by appeal to arms," and they denounced the moderate members of their own party as "traitor[s] to the cause."[23]

As the state's northwestern districts erupted in protest, one writer insisted the "excitement in the Mountains is beyond description." Unionist outrage was stronger and more widespread than ever before, and party leaders declared that Nullifiers could never enforce the militia bill. Greenville's Union men "welcome[d] Revolution" with all its consequences and vowed to free themselves from tyranny or "let their bones whiten and their blood enrich their hills." They urged their militia officers to defy the bill and maintain their commissions, vowing to "stand by [them] to the death." They began gathering arms and ammunition to defend themselves, and they asked Union men throughout the state to help them save the Constitution—"or die with it."[24]

This unprecedented political excitement spread throughout much of the state. Darlington's Union men favored "the most determined resistance," while those in Spartanburg prepared to "resist by an appeal to arms." A Yorkville writer agreed that they would "take the battle field" rather than submit to tyranny. At a meeting there that February, 1000 men gathered to fly the American flag and declare their opposition to the law. They resolved to maintain their freedom against every enemy—even their own "tyrannical Legislature." As a Lancaster meeting explained, Nullifiers had transformed the state into a military camp, disenfranchising Union men and spreading "discord and hatred" throughout South Carolina. Having tried everything in their

[23] Unknown to William R. Hemphill, 5 January 1834, Hemphill Family Papers, DU; John C. Nisbet to John A. Cooper, 17 January 1834, Papers of the Cooper-McClurken-Nisbet Families, SCL; James Edward Henry to Samuel F. Patterson, 31 January 1834, Samuel Finley Patterson Papers, DU.
[24] *The Charleston Courier*, 15 January 1834, 17 January 1834, and 24 January 1834.

power to maintain peace, these Union men now prepared to "try what virtue there is in bullets!" Meeting after meeting echoed these sentiments: denouncing the test oath, pledging only to serve under their own officers, and vowing to resist the law "even to the death."[25]

Some Nullifiers recognized the gravity of the crisis. George McDuffie informed Greenville Nullifier Waddy Thompson—now a brigadier general—that the Union men in his district would "disregard your orders & erect the standard of open rebellion." Others, however, relished the opportunity to fight. After a militant Union Party meeting in Abbeville, Henry Townes "laugh[ed] at their folly" and insisted that Nullifiers "would be very glad to have a good excuse to shoot some of them." If Union men "become insurgents and make war," a Charleston writer insisted, Nullifiers would rally to defend the state and enforce the law. If necessary, he threatened, they could even call upon President Jackson to "employ the forces of the Union to 'suppress the insurrection.'"[26]

The political fury horrified moderate Union men, who worked to rein in their martial allies and peacefully resolve the crisis. James Petigru observed that the "whole mountain region is in a flame," and he warned that a "border war" would erupt unless Nullifiers backed down. Another writer feared that the state's mountains would "soon be crimsoned with the blood of brethren." The oath, he insisted, would rekindle the "fires of civil commotion," and no matter which side won, the state would become a charred ruin of "domestic desolation." Spartanburg lawyer James Henry believed most party leaders—even in the upcountry—were "opposed to

[25] *The Charleston Courier*, 23 January 1834; *The Camden Journal*, 1 March 1834 and 15 March 1834.
[26] George McDuffie to Waddy Thompson, 24 January 1834, Waddy Thompson Papers, LOC; Henry H. Townes to George F. Townes, Townes Family Papers, SCL; *The Charleston Mercury*, 18 February 1834

violence," but the political fury among rank-and-file Union men would "never permanently subside until they have tasted blood—and felt some of the horrors of civil war."[27]

By early 1834, even Benjamin Perry recognized the need for moderation. Exhausted and hoping for peace, he had largely retreated from public life after the nullification winter. Even the test oath failed to move him, and he privately insisted Union men could take it without violating their principles. With "great reluctance," however, he reentered the "turmoil of party strife" to help save the state from war. He found the district's Union Party on the verge of revolution. On February 3, 1834, fifteen hundred Union men gathered in Greenville, many prepared for armed resistance. Undeterred, Perry presented a series of moderate resolutions and desperately encouraged the crowd to accept them. After a spirited discussion, they agreed to remain "peaceable citizens" and work through "legal and proper" channels before resorting to arms.[28]

A meeting in Spartanburg the same day followed the same pattern. One observer insisted the meeting "exceeded any thing I ever beheld—there was no speaking—we concluded it was best not to speak—*the excitement was too great*." Twelve hundred people attended, and most favored "going ahead" and "plac[ing] the Union party on the offensive." A party committee, however, drafted moderate resolutions that encouraged the crowd to resist "*first*, by legal means." Several committee members dissented, but the "cool-headed" moderates ultimately prevailed. They hoped to maintain law and order, preferring to "await the attack from the

[27] Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 315-316; James L. Petigru to William Drayton, 26 March 1834, in James Petigru Carson, *Life, Letters and Speeches of James Louis Petigru: The Union Man of South Carolina* (Washington, DC: W. H. Lowdermilk & Co., 1920); *The Charleston Courier*, 23 January 1834; James Edward Henry to Samuel F. Patterson, 31 January 1834, Samuel Finley Patterson Papers, DU.
[28] Kibler, *Benjamin Perry*, 162-163; *The Charleston Courier*, 18 February 1834.

nullifiers." Nonetheless, they agreed that Nullifiers could never enforce the test oath in the district, and they warned that—if peaceful measures failed—"we know what follows."[29]

Greenville's leaders called for a statewide Union Party convention to meet the following month—an attempt to "moderate the inconsiderate rashness of some of the party." The plan quickly gained momentum, and meetings across the state began appointing delegates. The convention met in Greenville on March 24, with 110 delegates from at least thirteen districts. They appointed Charleston lawyer Daniel Huger as president, and in his two-hour opening address, he raged against the militia bill and test oath. He was prepared to "risk every danger" to ensure the Union's survival, insisting that only "strong measures…could arrest the [Nullifiers'] revolution." A local Nullifier reported that Huger was "embittered to a degree approaching madness," and Petigru confessed that he was "far ahead of the rest" of Charleston's delegates.[30]

Several upcountry delegates rallied to Huger's leadership, preferring to fight rather than "turn the quarrel into a law suit." Poinsett, however, served as Chairman of the convention's Central Committee, and he drafted a series of moderate resolutions intended to "make the Nullifiers the aggressors." He had seen civil wars and revolutions devastate the Latin American republics, and he feared the country's freedom would not survive the struggle. He had gone to Greenville to "calm the troubled waters," and he urged the delegates to use exhaust every

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[29] *The Charleston Courier*, 12 February 1834. At a meeting in Union District, party leaders failed to restrain the passions of the crowd. A party committee presented a majority report calling for harmony. It insisted that Union men could take the oath without violating their consciences and agreed "not [to] act precipitately or rashly." The martial members of the committee, however, presented a minority report declaring that Union men would never obey the militia bill, submit to the test oath, or wear the new palmetto buttons. They vowed to "resist any sheriff or posse that may attempt to put the law in force, and if attempted by the use of arms, we too will appeal to arms, and protect ourselves, or perish in the struggle." Col. Thomas Williams, the party's Congressional candidate in the previous election, urged the crowd to adopt the majority report. The 500 men in attendance, however, overwhelmingly endorsed the martial minority report. See *The Charleston Courier*, 25 March 1834.

[30] George F. Townes to John A. Townes, 3 April 1834, Townes Family Papers, SCL; Daniel Huger to Philip Phillips, 20 April 1834, Philip Phillips Family Papers, LOC; *The Charleston Mercury*, 31 March 1834; James L. Petigru to Hugh S. Legaré, 24 April 1834, in Carson, *Life, Letters and Speeches of James Louis Petigru*.

"peaceable and constitutional remedy" before resorting to violence. He trusted the courts to strike down the test oath, and if the state's judges sustained it, he would appeal to the Supreme Court. At the same time, he urged the state's Union men to stand by their principles: to reject the oath, elect their own officers, and refuse to serve under any officer "*appointed* to command them."[31]

The delegates ultimately approved Poinsett's resolutions, and many party leaders rejoiced at the convention's moderation. Martial Union men, however, were ready and eager to fight. Two Charleston delegates reported that the "excitement in the upper districts was spontaneous with the people, and almost incontrollable [sic]." If Nullifiers tried to enforce the test oath, an Abbeville delegate observed, "you will certainly hear of bloodshed." Even Poinsett was ultimately willing to resort to violence to maintain his freedom. If necessary, he wrote, he would set aside his personal feelings and lead his party into battle. He urged Union men not to abandon the state, assuring them that they "had a right to the soil." He resolved to live and die in South Carolina, with the Star-Spangled Banner as his shroud.[32]

Even before the Union Convention met, party leaders had begun challenging the test oath in court. On February 28, 1834, Charleston's Washington Light Infantry, a predominantly Unionist militia company, elected Edward McCready as a first lieutenant. He refused to swear the new oath and sued to receive his commission—but Judge Elihu H. Bay denied him. In April, when Lancaster colonel James McDonald sued for his commission, Judge John S. Richardson sided with him and declared the oath unconstitutional. The Union Party appealed Bay's ruling

[31] *The Charleston Courier*, 1 April 1834 and 4 April 1834; *The Charlotte Journal*, 19 April 1834.
[32] *The Charleston Courier*, 4 April 1834; Elias S. Davis to Robert Leckie, 26 March 1834, Elias S. Davis Letter, SCL; Joel Poinsett to Daniel Webster, 17 March 1834, *The Papers of Daniel Webster: Correspondence*, Vol. 3: 1830-1834;

and Nullifiers appealed Richardson's, and the state Court of Appeals agreed to hear the cases in Columbia later that spring.[33]

Robert Barnwell Smith defended the state—and the test oath—while James Petigru and Thomas Grimké represented the Union Party officers. They debated for hours, contesting the nature of sovereignty, liberty, allegiance, and judicial review in a series of powerful speeches. Nullifiers argued that sovereignty was indivisible, and that South Carolina remained a "free, sovereign, and independent state." The state therefore had a right to demand "exclusive allegiance" from the men entrusted to serve it. By refusing to swear the oath, they maintained, their enemies denied the state's sovereign power and proved themselves "unworthy of liberty." Most Union men, however, believed in dual sovereignty, insisting the state and country both deserved their allegiance. As a Charleston meeting explained, they "owe[d] allegiance to the State which gave us birth and obedience to the laws which protect us." They refused, however, to "renounce their allegiance to the United States," which protected them from foreign invasion and preserved their republican institutions.[34]

Historian David Potter contends that nationalism flourishes not by overpowering other loyalties but by incorporating and subsuming them, and this dynamic characterized nullification-era Unionism. Union men's love for their families, communities, and state helped sustain their devotion to the country. Benjamin Perry observed that men's devotion to the Union could not diminish their love for South Carolina, because the two emotions were "not only consistent, but seem to strengthen and invigorate each other." State and country were "equally dear to me; and in fact, are but one and the same," because they were "both the governments of the people."

[33] Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 316-317.
[34] *The Columbia Telescope*, 11 October 1834; *The Charleston Courier,* 11 September 1834.

Drayton agreed that "Federal and State Allegiance are perfectly consistent: instead of interfering with, they mutually strengthen each other." Sumterville judge John S. Richardson agreed that being "for the State, properly means 'for the State' in the Union, under both the Federal and State Constitutions. The State is made up of those two Governmental compacts."[35]

Three judges served on the Court of Appeals: Unionists John B. O'Neall and David Johnson and Nullifier William Harper. Predictably, the court ruled the test oath unconstitutional in a 2-to-1 vote, declaring that South Carolinians owed dual allegiance to the state and country. Nullifiers denounced the ruling with a fury that "far exceeded" anything Union men expected. Some urged Governor Hayne to call the General Assembly into special session and impeach O'Neall and Johnson, while others encouraged him to ignore the court altogether. Although Hayne viewed the ruling as a "monstrous outrage," he recognized the danger of impulsive action. It would be "worse than useless," he concluded, "to attempt to legislate with a partisan Court ready to arrest your Laws." Instead, he looked ahead to the fall elections. If Nullifiers secured another two-thirds majority in the General Assembly, they could add the test oath to the state constitution and outflank the Court of Appeals. To ensure a decisive victory, Hayne encouraged Nullifiers to employ "all the means heretofore found so successful": reorganizing local State Rights Associations, hosting meetings, and flooding the countryside with pamphlets.[36]

A special Congressional election that June provided a test for both parties. On April 1, James Blair—the Union Party's only representative in Congress—committed suicide in Washington in a fit of drunken despair. Party leaders lamented Blair's death as a national

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[35] David M. Potter, "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," *The American Historical Review* 67, no. 4 (July 1962), 931; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 12 July 1834; *The Charleston Courier*, 9 March 1833 and 12 July 1833.
[36] Pease and Pease, *James Louis Petigru*, 58-62; Davis, *Rhett*, 81-86; Boucher, *The Nullification Controversy*, 336; Robert Y. Hayne to Francis W. Pickens, 10 June 1834, "Letters on the Nullification Movement." Harper drafted a searing dissent challenging federal authority and arguing that state officers had a duty to carry out "*every* act of the sovereign authority of the State."

tragedy, observing that his seat represented the "last and only citadel of our principles" in Washington. They nominated former governor Richard Manning to replace him, while Nullifiers countered with Col. Benjamin Elmore. In May, a Unionist writer reported that the "agitation of the people and the struggle of the parties" exceeded "all that we have experienced in the past." Nullifiers, in particular, were publishing pamphlets, circulating handbills, and "moving heaven and earth" to defeat Manning. Ultimately, however, the Union Party triumphed by about 650 votes.[37]

That spring, Union men also contested militia elections throughout the state, and one upcountry writer rejoiced that the party was steadily "turning back…the torrent" of tyranny. These victories helped energize the party, and in their Independence Day meetings they reaffirmed their resistance to the test oath. If Nullifiers amended the state constitution, one meeting declared, Union men would "rush upon [them], and slay them at the cannon's mouth." In Abbeville that day, twenty-year-old William Lowndes Yancey delivered his first major public address: a fiery appeal for Union. Yancey studied law in Greenville under Benjamin Perry and quickly absorbed his mentor's Unionist principles. In his speech, he celebrated the "cords of affection" that united all Americans and warned that Union men would fight with swords and muskets to hold the country together.[38]

Meetings across the upcountry portrayed the test oath amendment as part of a conspiracy to destroy republican government. As Greenville editor Charles D'Oyley explained, Nullifiers began by seizing control of the General Assembly. Because the legislature elected the governor,

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[37] Daniel Huger to Philip Phillips, 20 April 1834, Philip Phillips Family Papers, LOC; John P. Richardson to Philip Phillips, 25 April 1834, Philip Phillips Family Papers, LOC; John P. Richardson to Philip Phillips, 18 May 1834, Philip Phillips Family Papers, LOC.

[38] *The Camden Journal*, 19 April 1834; *The Charleston Courier*, 12 April 1834, 21 April 1834, and 23 April 1834; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 12 July 1834; William Lowndes Yancey, quoted in Eric H. Walther, *William Lowndes Yancey and the Coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 28-30.

this gave them control of the executive branch, as well. Nullifiers then imposed a test oath to gain control of the militia and purge Union men from office. When the Court of Appeals struck down the oath, Nullifiers resolved to amend the constitution and perhaps even abolish the court. If they succeeded—if they triumphed in the upcoming elections—Nullifiers would control the entire state government perhaps tear the state from the Union. Some writers pushed the conspiracy even further, claiming that Nullifiers were plotting to murder Union Party leaders. Rumors swirled that Nullifiers were infiltrating Unionist militia companies in order to assassinate their officers, or that Nullifiers were bribing Union men's slaves to kill them. Although these stories likely had little foundation in fact, they underscored the anxieties that still divided the state.[39]

Both parties redoubled their efforts as the October elections approached. Nullifiers founded Whig Associations or reorganized their old State Rights Associations to "disseminate correct political intelligence." Union men responded with massive petitions against the test oath: 350 men signed in Edgefield, 600 in York, 900 in Spartanburg, 900 in Pendleton, and more than 1400 in Greenville. In Clarendon, Union men accused Nullifiers of "conspiring to destroy the institutions of the country." They vowed to resist with "spirit and determination" and to "brave death, rather than perjury." At a meeting in Greenville that September, William Lowndes Yancey invoked the state's Revolutionary history to affirm the power and majesty of the Union. Turning to the district's Revolutionary War veterans, he asked if any man would march alongside traitors while the "single Star, Palmetto, and Rattle Snake waves over him, against that banner which he once fought for, bled for, [and] gave up fortune for?" He urged the crowd to demand their rights

[39] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 28 June 1834, 12 July 1834, 19 July 1834, and 4 October 1834.

as citizens of the United States—to lodge one more protest against injustice and then fight their oppressors with the very stones of their mountains.[40]

Many observers believed South Carolina was on the verge of an intra-state civil war. If Nullifiers refused to back down, one writer declared, "we will fight." Union men had the "best marksmen in the State," and if fighting broke out, they would "clean the coasts of our enemies" in a "short and bloody" campaign. On October 12, the night before the election, Nullifiers in Charleston broke into a Union Party house on Queen Street, demolishing windows and beating several Union men. The following night, when 300 Nullifiers besieged a Union Party headquarters, the outnumbered Union men opened fire on the crowd and wounded six men. Enraged, Nullifiers rushed to the city arsenal and demanded weapons, but the guards refused to release them. Hayne and Hamilton arrived and struggled to restrain the crowd, urging them to "wait till [they] had got the law on their side." When the time was right, Hamilton swore, he would lead the party to "victory and revenge."[41]

In the election of 1834, James Petigru reflected, Union men "made great efforts and rallied the whole of our party, but the majority retained an unbroken phalanx." Nullifiers captured 70 percent of the senate and 75 percent of the house, ensuring they had enough votes to amend the state constitution. The popular vote, however, was somewhat closer, as Union men

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[40] Petitions circulated in Greenville, Spartanburg, Pendleton, Kershaw, Lancaster, Union, York, Edgefield, Abbeville, Orangeburg, Charleston, Christ Church, St. Luke's Parish, Orange Parish, Prince George Winyaw, and St. George's Dorchester. See "Inhabitants of Abbeville, Kershaw, Lancaster, Greenville, Pendleton, and Union Districts, Petition Protesting against the Proposed Amendment to the State Constitution," SCDAH; "Inhabitants of Spartanburg District, Petition Opposing the Test Oath and Protesting its Being Included in the Constitution of the State," SCDAH; "Inhabitants of Edgefield District, Petition Protesting the Proposed Alteration of the State Constitution," SCDAH; Clarendon Resolutions, 2 August 1834, republished in *The Edgefield Advertiser*, 24 September 1840; The Greenville Mountaineer, 4 October 1834.

[41] Samuel MacCalla, quoted in James Albert Woodburn, "The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in Monroe County, Indiana," *Indiana Historical Society Publications* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1895), 452n; Pease and Pease, *Web of Progress*, 81; James L. Petigru to Hugh S. Legaré, 26 October 1834, *Life, Letters and Speeches*, 162-164.

made up about 44 percent of the electorate. Union Party editors described this as the "most important Election which has ever taken place in this country" and warned that it could be the state's last free election. These appeals resonated with voters, and the Union Party *gained* ground on their opponents. Both parties remained reasonably healthy and cohesive throughout much of the state. The Union Party elected two Congressmen—Yorkville lawyer James Rogers and Clarendon planter Richard Manning—and Benjamin Perry fell about 70 votes short of unseating Nullifier Warren R. Davis.[42]

For many Union men, the election results illustrated the injustice of South Carolina's political structure. The state constitution granted each parish and district equal representation in the senate, giving St. James Santee (with 20 voters) as much power as Pendleton (with 2500). These "rotten burroughs" helped transform Nullifiers' 58 percent popular-vote majority into an insurmountable 75 percent majority in the General Assembly. Union men argued that the test oath amendment violated the spirit of the constitution, since less than two-thirds of the state's voters supported it. They vowed to resist this "fearful tyranny," refusing to "fold their arms and suffer themselves to be trampled on." A Charleston writer declared that "all bonds of brotherhood are broken—all ties of fellow-citizenship are severed," and Union men and Nullifiers "must be foes." William Lowndes Yancey thundered that upcountry Union men had "planted the emblem of their faith—the Star Spangled Banner" in the soil of their mountains, and "no force shall tear it down" while they lived to defend it.[43]

[42] James L. Petigru to Hugh S. Legaré, 26 October 1834, *Life, Letters and Speeches*; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 4 October 1834. For election results, see *The Charleston Courier* issues for October 1834.
[43] *The Southern Patriot*, 25 October 1834; James L. Petigru to Hugh S. Legaré, 26 October 1834, *Life, Letters and Speeches*, 162-164; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 25 October 1834, 15 November 1834, and 22 November 1834.

A Georgetown editor declared that Union men had "lived citizens of the State and the United States—freemen under both, and we have resolved to die so." If the General Assembly passed the amendment, he argued, Union Party legislators should "secede" and organize a convention in Charleston. They should issue a proclamation denouncing the state government and declaring South Carolinians "absolved from its laws." They should then order a "military organization of the whole party" and prevent all state elections until Nullifiers rescinded the test oath. The writer recognized the radicalism of these plans. The test oath, however, would subject Union men to taxation without representation and degrade them to the level of Russian serfs. Yancey, now serving as editor of *The Greenville Mountaineer*, reprinted the resolutions and insisted that they "express the sentiments of the great mass of the *people* in the Mountains."[44]

By the time the General Assembly opened in November 1834, tensions neared a breaking point. Union men introduced a resolution stating that "true" allegiance to South Carolina did not imply "exclusive" allegiance; Nullifiers countered with one confirming that the oath demanded exclusive allegiance. On December 4, Abbeville legislator Armistead Burt proposed a new treason bill, declaring that anyone who levied war against the state or gave comfort or aid to its enemies would "suffer death without benefit of Clergy." Nullifiers also drafted a bill to abolish the Court of Appeals and consolidate the General Assembly's power over the state. Union men pushed back against every measure, but they were hopelessly outnumbered. The senate passed the test oath amendment on December 5, and the house followed soon after—easily surpassing the necessary two-thirds majority.[45]

[44] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 6 December 1834.
[45] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 13 December 1834.

While legislators debated and voters prepared for battle, James Petigru travelled to Columbia to avert the impending catastrophe. He hoped to persuade both parties to back down—to agree that the oath "leaves the question of divided allegiance to the judgment and conscience of every man." He expected his efforts to fail. Union men, he observed, were "running wild" and refusing to swear the oath, while Nullifiers were working to make its wording *stronger*. When he arrived in Columbia, he confessed, "things looked pretty dark," and Union men were "breathing nothing but war." He feared that mediation would fail and South Carolinians would soon find themselves "knee deep in blood."[46]

To his surprise, however, several Nullifiers appeared willing to work toward peace. Hamilton delivered a conciliatory speech in the senate, and David McCord offered to meet with Union men to "bring about a pacification." At a Union Party caucus on December 4, moderate and martial Union men debated the merits of compromise and whether "the oath was capable of an innocent construction." Ultimately, they crafted an ultimatum. They would accept the test oath only if Nullifiers tabled the treason bill, abandoned their plans to abolish the Court of Appeals, and clarified that allegiance to the state was consistent with allegiance to the Union. Petigru met with Hamilton the following day, and after a long discussion, the former governor "expressed himself satisfied with the terms." Hamilton served on the state's committee on federal relations, and he agreed to draft a report acceding to the Union Party's demands.[47]

Rank-and-file Nullifiers still sought to strengthen the test oath, and Hamilton feared a "rebellion in the ranks" if news of these meetings leaked. Over the next few days, he struggled to pacify the militant members of his party. He called a party caucus for 10am on December 9,

[46] James L Petigru to Hugh S. Legaré, 29 November 1834 and December 15, 1834, *Life, Letters and Speeches*.
[47] James L Petigru to Hugh S. Legaré, December 15, 1834, *Life, Letters and Speeches*.

hoping to conclude the debate before his belligerent allies began drinking. After four hours of discussion, Hamilton persuaded most legislators to accept the compromise. The house approved the committee's report by a vote of 91 to 28, and the senate concurred 36-to-4. The General Assembly "resounded with applause," followed by "shaking of hands, warm congratulation and wonderment and rejoicing." David McCord ordered 500 copies of the report printed, and moderates in both parties hoped the compromise would finally bring peace to the state. Calhoun observed that the "restoration of harmony is complete," while Petigru reported hopefully that the "spell of party is broken and Nullification in Carolina is no more than a recollection.[48]

The "most violent" Nullifiers, however, refused to accept reconciliation. They made up about one-third of the party's legislators: in the house, 28 men voted against the compromise report, 34 voted to take up discussion of the treason bill, and 35 voted to reform the judiciary system. Martial Union men in the state's northwestern districts also rejected the compromise. William Lowndes Yancey "*dissent*[ed] from every principle contained in it," insisting the test oath still demanded exclusive allegiance to the State. He thundered that Nullifiers had surrendered nothing, while the Union Party had given up everything. Greenville's Union men had resisted the test oath for almost two years, and many believed that their own representatives had betrayed them by accepting it.[49]

On January 17, 1835, several thousand Union men gathered in Spartanburg District to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Cowpens. Here, in 1781, Continental Army soldiers

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[48] *The Greenville Mountaineer,* 20 December 1834; Pease and Pease, *James Louis Petigru*, 65-66; Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, 151-152. When the committee delivered its report, one Nullifier introduced an amendment stating that, while the oath did not "impair the obligations which the citizens of South Carolina owe to the federal government…the State, in her sovereign capacity, has the exclusive right to determine what those obligations are." Nullifier David J. McCord moved to table the amendment, and the house agreed by a vote of 86 to 32.

[49] Abram Blanding to Henry DeSaussure, 18 December 1834, DeSaussure Family Papers, SCHS; *The Charleston Mercury*, 15 December 1834, 19 December 1834, 23 December 1834, and 6 January 1835; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 20 December 1834.

and militiamen had decisively defeated a British army in one of the turning points of the Revolution's southern theatre. To mark the occasion, Benjamin Perry delivered a stirring address celebrating the Union as the war's crowning achievement. Now, he warned, Nullifiers sought to destroy that Union—"poisoning and blighting all that is sacred in friendship—all that is patriotic in feeling, and all that is lovely and estimable in society!" Like Yancey, he rejected the compromise, insisting it had not resolved the nature of allegiance.[50]

At a public dinner that evening, guests celebrated the Union Party as the "political salvation of South Carolina." The official toasts endorsed the compromise, and party leaders from Charleston and Columbia wrote letters welcoming the "cessation of party strife." Yancey, however, raged that liberty was too sacred for the party to compromise away, and other guests echoed his resistance. They saluted the "mountain citizens" of Greenville, Spartanburg, and Pickens, who stood united against tyranny in the 1770s and the 1830s. They were "determined to be free," and they would never allow one star to fall from the sacred American flag. If Nullifiers renewed the struggle, Union men would prove themselves worthy of their ancestors and sustain their liberty with their lives.[51]

On July 10, 1835, Brigadier General Waddy Thompson ordered Greenville District's militia officers to assemble for review—igniting a military controversy that tested the limits of the state compromise. By attending the review, they would have to swear the oath of allegiance and adopt the state's new Palmetto buttons. In doing so, many believed, they would violate their principles and betray the trust of their men, who elected them in April 1834 with explicit instructions not to take the oath. After a meeting at Benjamin Perry's house that summer, they

[50] *The Greenville Mountaineer,* 14 February 1835.
[51] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 24 January 1835.

decided to boycott the militia muster; by one estimate, 240 of the area's 400 officers chose not to attend.[52]

Thompson ordered the arrest of all field officers and most company officers, but he soon focused his attention on four men: Col. Thomas Brockman, Col. Robert Goodlett, Lt. Col. William McNeely, and Maj. Henry Smith. He charged them with willfully disobeying orders and conspiring to "defy and resist the laws of the state" and scheduled a court martial for September 21. Union men denounced the proceedings, warning that Nullifiers would stack the court against them, and Thompson confirmed their fears by appointing Nullifier Tandy Walker as Judge Advocate. Smith and McNeely published letters reaffirming Union Party principles and declaring the court martial a plot to trample civil liberty. They insisted that Nullifiers, by charging them with mutiny for attending a peaceful political meeting, were effectively denying Union men their freedom of speech and assembly. While Nullifiers demanded paramount allegiance to the state, Smith reflected that he had served state and country together for twenty-five years. He had fought against Britain in the War of 1812, and he fiercely resisted any attempt to divide his allegiance to the state from his devotion to the Union. He would serve forever beneath the Star-Spangled Banner—the "proud emblem of Liberty—whether against foreign or domestic enemies." Despite their efforts, however, the court martial found all four officers guilty, cashiering them from service and disqualifying them from holding office for the next twelve months.[53]

The few elections that fall revealed a district and state in transition. On January 29, 1835, Congressman Warren R. Davis died in Washington after a long illness. Governor George

[52] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 1 August 1835, 22 August 1835, and 19 September 1835.
[53] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 29 August 1835 and 12 September 1835.

McDuffie scheduled a new election for September, and the campaign raged throughout the summer. Yancey endorsed his mentor Benjamin Perry in *The Greenville Mountaineer*, and Nullifiers responded by nominating Waddy Thompson. The campaign centered on four interlocking issues: the approaching presidential election, the oath of allegiance, the legitimacy of nullification, and the nature of the Union. Thompson ardently defended the test oath, insisting he would take it even if it demanded exclusive allegiance to South Carolina. The federal government, he contended, had no power to coerce the states, and any "violation of the compact of Union" would authorize and justify secession. Perry, however, insisted that secession was "at war with the fundamental principles of our Government." He denounced nullification and championed the principle of "divided Allegiance." Reflecting upon his love for the Union, he trusted his actions to speak for themselves: "If my course for the last five years be not a sufficient pledge," he insisted, then "I am incapable of giving one."[54]

Thompson secured a commanding victory, defeating Perry 3234 to 2524. For Greenville voters, the partisan battles of the nullification crisis remained salient: 1922 men cast their ballots in the election (down only six votes from the year before), and 76 percent voted for Perry. The Union Party, however, collapsed in neighboring Pendleton District. Hundreds of Union men failed to turn out, and the party's share of the district's vote fell from 35 percent in 1834 to 28 percent in 1835. Union men attributed Thompson's victory to fraud, violence, and intimidation, claiming that Pendleton Nullifiers had threatened to lynch anyone who supported the Union Party. In reality, however, Pendleton's Union Party leaders devoted little time to the campaign, and many quietly accepted the test oath compromise. In Charleston's municipal election earlier

[54] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 1 August 1835. Thompson endorsed Tennessee Senator Hugh White, a slaveholder who had opposed the tariff of 1828. Perry refused to endorse Martin Van Buren or Hugh White, instead seeking to turn the discussion toward state and local issues.

that month, neither party formally nominated candidates, and newspapers published three tickets dominated by incumbents. Turnout plummeted. Only 812 men voted in the city election, down from 1634 the year before.[55]

Across much of the state, observers agreed, the "din of nullification" had ceased, and the "spirit of party" lay dormant. One upcountry writer confessed that he had "little to write about politicks," because "we have peace [and] quiet in this part of the country." Ominously, however, he reported "some little stir about the abolitionists of the north," observing that South Carolinians were "determined to stop them." For the past two years, the partisan struggle over Unionism, sovereignty, and allegiance had divided the state and kept the wounds of nullification from healing. Nullifiers continued to view the Union as a compact of sovereign states and demanded exclusive allegiance from the men who served South Carolina. Most Union men, however, championed dual sovereignty and insisted that state and country held an equal claim to their allegiance. Although the General Assembly forged a compromise in December 1834, tensions lingered in some districts for years. In the summer of 1835, however, the crisis in South Carolina entered a new phase. As abolitionist tracts poured into their post offices and antislavery petitions flooded Congress, Nullifiers and Union men found themselves united against a common enemy. Many South Carolinians felt their state was under siege, with abolitionism threatening to tear apart the fabric of society. Their responses helped to unify the state—and erode the foundations of the Union.[56]

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[55] *The Charleston Mercury,* 2 September 1834, 2 September 1835, and 8 September 1835; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 12 September 1834.

[56] John C. Nisbet to John A. Cooper, 6 November 1835, and Samuel Nisbet to John A. Cooper, 18 September 1835, Papers of the Cooper-McClurken-Nisbet Families, SCL; *The Charleston Courier*, 10 August 1835.

Chapter Seven: "Unionism is Extinct in Our State": Forging Consensus in South Carolina, 1835-1836

From the beginning of the crisis, Nullifiers traced their defiance of the tariff to their defense of slavery. As a Greenville writer explained, the tariff of 1828 subsidized northern free labor and discouraged southern slave labor—a precedent that could threaten slavery's survival. "Upon the same principle," he observed, Congress could "abolish the one [system of labor] and give bounties to the other." It could liberate and colonize African Americans and "break up the whole domestic policy of the Southern States." With the tariff in force, another writer agreed, "a majority in Congress could sanctify any act whatever." Nullifiers feared that the tariff system would devastate the southern economy: cotton prices would plummet—"your land will become valueless—your slaves will be liberated." As slavery collapsed, they warned, freedmen would rise in rebellion across the South and "deluge this land in blood."[1]

Union men, however, consciously separated these two issues. Although they denounced the tariff and hoped for its repeal, they insisted that slavery remained secure. They argued that the Constitution sanctioned and protected slavery—that the Union provided the "only restraint" against "fanaticism." They realized that few northerners supported abolition, and they trusted the conservative majority to side with the South. For Union men, the most immediate threat to slavery came not from Congress but from their own state's reckless course. Nullifiers, they warned, were undermining the Constitution and drawing slavery into public debate, and their "high toned language of liberty or death" was only encouraging insurrection.[2]

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[1] *The Southern Sentinel*, 4 August 1832; *The Pendleton Messenger*, 1 September 1830; *The Southern Times*, 7 October 1830; *The Debate in the South Carolina Legislature in December 1,830*, 202.

[2] Thomas Grimké, *Speech of Thomas Grimké delivered in the Senate of South Carolina in December 1828* (Charleston: W Riley, 1829); *The Columbia Hive*, 21 April 1832.

Then, in 1835, the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) redoubled its efforts, launching a series of campaigns that made the abolition movement impossible to ignore. It shipped thousands of antislavery pamphlets across the South and flooded Congress with petitions. National leaders denounced the proceedings and tabled the antislavery petitions. Postmaster General Amos Kendall allowed southern postmasters to censor the mail, explaining that their duty to their communities trumped their obligation to the laws. In the long run, the AASS campaigns helped reframe the national debate over slavery, as southerners' repressive responses fueled fears of a "Slave Power Conspiracy." Within South Carolina, however, they permanently eroded the foundations of Unionism, which would never again be as powerful or unequivocal. For years, Nullifiers had warned that Congress would one day strike against slavery. Now, abolitionists were using federal institutions to reach into their homes. The anger and anxiety that followed helped unify the state and divide the country, ensuring that South Carolina's political landscape would never be the same.[3]

Virtually all white South Carolinians were deeply committed to slavery and white supremacy. By the 1820s, the state's radicals had begun piecing together a militant, unapologetic defense of slavery. Turnbull insisted it was the most benign labor system in the world, because few other laborers "work easier and have more comfort" than southern slaves. A Columbia writer agreed, indicting northern wage labor and contending that "No slavery is so wretched as that which is spent within the walls of a factory." While northern workers endured squalor and starvation, he explained, southern slaves received paternal care and protection. He argued that

[3] *The Evening Post*, 12 August 1835. On the "Slave Power Conspiracy," see Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000).

slavery civilized African Americans, ennobled slaveholders, and ensured the political stability of the South. In his annual message, Governor Stephen Miller insisted that slavery was "not a national evil; on the contrary, it is a national benefit," because it enriched the Union and empowered white men. In the mid-1830s, Calhoun baldly declared the institution a "positive good," and Hammond called it the "greatest of all the great blessings."[4]

While many Nullifiers embraced these convictions, Union men were often more receptive to older "necessary evil" defenses. Greenville editor Obadiah Wells called the institution "an evil and a curse," and Benjamin Perry declared it an "evil…entailed upon us by our ancestors." Camden governess Julia Brown decried the "curse of slavery" and wept over the "miserably degraded state of the slaves." Nat Turner's rebellion, she observed, had "shown the south, what they may *fear*, and expect at some future [date]." James Petigru freed a few of his slaves, defended freedmen's limited rights in court, and prayed that slavery would eventually die away. Thomas Grimké bravely championed colonization and privately grappled with slavery's morality.[5]

A few South Carolinians, including Grimké's sisters, rejected the institution altogether. Sarah and Angelina Grimké moved to Philadelphia in the 1820s and joined the abolition and women's rights movements. Angelina supported her brother's Unionist convictions and viewed

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[4] [Robert Turnbull], *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated Against the Southern & Western States, Respecting the Institution and Existence of Slavery Among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 56; *The Columbia Telescope*, 17 September 1833; 15 October 1833, and 24 December 1833; Stephen Miller, quoted in Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 81; [James Henry Hammond], *Remarks of Mr. Hammond of South Carolina, on the Question of Receiving Petitions for the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia* (Washington: Duff Green, 1836), 11.
For a discussion of this idea of "herrenvolk democracy," see George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).
[5] *The Mountaineer*, 21 February 1829; Benjamin Perry to Daniel Webster, 14 May 1833, *The Papers of Daniel Webster*; Julia M. Brown to Jonathan R. Flynt, Julia M. Brown Letter, SCL; Pease and Pease, *James Louis Petigru*, 30-31, 134-139; David W. Dangerfield, "Hard Rows to Hoe: Free Black Farmers in Antebellum South Carolina," (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 2014), 64-65; Lyon G. Tyler, "James Louis Petigru: Freedom's Champion in a Slave Society," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 83, No. 4 (October 1982), 272-286.

nullification as divine vengeance. Slavery, she explained, was "too great a sin for justice always to sleep over, and this is, I believe, the true cause of the declining state of Carolina." Ebenezer Cooper, a Reformed Presbyterian minister, expressed a similar outlook, insisting God was punishing America for the "national Sin" of slavery. The "guilt of slavery," he maintained, was only increasing, as slaveholders abandoned God's laws and hardened their hearts against justice. Throughout the state, small pockets of religious dissenters shared these moral reservations, and some excluded slaveholders from the congregations. Like the Grimké sisters, however, they found life in South Carolina increasingly "untenable." As the Reverend Hugh McMillan explained, the "hand of slavery was closing the door of emancipation," and sermons against slavery were provoking ever-greater resistance. In 1829, McMillan moved to the Midwest with "nearly all his congregation," and Ebenezer Cooper followed three years later.[6]

As Benjamin Perry observed, however, the overwhelming majority of Union Party supporters "sanction[ed] and tolerate[d]" slavery. They saw it as an essential "part of the social system"—an institution "interwoven with our interest, our manner, our climate, and our very being." Whatever qualms they felt, they insisted they could not "remedy [the situation], without the ruin of ourselves and the injury of [their slaves]." Although Petigru freed a few slaves, for example, he held 125 more in bondage, and he failed to speak out against the institution. Julia Brown pitied slaveholders "almost as much if not more than the slave[s]," and she was "utterly at a loss to know *what can* be done." Emancipation, she feared, would bring only death and

[6] Mark Perry, *Lift Up Thy Voice: The Grimké Family's Journey from Slaveholders to Civil Rights Leaders* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 111; Catherine H. Birney, *The Grimké Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimké, the First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1885), 110; Ebenezer Cooper to John A. Cooper, 6 March 1832, Papers of the Cooper-McClurken-Nisbet Families, SCL; Michael A. Broadstone, *History of Greene County, Ohio: Its People, Industries and Institutions, Vol. 1* (Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen & Company, Inc., 1918), 504-505; Samuel Brown Wylie, *Memoir of Alexander McLeod, D.D.* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), 504-505; Joseph S. Moore, *Founding Sins: How a Group of Antislavery Radicals Fought to Put Christ into the Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 90-116.

devastation. Perry agreed that abolition would ruin southern society, and Wells warned that it would turn the slaveholding states into "one great mausoleum of war, blood, and carnage."[7]

Anxieties over slavery's survival, however, did *not* lead inevitably to radicalism. During the nullification crisis, instead, these fears reinforced Union men's moderation and their commitment to the country. At party meetings and in newspaper columns, they argued that the Constitution sanctioned and protected slavery, and that only a handful of "fanatics" sought to abolish it. Constans Daniels, for example, assured readers that most northerners disavowed abolitionism and supported southern rights. He reprinted northern editorials and published news of northern meetings, hoping to repair the fraying cords of Union. Other Union men agreed: a Charleston planter insisted the Constitution "protect[ed] the Southern States," and Benjamin Perry observed that northerners had no desire to "interfere with [their] domestic policy."[8]

Nullifiers, however, continued to champion their militant defense of slavery and state rights. Even after they rescinded the Ordinance of Nullification, they urged voters to remain vigilant, warning that another political crisis was imminent. In July 1833, Pinckney declared that abolitionists were whetting their knives and lighting their torches, preparing to "clothe our fields with desolation, and turn our rivers into blood." These "fanatics," he insisted, hoped to turn "every southern city [into] a St. Domingo, and every village [into] a Southampton"—vivid reminders of the Haitian Revolution and Nat Turner's Rebellion. Pinckney acknowledged that few northerners supported abolition. He warned, however, that the movement would steadily gain strength and that abolitionists would one day wage the "worst of all wars" against them.

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[7] *The Camden Journal*, 4 September 1830; *The Mountaineer*, 21 February 1829; Benjamin Perry to Daniel Webster, 14 May 1833, *The Papers of Daniel Webster*; Julia M. Brown to Jonathan R. Flynt, Julia M. Brown Letter, SCL; Kelly, *America's Longest Siege*, 196-197; Pease and Pease, *James Louis Petigru*, 30-31, 134-139.

[8] *The Camden Journal*, 4 September 1830, 5 March 1831, 1 October 1831, and 4 May 1833; *The Charleston* Courier, 22 July 1833; Benjamin Perry to Daniel Webster, 14 May 1833, *The Papers of Daniel Webster*.

When that moment arrived, southerners could trust neither Congress nor the northern states—only each other. Richland planter Pierce Butler predicted that the "slave question" would ultimately "Dissolve the ties of this Union. *It will do it*. And if things go on as they begin…it *ought to do it*. Every move on the subject cuts one *cord* of this government.[9]

Union men recognized the power of these appeals and worked fiercely to counteract them. Camden editor Thomas Pegues warned that "all this noise about slavery is intended for *political effect.*" Nullifiers, he explained, were using the issue to "inflame the public mind" and undermine the Union. He reminded readers that slavery "will not [and] cannot be touched," and that every major northern politician was on their side. Benjamin Perry warned that Nullifiers were still conspiring to incite civil war and establish a southern confederacy. When the tariff failed to unify the South, he observed, the state's "revolutionists" had seized hold of slavery—hoping to "provoke the North and inflame the South." Perry, however, trusted northern conservatives to disavow abolitionism, and he appealed to Daniel Webster to uphold the "South, the Union and the cause of republican Government."[10]

These Union Party leaders viewed themselves as moderate men holding the middle ground between northern and southern radicalism. Yorkville residents insisted that only "fanatics

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[9] Henry L. Pinckney, *An Oration Delivered in the Independent, or Congregational Church, Charleston, Before the State Rights & Free Trade Party* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1833), 41-43; Pierce M. Butler to James Henry Hammond, 10 July 1835, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.

[10] *The Camden Journal*, 4 May 1833 and 1 June 1833; Benjamin Perry to Daniel Webster, 14 May 1833, *The Papers of Daniel Webster*. In May 1833, Andrew Jackson observed that the tariff was only the pretext of the nullification crisis, with "disunion and a Southern confederacy the real object," and he predicted that the "next pretext will be the negro, or slavery, question." Pegues took over as editor of *The Camden Journal* after Daniels resigned. Numerous Union Party leaders made the same observation during the summer of 1833: that Nullifiers, having failed to unify the South on the tariff issue, were now using slavery as a political tool. Petigru observed that "our nullifiers mean to pick a quarrel with the North about negroes," while Mitchell King noted that Nullifiers had embraced "a subject on which we have always been exceedingly sensative [sic]" only after Congress resolved the tariff issue. See Andrew Jackson to Andrew J. Crawford, 1 May 1833, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; James L. Petigru to Hugh S. Legaré, 15 July 1833, James L. Petigru Papers, SCL; Mitchell King to Hugh S. Legaré, 14 September 1833, Mitchell King Papers, SCL.

and nullifiers" would draw slavery into public debate, and a Charleston writer agreed that Garrison and Calhoun were "aiming at the same end, public excitement." Aaron Willington published dozens of articles praying for the Union's survival against "Southern discontents" and "Northern fanaticism." Although they saw abolitionists and Nullifiers as two sides of the same coin, the latter seemed to pose a more immediate threat to slavery in the early 1830s. As one writer explained, Garrison's antislavery pamphlets were "smothered almost as soon as they [arrived]," while Pinckney's ravings freely circulated throughout the state. By exaggerating abolitionists' power, Union men warned, Nullifiers were emboldening rebellious slaves and inspiring a "spirit of discontent." They were weakening the bonds of Union and striking a deadly blow at the "vitals of the State."[11]

Then, in the summer of 1835, the American Anti-Slavery Society launched one of the first direct-mail campaigns in American history. The AASS, founded two years earlier, declared slavery "the greatest possible violation of human rights" and published four monthly journals to illustrate its injustice. By 1835, they were printing more than one million pamphlets and periodicals per year, and that May, they began a bold campaign to spread their message throughout the South. They collected the names of 20,000 southern ministers, merchants, and civic leaders and bombarded them with 175,000 antislavery tracts. They hoped that "moral suasion" would open slaveholders' eyes to the evils of the institution. As one abolitionist predicted, their pamphlets would inspire "a feeling against which [slaveholders] cannot stand."

[11] *The Charleston Courier*, 4 July 1833, 19 July 1833, 22 July 1833, and 5 August 1833. Poinsett made the same argument in an address to Charleston voters in 1833. He assured them that the overwhelming majority of northerners "never have entertained" antislavery sentiments and posed no danger to the institution. The State Rights Party, however, continued to "agitate the most delicate question in our domestic policy," and their "rash conduct" threatened to incite "all the dangers we are taught to apprehend" from northern abolitionists. If Nullifiers persisted, he warned, the South would meet the same fate as the West Indies: facing emancipation, insurrection, and ruin. See *The Columbia Telescope*, 10 September 1833.

Some masters, they knew, would "rave and scold and threaten" and "draw closer the cords" of bondage. Ultimately, however, they would welcome abolition to ease their consciences of an "intolerable burden."[12]

On July 29, 1835, the steamship *Columbia* arrived in Charleston Harbor, carrying thousands of these antislavery tracts. Postmaster Alfred Huger, a Union Party leader, dutifully began delivering the mail. As news of the "incendiary" papers spread, however, hundreds of residents gathered to confront him. The crowd contained the "most respectable men of all parties," uniting "Nullifiers and Union men, Jackson men and Clay men…men who differ on all other points." Huger himself was deeply committed to slavery, and he declared the pamphlets "inflammatory and incendiary—and insurrectionary in the highest degree." As postmaster, however, he had a duty to uphold federal authority, and he vowed to "defend [the mail] until I am overpower'd." Huger refused to surrender the tracts, and he drafted an urgent letter to Postmaster General Amos Kendall asking for instructions.[13]

Although the City Guard eventually dispersed the crowd, they returned that night and broke into the post office. The following evening, 2000 people gathered on the parade ground and burned the mail, along with effigies of AASS leaders William Lloyd Garrison, Arthur Tappan, and Abraham Cox. Huger feared the crisis would escalate if the flood of pamphlets continued, and he swore to do everything in his power to "prevent future Excesses." Ultimately,

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[12] Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 249; Michael A. Schoeppner, *Moral Contagion: Black Atlantic Sailors, Citizenship, and Diplomacy in Antebellum America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 98;Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969), 145.

[13] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Abolitionists' Postal Campaign of 1835," *The Journal of Negro History* 50, no. 4 (October 1965), 227-229; Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 481; Alfred Huger to Samuel L. Gouverneur, 1 August 1835, in "Postmaster Huger and the Incendiary Publications," ed. Frank Otto Gatell, *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 64, no. 4 (October 1963), 193-201, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27566483; Susan Wyly-Jones, "The 1835 Anti-Abolition Meetings in the South: A New Look at the Controversy over the Abolition Postal Campaign," *Civil War History* 47, no. 4 (December 2001), 289-309.

however, he doubted that he could "Sustain himself in this position" for long. The entire city was arrayed against him, and only a "military force greater than [Charleston's] Undivided population" could permanently protect the mail.[14]

While Huger anxiously waited for guidance, Charleston's civic leaders rallied to protect the city. On August 3, a meeting at City Hall denounced abolitionists for inciting rebellion and "whet[ting] the knife of assassination." They arranged for guards to protect the mail and empowered a committee to "take all measures necessary to meet the emergency." Observers emphasized the crowd's wealth and respectability, and several ministers legitimized the meeting with their presence. Crucially, men from both parties attended, and the committee included eleven Nullifiers and at least eight Union men. Unionist Henry DeSaussure observed proudly that the "spirit of Carolina was rising" to meet the "evil" of abolition, and Robert Hayne urged the entire South to "act energetically and in concert."[15]

The committee presented its report a week later, declaring slavery "inherent and inseparable from the existence of the State." They asked the harbor master and railroad president to keep track of everyone entering the city and urged officials to punish anyone affiliated with the AASS. They also demanded that northerners suppress the spirit of fanaticism: silencing antislavery societies and banning "seditious Papers" from the mail. If Congress refused to act, they warned, the southern states would adopt "decisive" measures to defend themselves. They

[14] Alfred Huger to Samuel L. Gouverneur, 1 August 1835, and Samuel L. Gouverneur to Alfred Huger, 8 August 1835, "Alfred Huger and the Incendiary Publications."

[15] *The Charleston Courier*, 4 August 1835; Alfred Huger to Samuel L. Gouverneur, 15 August 1835 and 22 August 1835, "Postmaster Huger and the Incendiary Publications"; *The National Gazette*, 12 August 1835; *Charleston Southern Patriot*, 4 August 1835; Jennifer Rose Mercieca, "The Culture of Honor: How Slaveholders Responded to the Abolitionist Mail Crisis of 1835," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2007), 51-76. Charleston's merchants and store keepers held a meeting soon and resolved to boycott all northern merchants who supported abolition. They refused to "fold our arms and see our families butchered, and our fire sides deluged with blood," and by buying goods from abolitionists, they were only "add[ing] fuel to the fire that is intended to consume us."

called for a southern convention and vowed to "defend their property against all attacks—be the consequences what they may." Similar meetings took place across the South, and by December 1835, more than 150 communities had hosted torchlit parades and anti-abolition rallies. They formed vigilance committees to patrol the countryside, intimidate African Americans, and search stage coaches and steamboats for antislavery tracts. In some cities, they commanded enormous resources: New Orleans' "Anti-Fanatical Society" reported a budget of half a million dollars, and another Louisiana parish offered $50,000 to anyone who delivered AASS leader Arthur Tappan—dead or alive.[16]

Dozens of communities across South Carolina hosted anti-abolition meetings. Most followed the same pattern and adopted similar resolutions. "Respectable" community leaders called the meetings to order and chose a committee to draft resolutions. Ministers offered prayers and sanctioned the proceedings, while local orators offered fiery speeches denouncing northern fanaticism. The resolutions often struck an orderly but defiant tone. They argued that Scripture and the Constitution both justified slavery, and they refused to discuss the institution "in any manner." They accused abolitionists of undermining the Union's harmony and stability and insisted Congress had a moral duty to stop them. Ultimately, however, they called upon southerners to defend themselves, demanding political unity and organizing vigilance committees to stifle dissent.[17]

While some meetings called for "cool and calm decision," others struck a more radical tone. Sumterville residents denounced Tappan and Garrison as "enemies of mankind" and

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[16] *Proceedings of the Citizens of Charleston on the Incendiary Machinations Now in Progress Against the Peace and Welfare of the Southern States* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1835). The committee also asked the city council to print 5000 copies of their report and distribute them to every town in America; Wyatt-Brown, "The Abolitionists' Postal Campaign of 1835," 231.

[17] See *The Charleston Mercury*, *The Charleston Courier*, and *The Southern Patriot* for August and September 1835.

threatened to kill them if they set foot in the state. They vowed to resist abolition until their dying breaths, and they hoped the impending crisis would find all South Carolinians "prepared, with arms in their hands." A Pendleton meeting warned that abolition would make it "unsafe" for South Carolina to remain in the Union, and several lowcountry meetings boldly called for secession. If northerners failed to "put a final stop" to abolitionism, one meeting resolved, the southern states had a solemn duty to secede. Forced to choose between "Union without liberty and property" or disunion with them, they would "make the choice promptly, unitedly, and fearlessly."[18]

Responding to the crisis, Postmaster General Amos Kendall confessed that he lacked the legal power to censor the mail. Nonetheless, he refused to order Huger to deliver the antislavery tracts. The post office, he explained, should serve the American people and bind them together—not become the "instrument of their destruction." Although federal officers "owe an obligation to the laws," he insisted, they held a higher duty to the communities in which they lived. When those duties conflicted, Kendall wrote, "it is patriotism to disregard [the law]." Ultimately, Kendall allowed Huger to decide the issue for himself, writing that he would neither sanction nor condemn the postmaster's actions. In practice, his message gave southern postmasters license to censor the mail and rid their communities of "incendiary" papers.[19]

Antislavery tracts, however, continued to pour into South Carolina's post offices. Only days after the Charleston bonfire, one writer found thousands of pamphlets piling up in Huger's office, and weeks later a copy of *The Liberator* arrived with "threatening language" scrawled

[18] *The Charleston Mercury*, 11 September 1835, 12 September 1835, and 18 September 1835; Wyly-Jones, "The 1835 Anti-Abolition Meetings in the South," 305-306. A meeting in Beaufort offered $2000 to anyone who delivered "the bodies of either of the four well known Incendiaries among the Northern Abolitionists." See *The Charleston Courier*, 20 August 1835.
[19] *The Evening Post* (New York, NY), 12 August 1835.

across the margins. Although Huger removed "offensive" papers from the mail, some slipped through and circulated throughout the state. When a few pamphlets reached Columbia in early August, a mob attacked the post office at midnight and tried to force its way into the building. After a long argument, Postmaster Daniel Faust—an elderly Union man—convinced the crowd to leave. A local vigilance committee, however, interrogated him four days later and demanded that he suppress the pamphlets.[20]

As Alfred Huger and Daniel Faust discovered, local vigilance committees often took the law into their own lands to preserve "peace" and "property." Charleston residents organized a Lynch Club and advertised their actions in the city's newspapers. They threatened to serve "written notice" to anyone who sympathized with abolition and warned that "any person not going away as ordered, will by Lynched." If anyone fought back, the club would hang them "as a public example." On August 20, they targeted local barber Richard Wood for illegally trading with the city's slaves. When Wood refused to leave, the Lynch Club dragged him through the street to a nearby wharf, where they tied him to a post and gave him twenty lashes. After pouring tar over his body and covering him in cotton, they carried him through the market so residents could "take warning by his fate." Officials placed in him jail for his own protection and sent him north several days later.[21]

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[20] *The Charleston Mercury*, 20 August 1835 and 5 September 1835; *The Charleston Courier*, 7 August 1835, 28 August 1835, and 16 September 1835; Pierce M. Butler to A. C. Preston, 7 January 1835, Pierce Mason Butler Papers, SCL. Prince William's Parish, for example, reported receiving antislavery literature in August, and a Camden postmaster received a pamphlet entitled "Human Rights" that same month. See *The Charleston Courier*, 20 August 1835.

[21] *The Southern Patriot*, 21 August 1835; *The Charleston Courier*, 22 August 1835 and 25 August 1835; Michael D. Thompson, *Working on the Dock of the Bay: Labor and Enterprise in an Antebellum Southern Port* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015). Hammond remarked that abolitionists "can be silenced in but one way—*Terror—death*. The non-slaveholding states must pass laws denying protection to them." James Henry Hammond to Mordecai Manuel Noah, 19 August 1835, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.

That summer, local clubs and vigilance committees lynched at least five men across the state. Robert Gage, the son of an upcountry planter, observed that the "whole country is in a state of ferment." Several men, he reported, had been "tried before Judge Lynch [and] condemned & hung without a word." In early September, Columbia's Lynch Club targeted a man for an unspecified crime and "inflicted the punishment" on Main Street at 10am. In a small upcountry village, one editor remarked, "Judge Lynch *pinned* it into a chap" after residents discovered him talking to local slaves. Around the same time, Orangeburg villagers "detected" two outsiders, and "Judge Hang presided there and passed sentence on them."[22]

Some Union men spoke out against these proceedings, insisting the accused men deserved full and fair trials. One Camden editor, for example, viewed lynching as an expression of "anarchy and misrule" and argued that "every good citizen" had a duty to denounce it. Only the law, he explained, could secure Americans' liberty and property. Aaron Willington agreed that Lynch Clubs would undermine the laws and encourage "fearful abuses." Others, however, condoned or helped provoke the attacks and praised the lynch mobs for their "quietness and order." Union Party editors published advertisements for the Lynch Club and openly called for the murder of abolitionists. "Let such justice be meted out," a Greenville editor declared, and before long "they will keep at a proper distance."[23]

These defenses of lynching reflected a broader shift in South Carolina politics. In the aftermath of the AASS direct mail campaign, many of the state's anti-abolition meetings framed themselves as non-partisan, hoping to demonstrate South Carolina's unity and resolve. A rally in Sumter drew "persons of all parties," and men in Abbeville, Greenville, and Camden gathered

[22] *The Charleston Mercury*, 14 September 1835; Robert I. Gage to James M. Gage, 31 August 1835, James M. Gage Papers, SHC.
[23] *The Camden Journal,* 22 August 1835; *The Charleston Courier*, 25 August 1835; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 22 August 1835.

"without distinction of party." Americans made similar anti-partisan appeals throughout the antebellum era, often to serve deeply partisan ends. During the nullification crisis, for example, Nullifiers de-legitimized Unionist resistance by claiming to speak for all "true South Carolinians." The summer of 1835, however, was a period of transition in the state. The test oath compromise had resolved the most pressing partisan issues, and most South Carolinians were eager for harmony. The direct-mail campaign took place in this moment of political uncertainty and provided a powerful motivation for unity.[24]

For the past five years, public meetings, militia companies, and even church congregations had sharply divided along party lines. Newspapers had served as unofficial party organs, and editors had often only reported their own party's meetings and events. At most anti-abolition meetings, however, 25 percent of committee members were Union men, and leaders from both parties worked together to draft reports and resolutions. Virtually every newspaper vehemently denounced antislavery "fanaticism" and published news of the meetings—another striking departure from the partisanship of the early 1830s. A Camden editor, for example, warned that abolitionists would "awake[n] a servile war [filled with] murder and rapine and all the darker deeds" and "build the freedom of the slave upon the annihilation of the white man."

[24] *The Charleston Mercury*, 21 August 1835, 12 September 1835, 16 September 1835, 27 November 1835; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 12 September 1835 and 19 September 1835; Henry H. Townes to George F. Townes, 26 September 1835, Townes Family Papers, SCL. For a discussion of centrism and anti-partisanship in the antebellum and Civil War eras, see Mark Voss-Hubbard, *Beyond Party: Cultures of Antipartisanship in Northern Politics before the Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *Rude Republic: Americans and Their Politics in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Adam I. P. Smith, *The Stormy Present: Conservatism and the Problem of Slavery in Northern Politics, 1846-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Adam I. P. Smith, *No Party Now: Politics in the Civil War North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Jack Furniss, "States of the Union: The Rise and Fall of the Political Center in the Civil War North," (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2018).

Although Union men had stood by the country in the "darkest hour of peril," Aaron Willington observed, they would mournfully tear it apart rather than surrender southern rights.[25]

Some political distinctions endured, and some Union men pushed back against the state's growing consensus. While Nullifiers often equated all northerners with abolitionists, Union men were more likely to maintain their faith in northern conservatives. A Charleston Nullifier, for example, warned that the "whole population of the North" supported abolition "directly or indirectly," while another writer insisted that "eight-tenths of the Northern people are Abolitionists." Union Party editor Obadiah Wells, however, assured readers that 90 percent of "respectable" northerners rejected abolitionism, and he trusted the Constitution to safeguard slavery and social order. Some Union men viewed the public outcry as yet another political conspiracy. Benjamin Perry believed Nullifiers were using the direct-mail campaign for political effect, because they knew that "Slavery is the only thing that can produce a dissolution of the Union…the only thing that will unite the whole South in opposition to the North." Wells agreed, accusing Nullifiers of trying to drain the federal treasury, dismantle the navy, and leave the country vulnerable to European tyrants. He argued that Nullifiers only decried abolitionists in order to promote a southern confederacy and enable "foreign troops…to land upon our shores."[26]

These appeals, however, were largely unsuccessful, and the threat of abolition pushed the Union Party toward the state's political margins. Beaufort Unionist Benjamin Allston, for example, tried—and failed—to moderate his district's radicalism. When a meeting that September condemned the "progress of *Northern* fanaticism," Allston objected and introduced a

[25]*The Camden Journal*, 8 August 1835; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 8 August 1835 and 22 August 1835; *The Charleston Courier*, 12 August 1835. Figure calculated by compiling membership lists of vigilance committees and committees on resolutions from the state's newspapers and searching for each man in the records of party meetings for the years 1830-1834.

[26] *The Charleston Mercury*, 24 September 1835, 28 September 1835, and 13 October 1835; *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 15 August 1835, 22 August 1835, and 12 September 1835; Benjamin Perry Diary, 8 August 1835, SHC.

new set of resolutions. He insisted that the vast majority of northerners rejected abolition, and he trusted their "patriotism, kindly feeling, and sense of justice" to peacefully resolve the crisis. The crowd, however, overwhelmingly opposed the resolutions, and Allston ultimately withdrew them.[27]

A similar scene took place in Abbeville, where a non-partisan committee reported militantly proslavery resolutions. Most public meetings followed a familiar script, with the crowd "unanimously" endorsing the committee's report. This time, Unionist John Pressly objected and forced the meeting to vote on the resolutions one-by-one. Most passed without dissent, as the crowd declared slavery a "domestic question" and expressed "abhorrence" toward abolition. Pressly, however, protested three resolutions. One declared the Union a compact of sovereign states, united "for special purposes only." Another demanded a federal law barring the Post Office from carrying "seditious Papers," and a third called for a southern convention to "defend our property against all attacks." Despite his pleas, the resolutions passed overwhelmingly. Only three men voted against the sovereign-state and seditious-paper resolutions, and Pressly stood alone in opposing a southern convention. The moment was deeply symbolic, as the resolution declared that South Carolinians stood "united as one man" in defense of southern rights. Pressly's solitary dissent belied the claim, revealing a few lingering doubts and divisions—but it also proved how rapidly Nullifiers' beliefs were hardening into orthodoxy and transforming the state's political culture.[28]

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[27] *The Charleston Mercury*, 11 September 1835;

[28] *The Charleston* Mercury, 16 September 1835. Rather than draft their own resolutions, the Abbeville committee repeated the resolutions from Charleston's August 10 meeting. They did so in order to demonstrate the "entire unanimity of opinion, and concert of action throughout the State." In November 1835, a Union Party meeting in Pickens celebrated the "spirit of compromise" in the state and asked the party's local standard-bearers not to run for election. As they explained, they earnestly

Events in Washington that winter only accelerated that trend. As antislavery pamphlets flooded southern post offices, the AASS began petitioning Congress to abolish slavery in Washington, DC. This tactic was as old as the country itself; in 1790, Benjamin Franklin had petitioned the first Congress to "loosen the bounds of slavery" and ensure "equal liberty" for all Americans. The AASS, however, dramatically increased the scale and frequency of the campaign, sending nearly 200 petitions with 34,000 signatures during the 1835-1836 session alone. Initially, Congress dealt with the prayers as it always had: voting to accept and immediately table the first two petitions. When the third petition arrived, however, James Henry Hammond rose to demand a "more decided seal of reprobation." Instead of tabling the appeals, he urged the House not to accept them at all—to stifle discussion before it began. He "wished to put an end to these petitions," refusing to "sit there and see the rights of the southern people assaulted day after day."[29]

Hammond's motion ignited a fierce debate over the limits of constitutional freedom and Congressional power. While most northerners opposed abolition, they passionately defended their right to petition the government. As New York Democrat Samuel Beardsley explained, Congress could "decline acting" on certain petitions, but it could not deny Americans' "sacred and invaluable right" to present them. Beardsley sided with the South "against all agitation on this subject" and sought to "put down the fanatics of the North." He reminded Congress,

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"desire[d] peace" and "deprecate the idea of keeping up parties in our District." See *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 21 November 1835.

[29] Petition from the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, National Archives Catalog, available from http://www.catalog.archives.gov/id/306388; Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, 308-311; Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 500-501; David A. Moss, *Democracy: A Case Study* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 253; *Register of Debates in Congress,* House of Representatives, 24th Congress, 1st Session, 1966-1968; Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 168-180. Many petitioners favored limited and gradual measures, acknowledging that Congress had no power to abolish slavery in the states. Southern radicals, however, ignored these distinctions and accused all northerners who sympathized with the AASS of promoting immediate abolition.

however, that radicals in *both* sections were using antislavery agitation to tear the country apart. Only by accepting and tabling the petitions, he argued, could Americans maintain "peace, quiet, and order, in every part of the Union."[30]

Most southerners, however, saw the debate not as a contest over the right of petition but rather as a struggle for slavery's survival. Hammond framed his demands in the language of southern honor, observing that abolitionists had "assailed" and "assaulted" their way of life. By accepting antislavery petitions, he warned, Congress would legitimize the abolition movement and implicitly grant the federal government the power to regulate slavery. Francis Pickens, a young Edgefield Nullifier, rushed to Hammond's defense, urging Congress to stop the AASS "at the threshold." He viewed the abolition movement as a trans-Atlantic crusade to stifle southern freedom. The "moral power of the world," he observed, was arrayed against them. Great Britain had freed its West Indian slaves in 1833, and France had begun debating emancipation. Now, the AASS had gained a foothold in the North, and its spirit of "fanaticism" would only grow stronger. Pickens argued that southerners would soon face a stark choice: defend their "consecrated hearthstones" to the death or watch their own country become a "black colony."[31]

The debate placed tremendous strain on southern moderates. With the future of slavery apparently at stake, they could not allow Congress to discuss the petitions. Rejecting them altogether, however, could galvanize northern resistance, strengthen the abolition movement, and weaken the bonds of Union. In early February 1836, after weeks of tense debate, Charleston Nullifier Henry Pinckney offered a compromise. He proposed creating a select committee to address the antislavery petitions, instructing it to report that Congress had no power over slavery

[30] *Register of Debates*, House of Representatives, 24th Congress, 1st Session, 1975-1976, 1979-1980, 2039-2040.
[31] Francis W. Pickens, quoted in Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, 311-312; John B. Edmunds, Jr., *Francis W. Pickens and the Politics of Destruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 42-43.

in the states and "ought not" to interfere with it in Washington, D.C. Pinckney hoped to sidestep the debate's constitutional controversies. He would assert the right to petition while protecting the right to property, and confirm Congress's power over the District of Columbia while ensuring that slavery there remained secure. Congress quickly approved the plan, with southerners evenly divided and almost every northerner voting in favor. Three months later, the committee delivered its final report, agreeing that Congress would receive and table all antislavery petitions.[32]

Pinckney's actions baffled many contemporaries, who questioned why a radical Nullifier would defy his party and craft a potentially Union-saving compromise. Some traced his moderation to a recent religious conversion. As early as mid-January, Hayne advised Hammond to "keep Pinckney *straight*," warning that he had been "strangely self willed and erratic" since becoming "a *saint*." Others saw the former editor as a mere political opportunist. Despite *The Charleston Mercury*'s influence, Pinckney remained a second-tier statesman in South Carolina, overshadowed by Calhoun, McDuffie, Hamilton, and Hayne. By working with Martin Van Buren—Jackson's handpicked successor—to resolve the crisis, Pinckney could position himself as a national leader. As Hammond explained, he could become "a second Clay [and] save the Union."[33]

Pinckney, however, viewed his moderate gag rule as an urgent necessity. He warned that Hammond's plan would place the "contest *upon the right of petition*," which many Americans—in both sections—considered a "sacred and fundamental" freedom. The debate, then, would only unify the North while dividing the South. It would also strengthen abolitionists' hands, allowing

[32] Cooper, Jr., *The Lost Founding Father*, 328-331; Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 322-328.
[33] Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 328-330; Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 501-503.

them to "cry out that they were persecuted and disfranchised." Pinckney, by contrast, planned to center the debate around abolition. He recognized that most northerners opposed immediate abolition, and by "letting the right of petition alone," he hoped to unite "all parties" in suppressing the movement. He assured South Carolinians that he had not forgotten the nullification crisis, nor had he forsaken his principles. Then, as now, he sought to defend slavery and southern rights, and he asked his constituents to calmly consider which plan was "best for them, as slaveholders."[34]

Pinckney's plea failed to persuade most South Carolinians, and letters poured into the *Mercury* office denouncing his conduct. One writer insisted that Pinckney had "sacrificed the South" and left the state vulnerable to rebellion. "Dishonor, and ruin, and wretchedness," he warned, would engulf South Carolina, and a "new Act will be added to the West India Tragedy." Writers reached for military metaphors to describe the gravity of Pinckney's betrayal. A Columbia cashier accused him of "surrender[ing] the Citadel," and a Barnwell doctor agreed that he had "desert[ed] his post" on the "Watch Tower of Southern Rights." One essayist observed that Pinckney had struck the Palmetto Banner in surrender. He expressed shock and dismay to hear the Congressman "prating about the Union" when his "denunciation of unionism in the days of Nullification yet vibrate[d] upon the ear."[35]

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[34] *The Charleston Mercury*, 23 February 1836 and 25 March 1836. Pinckney recognized that moderate southerners—men like Henry Clay and Tennessee Congressman John Bell—believed Congress had a constitutional obligation to accept the petitions. He hoped to "bring the whole subject of the abolition of slavery to a practical result, in a manner safe and advantageous to the South, satisfactory to the North and calculated also to tranquilize the country and to confirm the Union." The AASS, he observed, worked toward "general emancipation," and "I would meet them, and defeat them, at once and forever, upon that." Pinckney insisted that the "battle of abolition" would be fought in the North, between the abolitionist minority and the "great body of the people." By introducing his moderate gag rule, Pinckney hoped to "strengthen our friends" and enable them to "fight the abolitionists in their own way."

[35] *The Charleston Mercury*, 25 February 1836, 27 February 1836, 18 March 1836, and 29 March 1836. Thomas Harrison to James Henry Hammond, 16 February 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; John B. Bowers to James Henry Hammond, 17 February 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.

While Pinckney's political fortunes fell, Hammond and Pickens became heroes throughout much of South Carolina. A Charleston editor remarked that they had "done their duty manfully," and another writer agreed that they "would not disgrace [their] manhood by tamely and patiently submitting." Edgefield residents praised the men as "true models of Carolina patriotism" and insisted the federal government had no authority over slavery. The moment Congress tried to regulate or restrict it, they warned, the entire South would secede. Barnwell's citizens shared these sentiments, declaring that the time had arrived for South Carolinians "not only to speak, but to act." Their "very existence [was] in danger," they observed, and only decisive action could save them from destruction.[36]

Dozens of South Carolinians wrote to Hammond that winter, expressing an uncompromising defiance toward abolition. Hayne advised him to "meet the question boldly in every shape…the more directly the better." He remained confident in southern strength and resolve and "fear[ed] nothing from discussion or excitement." Richland Nullifier Pierce Butler encouraged him to "*Fix bayonets*" and "dispute every inch of ground." By seizing the initiative, he argued, South Carolinians would force every southern Congressman to choose a side. Together, they would prove to their enemies that they could vindicate slavery "in the forum and in the field." A Columbia writer agreed that hesitation would prove fatal: every hour of delay strengthened the abolitionists and "weaken[ed] us at home."[37]

Some writers insisted it was already too late to preserve southern freedom. Henry Nott, a professor at South Carolina College, baldly declared that "all is lost." Europe and the North, he explained, had already turned against slavery, and the southern states were full of enemies. The

[36] *The Charleston Mercury*, 4 January 1836, 25 February 1836, 1 March 1836, and 18 March 1836.
[37] Robert Y. Hayne to James Henry Hammond, 14 January 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Pierce M. Butler to James Henry Hammond, 30 December 1835, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Thomas Harrison to James Henry Hammond, 16 February 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC;

native northerners who filled their towns were only "*feebly* with us," and many secretly plotted their destruction. When the final crisis arrived, he predicted, poor southerners and religious dissenters would renounce slavery "on the ground of republicanism as well as religion." Another writer agreed that there was little hope for slaveholders' survival. Years of agitation, he observed, had inspired a powerful "spirit of insubordination" in their slaves, and even disunion could not protect them from the impending catastrophe.[38]

Despite their anxieties, most South Carolinians still hoped for victory and vindication. Thomas Cooper welcomed the prospect of disunion, insisting the South "had no safety in any other measure." He connected the state's struggle to Poland's ill-fated revolution. The Russian emperor, he observed, had vanquished the Polish armies and "annihilated" the rebellious kingdom. The "Demon of Discord has shaken his wings over both Continents," provoking a hemispheric struggle between liberty and tyranny. Cooper observed that southerners needed "all the courage we can muster," and he urged Hammond to "force a decision"—to compel southern leaders to choose sides in the looming struggle over slavery. If Congress voted to accept antislavery petitions, he wrote, southern lawmakers should resign en masse and begin working toward secession.[39]

Cooper offered a dramatic vision of South Carolina's future. If the federal government interfered with slavery, he wrote, "separation and war" must inevitably follow. While South Carolinians had temporized and retreated during the nullification winter, this time they would "act decisively" and secede from the Union. The rest of the South would gradually follow, and the loss of tariff revenue and bank credit would devastate the northern economy. The ensuing

[38] Henry J. Nott to James Henry Hammond, 8 March 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; James Davis to James Henry Hammond, 2 April 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.
[39] Thomas Cooper to James Henry Hammond, 8 January 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.

civil war would "assume a savage character," as southerners slaughtered their enemies without remorse. As Cooper explained, northerners had incited their slaves to "ravish [their] females, & then to cut their throats," and he had "no scruples about the means of putting [them] to death."[40]

Other South Carolinians echoed these defiant calls to arms. A Columbia writer agreed that the state's "only safe reliance" lay in its "swords and muskets." Thomas Twiss, a professor at South Carolina College, vowed to "stand by the south" and "fight to the last in the just and right cause." Nullifier Thomas Stark believed the state "should have dissolved the union when Charleston was blockaded [during the nullification winter]," and he hoped Hammond's resolution would finish the task. Virginia radical Beverly Tucker urged South Carolinians to take the "decisive step" toward disunion. If Jackson allowed the state to secede peacefully, he explained, the rest of the South would quickly follow. If the president tried to stop South Carolina, the other states would rise up against him. Either way, the old Union would collapse, and the resulting southern confederacy would flourish in its freedom. Hammond forwarded the letter to Governor George McDuffie, who "entirely concur[red]" with its contents. South Carolina, McDuffie declared, must "exorcise the demon," even "if the magic circle is drawn in blood."[41]

Across South Carolina, the gag rule debate provoked a faint echo of nullification-era partisanship. The state's Unionist Congressmen—Richard Manning and James Rogers—

[40] Thomas Cooper to Martin Van Buren, 14 March 1837,in Ernest M. Lander, Jr., ed., "Dr. Cooper's Views in Retirement," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 54, no. 4 (October 1953), 173-184, available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27565928; Thomas Cooper to Langdon Cheves, 2 March 1837, Louisa S. McCord Family Papers, SCHS.

[41] J. Adams to James Henry Hammond, 29 March 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Thomas S. Twiss to James Henry Hammond, 19 February 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Thomas Stark to James Henry Hammond, 14 April 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Beverley Tucker to James Henry Hammond, 17 February 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; George McDuffie to James Henry Hammond, 11 March 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, 316-317.

supported Pinckney's moderate resolutions, while the remaining Nullifiers sided with Hammond. Unionist newspapers, including *The Greenville Mountaineer*, *The Camden Journal*, and *The Charleston Courier*, reported Pinckney's actions with nuance and sympathy. Camden editor John West declared the resolutions a "conclusive appeal to the heart and head of every patriot," and a Charleston writer calling himself *Unionist* hailed them as a "patriotic triumph." Aaron Willington viewed Pinckney's plan as the only practical solution. The "whole controversy," he observed, revolved around "whether to reject the petition, or to reject the prayer of the petition." In practice, these tactics were identical, and Pinckney had "wisely and patriotically…preferred gaining the practical point, to losing the theoretical one."[42]

Some Nullifiers feared that Pinckney's "defection" would revive the partisan battles of the early 1830s. A Georgia writer warned Hammond that Union men would "use [Pinckney] hereafter to divide the party," and state senator Angus Patterson agreed that the "Union party would sustain him" in order to rise to power. Obsessed with forging a militant proslavery consensus, these Nullifiers viewed the smallest dissent as a signal of disloyalty and division. An upcountry doctor predicted slaveholders would never have peace, because there were "too many amongst ourselves who strengthen the cause of abolitionism, not directly, but indirectly, by their lukewarmness." Columbia editor Edward Johnston believed "Unionists [were] sure to desert us—when it came to the practice, instead of declarations—on the slave questions." Union men,

[42] *The Charleston* Courier, 19 February 1836 and 23 September 1836; The *Camden Journal*, 11 June 1836. West had reprinted the article from the Washington *Globe*. In February 1836, Columbia editor Edward Johnston informed Hammond that *The Charleston Mercury*, *Winyaw Intelligencer*, *The Columbia Times*, and *The Pendleton Messenger* (all Nullifier papers) "will take ground warmly with us," while *The Southern Patriot*, *The Greenville Mountaineer*, *The Camden Journal*, *The Columbia Hive*, and *The Charleston Courier* (all Union Party papers) were "Against us." See Edward W. Johnston to James Henry Hammond, 20 February 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.

he explained, were "timid," "temporizing," and "incapable of manly and resolute views," and they would "easily [be] misled by Abolitionism."[43]

A few Union men tried to revive their party in the summer of 1836, revealing that the tensions and labels of the nullification crisis still carried some weight. In August, party leaders James Petigru, Alfred Huger, Joseph Johnson, and James Pringle met in Charleston to choose a candidate for the fall's Congressional election. After a long debate, they decided on Hugh S. Legaré, who had spent the past four years as Minister to Belgium. Legaré's long absence had sheltered him from the state's partisan battles, and he had largely avoided "angry collisions with his enemies." At the same time, he was "ardently attached to the Union" and "zealous to defend the Institutions of the State." The following month, forty of the city's most prominent Union men published a call for a party meeting at City Hall, where they formally nominated Legaré for Congress.[44]

Petigru spearheaded the campaign, pledging to "write and battle, and bustle, and do all things." The city's Unionist editors quickly reentered the fray. The "Union Banner is once more unfurled," Aaron Willington declared, and he would faithfully take his place beneath its folds. The flag, he explained, symbolized Union and Liberty—"proclaim[ing] the glory of our nation" and the principles of their party. If voters rallied around it and remained united, they were sure to achieve victory. The editor evoked the memory of nullification to will the party back together. "Let all divisions in our ranks now cease," he pleaded, and "let us, still alive to the sacred

[43] J. B. Lamar to James Henry Hammond, 27 February 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; John Knox to James Henry Hammond, 24 March 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC; Edward W. Johnston to James Henry Hammond, 28 February 1836.

[44] Alfred Huger to Joel R. Poinsett, 27 August 1836, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; *The Charleston Courier*, 23 September 1836, 26 September 1836. Several other Union men attended the private meeting in August 1836, but they ultimately voted against Legaré's candidacy.

associations which knitted our very hearts together in the by-gone season of common peril, rally as a band of brothers under the time honored flag."[45]

Charleston editor Jacob Cardozo insisted that Union men could never vote for Pinckney. The former Nullifier, he explained, had persecuted the Union Party and worked to tear the country apart. Even as Pinckney asked for Union men's support, he disavowed their principles and refused to repent. Alfred Huger agreed, observing that Pinckney had betrayed first his country and then his party. Despite his actions in Congress, Pinckney had "not given up his ground as a Nullifier," and Union men could not afford to trust him. The party's voters needed to rally now or risk their own destruction. If they failed to field a candidate, he warned, "our people would go over to Pinckney and never return." Poinsett shared these sentiments, urging Union men to stand together in the fall campaign. If the party collapsed, he feared, their "scattered force will only strengthen the nullifiers."[46]

Despite these passionate appeals, the election of 1836 signaled the death of nullification-era partisanship. In the early 1830s, Charleston's Union Party meetings routinely drew more than a thousand people. In September 1836, only 193 men turned out, and many of them opposed their party's course. When the meeting began, attorney Benjamin Pepoon urged the crowd *not* to nominate a candidate, igniting a long debate about the party's future. James Petigru and Alfred Huger opposed Pepoon's resolution, and the meeting ultimately tabled it by a vote of 108 to 85. Enthusiastic editors insisted that a "considerable majority" of Union men supported Legaré's nomination. Less charitable observers, however, mocked the proceedings and refused to accept

[45] Joel R. Poinsett to James Campbell, 25 August 1836, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; *The Charleston Courier*, 26 September 1836.
[46] *The Southern Patriot*, 19 September 1836, 24 September 1836, and 30 September 1836; Alfred Huger to Joel R. Poinsett, 27 August 1836, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP; Joel R. Poinsett to James Campbell, 10 September 1836, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP.

the "party's" decision. As one former Union man observed, there "now exists no political party at all in Charleston," and every voter was free to follow the "dictates of his conscience."[47]

Even many who supported Legaré hoped the election would not "turn on party feeling." Poinsett observed that "Carolina demands repose from political strife," and another writer prayed that "Party heat" would never again endanger the city. A writer calling himself *A lover of peace* urged Union men not to support Legaré. The past two years, he explained, had obliterated the "old party distinctions" and "banish[ed] discord from the domestic altar." Union men had defeated nullification and resolved the test oath controversy, and the "great principles" that united their party—"the preservation of the Union and resistance to domestic oppression"—no longer called them into battle. Instead, he argued, Union men should rally around Pinckney, who had faithfully served the city and boldly vindicated southern rights. He insisted that the gag rule was a signal triumph for the South, protecting slavery more forcefully and conclusively than any Congress ever had. Legaré's nomination could only "reawaken the warfare of party." Pinckney's reelection, however, would foil Nullifiers' "scheme of agitation" and demonstrate South Carolina's unity and resolve.[48]

While the dwindling Union Party debated its course, Nullifiers also found themselves drifting and divided. Columbia editor Edward Johnston complained that his city had "lost its lead in the movements of the State." During the nullification crisis, the state capital had been a hotbed of radicalism, driving the party toward armed confrontation. Now, Johnston wrote, local leaders had lost the "means of exciting the people." The city's most "inflammable spirits" were away serving in the Seminole War, leaving "no one capable of directing things." The public inertia

[47] *The Charleston Courier*, 23 September 1836, 26 September 1836;
[48] *The Charleston Courier*, 17 September 1836, 24 September 1836; Joel R. Poinsett to the Editor of *The Georgetown Union*, 13 August 1836, Joel R. Poinsett Papers, HSP.

frustrated Johnston, who insisted it was "really necessary to alarm the people." The looming crisis over slavery, he observed, would make it "increasingly dangerous to remain as we are—without any concert throughout the state."[49]

In Charleston, however, Pinckney's gag rule left Nullifiers searching for direction. On September 20, 1836, the State Rights Party held a meeting at City Hall to select Pinckney's replacement. The Congressman, they explained, had "compromised our rights" and betrayed the city's trust, leaving South Carolinians vulnerable to antislavery agitation. The party refused to re-nominate him, instead selecting attorney Isaac E. Holmes. Crucially, however, only 170 men attended the meeting, and barely 60 percent of them supported their new candidate. In a public letter two days later, Holmes declined the nomination. The party scrambled to nominate another candidate, but he, too, turned them down.[50]

Desperate to defeat Pinckney, some Nullifiers turned to Hugh Legaré, and in early October they organized a meeting "without distinction of party." Leaders from both parties carefully choreographed the event to symbolize civic unity. Nullifier Henry Deas called Unionist Thomas Bennett to the chair, and Unionist James Petigru nominated Nullifier Edward Laurens as secretary. Together, they declared that the "two great political parties" would no longer "keep alive a spirit of hostility" or exclude their enemies from power. This "United Ticket" nominated Legaré for Congress, Poinsett for state senate, and an evenly-divided slate for the state house of representatives.[51]

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[49] Edward W. Johnston to James Henry Hammond, 20 February 1836, 9 March 1836, and 24 March 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC.
[50] *The Charleston Courier*, 23 September 1836; *The Charleston Mercury*, 22 September 1836, 24 September 1836, 27 September 1836, 1 October 1836, and 3 October 1836.
[51] *The Charleston Courier*, 10 October 1836.

Pinckney's followers responded by calling a meeting of "Independent Republican Voters." They, too, celebrated the test oath compromise and the "oblivion of party difference." They accused their opponents of reviving the "prejudice of party" and reopening the state's "fester[ing]" wounds. To illustrate their political independence, they nominated Pinckney for Congress and a mixture of Nullifiers and Union men for the state legislature. In the campaign that followed, observers struggled to make sense of the city's shifting alliances. Jacob Schirmer, a Charleston cooper, reported that "the old parties were quite amalgamated and divided into the Union & Pinckney [Parties]." Petigru informed Legaré that Nullifiers were "betting on your election," and he predicted that they would "get nearly as many nullification votes as Pinckney will take away." At the Union Party meeting in September, dozens of Nullifiers lined the galleries and expressed "joy" and relief at Legaré's nomination.[52]

About 2100 men voted in Charleston's Congressional election—down 21 percent from two years earlier. Pinckney captured 55 percent of the city's votes and (according to Petigru) polled particularly well among poor and working-class voters: the "Irish, the mechanics, and the Methodists." In the slave-dense parishes surrounding Charleston, however, Pinckney's support virtually collapsed. Two years earlier, Pinckney captured 88 out of 123 votes in the parish of St. John's Berkeley; now, only two men voted for his reelection. With the support of these coastal parishes, Legaré narrowly won the election. *Mercury* editor John Stuart praised parish voters for "do[ing] their duty nobly" and "vindicat[ing] the character of the District," but he lamented that so many city voters remained loyal to Pinckney.[53]

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[52] *The Charleston Courier*, 24 September 1836, 4 October 1836, and 10 October 1836; Jacob F. Schirmer Journal, 11 October 1836, Jacob F. Schirmer Family Journals and Registers, SCHS; James L. Petigru to Hugh S. Legaré, 6 September 1836, Pease Research Collection.

[53] *The Charleston Courier*, 15 October 1836; *The Charleston Mercury*, 15 October 1836. Rogers secured an overwhelming majority in Spartanburg. The Congressional district, however, also encompassed York, Chester, and Union Districts, where Clowney received a larger share of the vote. In 1834, Rogers had narrowly beaten Clowney

Statewide, election results confirmed the trends in Charleston. Bitter memories lingered in many districts, and some voters remained avid partisans. In Spartanburg, incumbent James Rogers (a former Union man) faced William Clowney (a former Nullifier) in a rematch of their 1834 campaign. Nearly 75 percent of district voters remained loyal to Rogers, despite—or because of—his support for Pinckney's gag rule. Spartanburg, Greenville, and Clarendon all elected full slates of Union men to the state legislature, while other districts elected only Nullifiers. In Kershaw District that August, Daniel Huger prayed for the "integrity of our party," and James Chesnut rejoiced that "our chances for [a] Representative" were steadily improving. During the nullification crisis, Kershaw had been "in the van of the party," and Huger believed Union men were still looking to its example. If the district faltered now, he warned, "confusion must follow."[54]

To a remarkable degree, however, the state's political campaigns blurred or erased the party lines of the early 1830s. Few districts held public meetings, and few candidates declared themselves *Nullifiers* or *Union men*. Five of the state's nine Congressional races went uncontested, and two others pitted former Nullifiers against each other. Even in Greenville, former Union men refused to challenge incumbent Waddy Thompson, who championed Hammond's stronger gag rule. An upcountry editor observed that the "old party organization in our State is broken up," and a northern writer marveled at the state's profound political calmness.

by a 4213-4038 vote. In 1836, however, Clowney triumphed by a few hundred votes. See *The Fayetteville Weekly Observer*, 27 October 1836.

[54] Daniel E. Huger to James Chesnut, 23 August 1836, Papers of the Williams, Chesnut, and Manning Families, SCL; James Chesnut, Sen., to James Chesnut, Jr., 5 August 1836, John Chesnut Papers, SCHS.

As a Charleston voter explained, "Nullification and Union, once watch-words" that called the parties into battle, were quickly losing their power to mobilize the people.[55]

By early 1835, weary from years of partisan strife, most South Carolinians simply wanted peace. A majority of voters accepted the test oath compromise, and most party committees and organizations quickly disbanded. South Carolinians, however, had experienced this before. In the summer of 1833, an uneasy calm had descended on the state—until Nullifiers began threatening to purge Union men from power. This time, former Nullifiers consciously avoided "renew[ing] the bitterness of party strife." In March 1836, for example, Columbia's local leaders planned a meeting to denounce Pinckney's moderate gag rule. They were careful, however, not to alienate his "Union accomplices." Although Manning and Rogers—the state's Unionist Congressmen—supported Pinckney's resolutions, the Columbia writers left them "entirely unmentioned." As a Charleston writer explained, many former Nullifiers preferred to stay "silent rather than exhibit a division on the subject." Throughout the state, they began working *with* former Union men to forge a political consensus and defend slavery and social order.[56]

For nearly a decade, radical South Carolinians had warned that northern "fanatics" would one day turn the federal government into an instrument of abolition. Those anxieties helped fuel the nullification crisis and brought the country to the brink of civil war. They failed, however, to persuade 40 percent of the state's voters, who saw the Union as the greatest guarantor of white liberty and African-American slavery. Then, at the same moment that political peace returned to

[55] *The Cheraw Republican*, 1 November 1836; *The New York Evening Post*, 4 November 1836; *The Charleston Courier*, 16 September 1836. For election results, see *The Charleston Mercury* and *The Charleston Courier* for October 1836.
[56] *The Pendleton Messenger*, 17 April 1835; Edward W. Johnston to James Henry Hammond, 9 March 1836, James Henry Hammond Papers, LOC;

South Carolina, the American Anti-Slavery Society launched its direct mail and petition campaigns. Suddenly, abolitionists seemed to reach into South Carolinians' homes and invade the halls of Congress, inspiring slaves to "cut the throats of defenceless women and children." These events appeared to confirm Nullifiers' warnings, and they helped unify the state as nullification never could. By August 1835, Union men like Aaron Willington were prepared to "root [the Union] from our hearts and…tear down its pillars, though moistening its fragments with tears of blood."[57]

As antislavery tracts poured into South Carolina's post offices, John C. Calhoun boldly declared that "Unionism is extinct in our state." National sentiment was far from dead, and many South Carolinians remained conditional Unionists well into the antebellum era. During the sectional crises of the 1840s and 1850s, some state leaders worked to harness federal power to preserve and expand slavery's reach. As an organized political movement, however, Unionism would never fully recover in South Carolina. After 1835, it was always more fragile, more contested, and more conditional, and every crisis found fewer men willing to defend it. By 1860, as South Carolina prepared the tear the Union apart, Benjamin Perry and James Petigru stood virtually alone in resisting secession and praying that the "great and glorious Union" would endure.[58]

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[57] *The Greenville Mountaineer*, 22 August 1835; *The Charleston Courier*, 12 August 1835.

[58] John C. Calhoun to James Edward Calhoun, 23 September 1835, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun: Volume 12: 1833-1835*, ed. Clyde N. Wilson (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1979); *The Anderson Intelligencer*, 18 October 1860. On South Carolina in the later antebellum era, see Robert Barnwell, *Love of Order: South Carolina's First Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Steven A. Channing, *Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970); Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism*; McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*; Harold S. Schultz, *Nationalism and Sectionalism in South Carolina, 1852-1860* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1950).

Epilogue

The election of Abraham Lincoln in November 1860 provoked outrage across the South. Lincoln was a Republican committed to "free soil, free labor, and free men," and many southerners viewed his election as an assault on slavery and white supremacy. In response, on December 20, 1860, a state convention in Charleston voted to dissolve the Union and declare South Carolina's independence. Throughout the city, one witness observed, "loud shouts of joy rent the air." Church bells tolled and cannons roared, and men and women flooded the street in celebration. Bonfires burned through the night, and firecrackers and rockets lit up the sky. Civic leaders raised the state's Palmetto flag, and merchants hung bales of cotton above the streets, inscribed with the words "THE WORLD WANTS IT." In the days ahead, thousands rushed to volunteer for their new nation, flush with optimism and certain of victory. By all accounts, South Carolinians were "almost unanimous" in their support for independence, and the state convention ratified the Ordinance of Secession by a vote of 169 to 0.[1]

Mississippi followed three weeks later, and by February 1861, seven slaveholding states had withdrawn from the Union and organized a new southern Confederacy. A tense stalemate stretched into early spring, as Confederates consolidated their strength and Unionists in both sections struggled to craft a compromise. Then, on April 12, Confederate artillery in Charleston Harbor opened fire on the Union garrison at Fort Sumter. Three days later, Lincoln called for 75,000 soldiers to "suppress insurrection," prompting four additional states to secede. The Civil

[1] *The Charleston Mercury*, 21 December 1860; David Detzer, *Allegiance: Fort Sumter, Charleston, and the Beginning of the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, Inc. 2001), 90-91. See also Lawrence T. McDonnell, *Performing Disunion: The Coming of the Civil War in Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018) and Steven A. Channing, *A Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

War that followed lasted four years, cost roughly 750,000 American lives, and ultimately led to slavery's destruction.[2]

As Americans navigated the secession winter of 1860-61, many looked to the nullification crisis for guidance. In a culture steeped in historical memory, the patriotism of Andrew Jackson, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster provided powerful reference points. As a Maryland orator explained, these men's "deep seated love of country" had saved the Union a generation earlier and "pointed out a path to their successors." Illinois Governor Richard Yates agreed, echoing their belief that America's freedom depended on a "perpetual, unbroken Union." As the secession crisis deepened, an Oregon editor mourned that "[w]e have no Clay or Webster or Gen. Jackson now." The "great statesmen of the last age," he observed, had staved off disunion again and again. Now, no one remained who could "mount the whirlwind and direct the storm." Unionists invoked Clay's spirit of compromise and Webster's lyrical devotion to the Union. Editors and politicians endlessly quoted Webster's second reply to Hayne, proclaiming, "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."[3]

As historian Russell McClintock observes, however, Andrew Jackson became "far and away the most ubiquitous historical reference" during the secession crisis. The Nullification Proclamation appeared in dozens of newspapers, and countless men and women repeated Jackson's defiant toast: "Our Federal Union—It must be preserved." Illinois' out-going

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[2] "Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union," *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, Yale Law School, available from http://www.avalon.law.yale.edu; J. David Hacker, "A Census-Based Count of the Civil War Dead," *Civil War History* 57, no. 4 (December 2011), 307-348. For an account of the secession winter and the thwarted efforts at compromise, see Russell McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Daniel W. Crofts, *Lincoln and the Politics of Slavery: The Other Thirteenth Amendment and the Struggle to Save the Union* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

[3] *The Cecil Whig*, 19 January 1861; *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 15 January 1861; *The Oregon Statesman*, 14 January 1861 and 18 March 1861.

Governor John Wood included the phrase in his annual message, and Massachusetts Governor John Andrew used it to end his inaugural address. On January 8, the anniversary of Jackson's victory in the Battle of New Orleans, northern towns celebrated his memory with public dinners and rallies. John Andrew ordered every town in Massachusetts to fire a 100-gun salute, and Pennsylvania legislators marked the day by reading the Nullification Proclamation. A New York editor prayed the entire country would treat "St. Hickory's Day" as a "general fête." A single day devoted to Jackson's principles, he explained, "would do more to revive the spirit of patriotism and Union than a century of compromises."[4]

Many Unionists hoped—in vain—that President James Buchanan would follow Jackson's example and quell the incipient rebellion. General-in-Chief Winfield Scott, who had commanded the federal garrison in Charleston in the winter of 1832-33, urged the president to reinforce the country's southern forts. The Virginia-born general celebrated Jackson's decisive stand against treason, hoping to overawe secessionists and avoid civil war. Another southern Unionist prayed Buchanan would take a "Jacksonian position," and a Pennsylvania writer wishfully praised the president's "Jacksonian spirit." Buchanan's indecision, however, frustrated many observers, who sighed longingly "for an hour of Old Hickory." If Jackson was president, a Tennessee Unionist observed, "this glorious Union of ours would still be intact." An Ohio editor agreed, insisting that an hour of Jackson's "manhood, force and nerve" would instantly restore the fractured country. While Buchanan cowered in the White House, Jackson would *act*—

[4] McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War*, 127; *The Cecil Whig*, 19 January 1861; *Evansville Daily Journal*, 7 January 1861; *The Evening Star*, 9 January 1861; *The New York Times*, 8 January 1861; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of the Session Begun at Harrisburg on the First Day of January, A.D. 1861* (Harrisburg: A. Boyd Hamilton, 1861), 56.

summoning "to the country's aid the courage of her sons, and call[ing] upon THE PEOPLE OF THE UNION North and South" to unite against treason.[5]

Many northerners expressed confidence in Lincoln, hoping he would "prove a second Jackson." A Pennsylvania writer trusted that, "Like Jackson," the new president would "prove himself equal to the emergency" and craft a new Nullification Proclamation. A Wisconsin legislator called him "another Jackson"—a man committed to preserving the Union and punishing the nation's enemies. Francis P. Blair, who had served as one of Andrew Jackson's advisors, hoped Lincoln would issue an "eloquent appeal…like that of Genl Jackson in the crisis of 1832." Postmaster General Montgomery Blair (Francis's son) insisted that "rebellion was checked in 1833 by the promptitude of the President," and he urged Lincoln to reinforce the Charleston garrison just as Jackson had a generation earlier. As Lincoln crafted his first inaugural address, he drew upon four documents: the Constitution, Clay's 1850 plea for compromise, Webster's second reply to Hayne, and Jackson's Nullification Proclamation.[6]

In many ways, of course, the nullification and secession crises were fundamentally different. Jackson was a southern planter who championed proslavery Unionism and helped forge the national Democratic Party. Most southerners trusted him to defend slavery and southern rights, and they feared that nullification would lead to anarchy. In 1832-33, no other state joined South Carolina, leaving Nullifiers to confront the federal government alone. Lincoln, however, led an essentially sectional party committed to stopping the spread of slavery.

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[5] Winfield Scott to William C. Preston, 14 December 1832, in *The Nullification Era: A Documentary Era*, ed. William W. Freehling (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), 175-177; *The Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, 23 November 1860; *The Daily Evening Express*, 9 January 1861; McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War*, 127; *The Wyandot Pioneer*, 3 January 1861; *The Republican Banner*, 27 February 1861.

[6] *The Cleveland Daily Leader*, 12 January 1861; *The Centre Democrat*, 13 December 1860; *The Wisconsin State Journal*, 5 March 1861; Francis P Blair, Sr., to Montgomery Blair, 12 March 1861, Blair Family Papers, Library of Congress; Montgomery Blair to Abraham Lincoln, 15 March 1861, Abraham Lincoln Papers, LOC.

Although Lincoln disavowed immediate abolition, many southerners viewed all Republicans as antislavery fanatics. The Rev. James C. Furman, for example, warned Greenville voters that Republicans would make their slaves "the equal of every one of you." He insisted that Lincoln would abolish slavery and send "Abolition preachers…to consummate the marriage of your daughters to black husbands!" These racial and gendered appeals proved highly effective. Lincoln won only two southern counties, and ten states excluded him from the ballot altogether. For many southerners, his election proved that slavery was no longer secure within the Union—that "safety, honor and political libert[y]" demanded "a separation of the South from the North."[7]

Many South Carolinians viewed secession as the culmination of a thirty-year crusade for freedom. Since the nullification winter, one editor remarked, they had "looked forward to the present day…preparing for the storm that has burst upon us." Convention delegate John Middleton believed it was unnecessary even to debate the state's course. South Carolinians, he explained, had been "debating this matter for the last thirty years, and…at last arrived at a true and final decision." After a generation of "agitation, and compromise, and submission," Robert Barnwell Rhett rejoiced, South Carolinians were finally ready to dissolve the Union. As they approached the precipice, secessionists drew inspiration from the nullification crisis, which many remembered as a triumph over federal tyranny. History, one writer explained, vindicated the state's struggle and proved that Jackson had backed down. Camden editor Thomas Warren agreed, observing that "even General Jackson, tyrant as he was, dared not" defy South Carolina.[8]

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[7] Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001); *The Southern Enterprise*, 22 November 1860; *The Charleston Mercury*, 12 September 1860. See also Lauren N. Haumesser, "Party of Patriarchy: Democratic Gender Politics and the Coming of the Civil War" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2018).

[8] *The Yorkville Enquirer*, 20 December 1860, 10 January 1861, and 5 December 1861; *The Camden Journal*, 30 April 1861; *The Charleston Mercury*, 23 October 1860; *The Charleston Courier*, 15 December 1860. Robert Barnwell Smith changed his surname to Rhett in 1837.

As radicals mobilized support for secession, the symbols of the nullification crisis became powerful rallying points. Men sported blue cockades, and women displayed their old homespun dresses as sacred "relic[s] of the past." At a military parade in Charleston, cadets proudly unfurled a "State Rights Resistance Flag of 1832." The banner had once belonged to a battalion in Hayne's volunteer force, and it depicted a soldier and cannon sheltered beneath a Palmetto tree. After twenty-eight years, one writer observed, its "tattered folds…again waved in triumph" over the streets of Charleston. A week later, another fading flag appeared over a Charleston printing office, and the "nullification flag of 1832" began flying over the Citadel. Veterans of Hayne's army volunteered in the state's new home guard units, and seven men who had served in the nullification convention signed the Ordinance of Secession. With the Union dissolved, Charleston's artillery companies fired a triumphant salute, using powder saved from the "stirring times of Nullification."[9]

As secessionists understood, the political calculus had shifted dramatically in the past thirty years. A lowcountry writer rejoiced that South Carolina would become, "as in the days of nullification, an armed camp, only this time we will be almost unanimous." A generation earlier, one editor observed, Nullifiers had challenged the federal government with only a "bare majority" of the population behind them. If the state refused to "recede in 1832," he asked, then "how much less will she do it now, when her people are united to a man?" During the nullification crisis, South Carolinians were "divided amongst themselves, and not a solitary

[9] *The Yorkville Enquirer*, 21 March 1861; *The Charleston Mercury*, 12 November 1860 and 20 November 1860; *The Athens Post*, 23 November 1860; Walther, *The Fire Eaters*, 158; *The Lancaster News*, 31 October 1860; *The Charleston Courier*, 2 May 1861.

Southern State" defended them. Now, "her people act as one man, and four or five States stand ready to…share her fate."[10]

Thirty years earlier, partisan divisions threatened to tear the state apart. Nullifiers stormed to power by channeling voters' anger and anxiety into an organized political movement. They framed the tariff of abominations as a threat to slavery and white supremacy and called upon voters to defend their freedom "at the threshold." These arguments, however, failed to persuade 40 percent of South Carolinians, who saw the Union as the "world's last hope"—the only safeguard against social and political chaos. Slowly, often reluctantly, they organized a party of their own to resist southern radicalism. From 1830 to 1834, Nullifiers and Union men vied for power across the state, struggling to decide the "destiny of free government."[11]

In 1835, however, partisan compromise coupled with antislavery agitation substantially altered South Carolinian politics. Union men and Nullifiers worked together to denounce the AASS, demand a Congressional gag rule, serve in repressive Vigilance Associations, and lynch dissenters and "fanatics." Even after 1835, the road to disunion was neither clear nor direct. Many South Carolinians remained conditional Unionists and worked fiercely to hold the country together on their terms. The debates over the direct-mail and petition campaigns, however, provided a road map for radicalism. South Carolinians condemned *all* northerners as abolitionists, demanded—and enforced—southern unity, and called upon men to defend the racial and gender hierarchy at the heart of their world.[12]

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[10] *The Yorkville Enquirer*, 20 December 1860 and 10 January 1861; *The Charleston Courier*, 15 December 1860; John S. Palmer to James J. Palmer, 16 November 1860, in *A World Turned Upside Down*.

[11] *The Debate in the South Carolina Legislature in December 1,*830, 100-110; *The Columbia Hive*, 28 April 1832.

[12] See Freehling, *The Road to Disunion, Vol. I*. In June 1857, Francis Pickens explained, "We have the Executive [James Buchanan] with us, and the Senate & in all probability the H.R. too. Besides we have repealed the Missouri line & the Supreme Court…has declared it, & all kindred measures on the part of the Federal Govt. unconstitutional null & void. So, that before our enemies can reach us, they must first break down the Supreme court—change the Senate & seize the Executive & by an open appeal to Revolution, restore the Missouri line, repeal the Fugitive slave

By the fall of 1860, only a handful of South Carolinians dared to publicly defend the Union. Speaking in Anderson that October, Benjamin Perry confessed that he was "still a Union man," and even Lincoln's election could not alter his convictions. The Constitution, he explained, still protected slavery, and Republicans' policy of non-extension "really amounts to nothing," since there was "no territory at present where slavery can be carried." Secession, however, would provoke "revolution and civil war, and endanger our property, our liberty, and Independence." If civil war erupted, he warned, nothing could stop a northern army from landing in the South Carolina lowcountry and "proclaiming freedom to the slaves who shall flock to their standard." Federal forces would "carry off" thousands of slaves and incite rebellion among those who remained.[13]

A few other South Carolinians resisted secession, most of them veterans of the nullification-era Union Party. Postmaster Alfred Huger maintained "National & Federal" principles and refused to resign his office. The Union, he explained, was "made sacred by Every recollection," and he mourned that he was destined to outlive it. Judge John B. O'Neall spoke out against secession even as his neighbors threw eggs and turnips at his body. Charleston cooper Jacob Schirmer lamented the "dissolution of our glorious Union," and Judge George Bryan declared that he still saw the Union as "the greatest blessing to North and South." James Petigru supported the conservative Constitutional Union Party in 1860 and prayed that secessionists would not "make [Lincoln's] bare election a *causus belli*." He decried disunion and pleaded for South Carolinians to wait until Lincoln committed an "overt act against the Constitution." As Petigru heard the Charleston church bells tolling for secession, he remarked that radicals had "set

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law & change in fact the whole governt [sic]. As long as the Govt. is on our side I am for sustaining it, & using its power for our benefit, & placing the screws upon the throats of our opponents." Francis W. Pickens, quoted in Channing, *Crisis of Fear*, 80n.

[13] *The Anderson Intelligencer*, 18 October 1860.

a blazing torch to the temple of constitutional liberty." South Carolinians, he observed, would "have no more peace forever," and he had "seen the last happy day of [his] life."[14]

In Greenville and Spartanburg Districts, Unionist sentiment lingered in some communities. At Spartanburg Court House, a few residents defiantly denounced secession, and a rural meeting insisted the state was "acting rather hastily." A few Spartanburg residents even organized a "Union Military company" to stem the tide of radicalism. Public outrage, however, forced them to disband several days later, as they "fear[ed] being hanged." As elections for the state convention approached, Greenville moderates nominated a ticket—headlined by Benjamin Perry—opposed to immediate secession. Perry received 225 votes, and he secured a majority at a few rural polling stations. Secessionists, however, carried 85 percent of the district's vote. It was the first time Perry had ever lost an election in Greenville District. When news of secession reached him, Perry wrote mournfully to Petigru that he had "been trying for the last thirty years to save the State from the horrors of disunion. They are now all going to the devil, and I will go with them."[15]

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[14] William J. Cooper, *We Have the War Upon Us: The Onset of the Civil War, November 1860-April 1861* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 25; Alfred Huger to William Porcher Miles, 1 June 1860, William Porcher Miles Papers, SHC; Alfred Huger to Sally Baxter Hampton, 9 December 1860, Sally Baxter Hampton Papers, SCL; Lillian Adele Kibler, "Unionist Sentiment in South Carolina in 1860," *The Journal of Southern History* 4, no. 3 (August 1938), 361-362; James L. Petigru to Alfred Huger, 5 September 1860, in *Life, Letters and Speeches of James Louis Petigru*, 356; *The Daily Evening Express*, 19 March 1861; Clement Eaton, *History of the Southern Confederacy* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), 19; James Petigru, quoted in Kelly, *America's Longest Siege*. A few former Nullifiers opposed secession or counseled moderation. Senator James Henry Hammond observed that Lincoln's election was "entirely constitutional" and urged legislators to wait to secede until the new president committed an "overt act" against slavery. Lexington Nullifier Lemuel Boozer spoke out against secession in 1860, and local Minute Men threatened to "meet and hang him on the other side of the Congaree [River] if he ran for a seat in the secession convention. See Channing, *Crisis of Fear*, 247n; Charles Edward Cauthen, *South Carolina Goes to War, 1860-1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1950), 47.

[15] *The New York Tribune*, 11 December 1860; David Golightly Harris, 24 November 1860, 5 January 1861, and 9 January 1861, *Piedmont Farmer: The Journals of David Golightly Harris, 1855-1870*, ed. Philip N. Racine (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990); Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, 369; Benjamin Perry, quoted in Archie Vernon Huff, Jr., *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 135. In Horry District, another Unionist stronghold during the

In March 1861, Lincoln sent South Carolina native Stephen Hurlbut to Charleston to investigate the "actual state of feeling in this City & State." A generation earlier, Jackson had done the same thing, sending his secretary George Breathitt to uncover the "real intentions of the nullifyers." Breathitt visited Charleston's federal garrison and met with local Union Party leaders, and he discovered a city and a state divided. Hurlbut, however, found only Petigru. In the entire city, he reported, "Fort Sumter is the only spot where the U[nited] States have jurisdiction and James L. Petigru [is] the only citizen loyal to the Nation." South Carolinians had embraced secession, and a large number hoped to "precipitate collision [and] inaugurate war." Secession, he observed, was a "fixed fact," and South Carolinians had "no attachment to the Union." Every man who remained loyal to the Union thirty years earlier was now prepared to take up arms for the Confederacy. He concluded sadly that political compromise and patriotic eloquence would not avail: "There is positively nothing to appeal to—The Sentiment of National Patriotism always feeble in Carolina, has been Extinguished…"[16]

nullification crisis, 1074 men voted for the secession ticket and only 28 men voted against it. *The Charleston Courier*, 10 December 1860.

[16] Andrew Jackson to Joel R. Poinsett, 7 November 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LOC; Stephen A. Hurlbut to Abraham Lincoln, 27 March 1861, Abraham Lincoln Papers, LOC. Stephen Hurlbut's father Martin Luther Hurlbut was a staunch Union man during the nullification crisis. He published a pamphlet refuting the radical doctrine and wrote to James Madison asking him to clarify the constitutional questions involved in the crisis. See Jeffrey Norman Lash, *A Politician Turned General: The Civil War Career of Stephen Augustus Hurlbut* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2003), 9-10.

Appendix 1: Slavery in South Carolina, 1830

District	Percentage of African Americans in Population	Percentage of Slaveholding Households	Percentage of Planter Households
Abbeville	47%	58%	6%
Anderson	26%	32%	2%
Barnwell	46%	45%	6%
Beaufort	85%	68%	32%
Charleston	74%	91%	14%
Chester	42%	50%	4%
Chesterfield	37%	34%	3%
Colleton	80%	59%	22%
Darlington	51%	46%	7%
Edgefield	51%	55%	8%
Fairfield	55%	58%	10%
Georgetown	90%	71%	32%
Greenville	30%	36%	3%
Horry	33%	35%	3%
Kershaw	63%	50%	10%
Lancaster	41%	47%	4%
Laurens	35%	52%	3%
Marion	35%	42%	3%
Marlboro	51%	45%	9%
Newberry	49%	61%	6%
Orangeburg	59%	65%	12%
Pickens	20%	22%	2%
Richland	65%	59%	10%
Spartanburg	23%	29%	1%
Sumter	68%	58%	15%
Union	41%	45%	5%
Williamsburg	69%	56%	19%
York	37%	51%	2%

Note:
"Planter Household" is here defined as a household with 20 or more slaves.

Sources:
Percentage of African Americans drawn from William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 365-367
Percentage of Slaveholding and Planter Households drawn from 1830 United States Census. Author's calculations.

Appendix 2: Charleston Municipal Elections, 1827-1834

Table 1: Charleston Municipal Election, September 1827

Candidate	**Votes**	**Percentage**
John Gadsden	655	70%
N.G. Cleary	281	30%
Total	936	

Table 2: Charleston Municipal Election, September 1828

Candidate	**Votes**	**Percentage**
John Gadsden	616	100%
(unopposed)		
Total	616	

Table 3: Charleston Municipal Election, September 1829

Candidates	**Party/Faction**	**Votes**	**Percentage**
Henry L. Pinckney	Radical	560	53%
Thomas Grimké	Moderate	487	47%
Total		1047	

Table 4: Charleston Municipal Election, September 1830

Candidates	**Party**	**Votes**	**Percentage**
James Pringle	Union	838	53%
Henry L. Pinckney	State Rights	754	47%
Total		1592	

Table 5: Charleston Municipal Election, September 1831

Candidates	**Party**	**Votes**	**Percentage**
Henry L. Pinckney	State Rights	1040	53%
James Pringle	Union	932	47%
Total		1972	

Table 6: Charleston Municipal Election, September 1832

Candidates	**Party**	**Votes**	**Percentage**
Henry L. Pinckney	State Rights	1112	54%
Henry A. DeSaussure	Union	950	46%
Total		2062	

Table 7: Charleston Municipal Election, September 1833

Candidates	**Party**	**Votes**	**Percentage**
Edward W. North	State Rights	1221	100%
(no opposition)			
Total		1221	

Table 8: Charleston Municipal Election, September 1834

Candidates	**Party**	**Votes**	**Percentage**
Edward W. North	State Rights	1491	100%
(no opposition)			
Total		1491	

Sources: *The Charleston Mercury*, 4 September 1827; *The Charleston Courier*, 2 September 1828; *The Charleston Courier*, 8 September 1829; *The Charleston Courier*, 7 September 1830; *The Charleston Courier*, 7 September 1831; *The Charleston Courier*, 5 September 1832; *The Charleston Courier*, 4 September 1833; *The Charleston Courier*, 3 September 1834

Appendix 3: Election of 1832

Table 1: Election Results by District

District	Nullifier Votes	Nullifier Percentage	Union Party Votes	Union Party Percentage	Estimated Turnout
Abbeville	1666	64%	946	36%	78%
Barnwell	1101	65%	595	35%	76%
Beaufort	619	86%	99	14%	50%
Charleston	2030	55%	1669	45%	69%
Chester	1096	59%	757	41%	82%
Chesterfield	343	38%	559	62%	77%
Colleton	433	67%	212	33%	51%
Darlington	497	43%	666	57%	66%
Edgefield	1630	73%	610	27%	71%
Fairfield	1202	92%	103	8%	58%
Georgetown	348	61%	221	39%	104%
Greenville	500	28%	1293	72%	76%
Horry	58	14%	363	86%	57%
Kershaw	341	36%	603	64%	132%
Lancaster	439	41%	632	59%	77%
Laurens	1482	60%	985	40%	90%
Lexington	624	100%	0	0%	56%
Marion	772	61%	500	39%	82%
Marlboro	271	100%	0	0%	29%
Newberry	1156	89%	137	11%	62%
Orangeburg	864	86%	145	14%	61%
Pendleton	2490	66%	1255	34%	75%
Richland	783	75%	259	25%	76%
Spartanburg	831	31%	1893	69%	79%
Sumter	983	56%	776	44%	84%
Union	1352	72%	523	28%	82%
Williamsburg	283	50%	283	50%	88%
York	1116	51%	1082	49%	87%
Total	25,310	60%	17,166	40%	74%

Table 2: Lowcountry Parish Election Results

District/Parish	Nullifier Votes	Nullifier Percentage	Union Party Votes	Union Party Percentage
Beaufort District				
Prince William's	160	100%	0	0%
St. Helena	120	76%	38	24%
St. Luke's	161	73%	61	27%
St. Peter's	178	100%	0	0%
Charleston District				
Christ Church	50	40%	75	60%
St. Andrew's	50	100%	0	0%
St. James, Goose Creek	114	39%	177	61%
St. James, Santee	61	79%	16	21%
St. John's, Berkeley	139	67%	69	33%
St. John's, Colleton	71	100%	0	0%
St. Philip's and St. Michael's	1448	52%	1316	48%
St. Stephen's	60	100%	0	0%
St. Thomas and St. Dennis	37	70%	16	30%
Colleton				
St. Bartholomew's	227	100%	0	0%
St. George, Dorchester	88	29%	212	71%
St. Paul's	118	100%	0	0%
Georgetown District				
All Saints	162	83%	34	17%
Prince George Winyaw	186	50%	187	50%
Orangeburg District				
Orange	578	83%	115	17%

St. Matthew's	286	91%	30	9%
Sumter District				
Claremont	728	63%	436	37%
Clarendon	255	43%	340	57%

Sources: 1830 United States Census; Issues of *The Charleston Mercury*, *The Charleston Courier*, and *The Greenville Mountaineer* for October 1832.

Methodology: The author used data from the 1830 census to compile a spreadsheet listing all the men in each census age category in each district. He calculated the total number of voters by adding up all the men in the "20 to 29," "30 to 39," "40 to 49," "50 to 59," "60 to 69," "70 to 79," "80 to 89," "90 to 99," and "Over 100" categories and pro-rating the "15 to 19" category to estimate the number of boys who had turned 21 by election day. The author estimated that 20% of the boys in the "15 to 19" category in 1830 had turned 21 by October 1832.
Contemporary editors often calculated a district's party strength by listing the candidate with the highest number of voters from each party. Although this method is inexact, it represents the closest possible approximation for most districts, and the author has therefore adopted it, as well.

Appendix 4: Election of 1834

Table 1: Election Results by District

District	Nullifier Votes	Nullifier Percentage	Union Party Votes	Union Party Percentage	Estimated Turnout
Abbeville	1354	57%	1033	43%	65%
Barnwell	1001	64%	565	36%	63%
Beaufort	647	88%	92	12%	46%
Charleston	1744	53%	1544	47%	57%
Chester	1001	58%	739	42%	70%
Chesterfield	148	27%	406	73%	43%
Colleton	375	59%	261	41%	46%
Darlington	441	42%	611	58%	65%
Edgefield	1563	90%	172	10%	50%
Fairfield	--	--	--	--	--
Georgetown	304	54%	260	46%	97%
Greenville	419	22%	1509	78%	74%
Horry	31	8%	363	92%	49%
Kershaw	143	30%	338	70%	53%
Lancaster	261	31%	579	69%	55%
Laurens	1365	61%	861	39%	74%
Lexington	421	52%	391	48%	65%
Marion	689	63%	410	37%	65%
Marlboro	495	96%	22	4%	52%
Newberry	1001	100%	0	0%	44%
Orangeburg	--	--	--	--	--
Pendleton	2506	65%	1346	35%	70%
Richland	718	75%	244	25%	63%
Spartanburg	840	31%	1875	69%	72%
Sumter	787	54%	675	26%	64%
Union	1152	68%	538	32%	67%
Williamsburg	310	49%	318	51%	90%
York	1039	49%	1067	51%	76%
Incomplete Parish Returns*	406	84%	78	16%	484
Total	21,161	56%	16,297	44%	63%

Note: Election results unavailable or incomplete for Fairfield and Orangeburg Districts
*Parish returns from Orange Parish in Orangeburg District

Table 2: Lowcountry Parish Election Results

District/Parish	Nullifier Votes	Nullifier Percentage	Union Party Votes	Union Party Percentage
Beaufort District				
Prince William's	192	100%	0	0%
St. Helena	119	66%	60	34%
St. Luke's	143	82%	32	18%
St. Peter's	193	100%	0	0%
Charleston District				
Christ Church	40	37%	67	63%
St. Andrew's	--	--	--	--
St. James, Goose Creek	52	29%	126	71%
St. James, Santee	20	100%	0	0%
St. John's, Berkeley	88	72%	35	28%
St. John's, Colleton	50	100%	0	0%
St. Philip's and St. Michael's	1397	52%	1280	48%
St. Stephen's	48	65%	26	35%
St. Thomas and St. Dennis	49	83%	10	17%
Colleton				
St. Bartholomew's	369	73%	138	27%
St. George, Dorchester	6	5%	123	95%
St. Paul's	--	--	--	--
Georgetown District				
All Saints	94	76%	30	24%
Prince George Winyaw	210	48%	230	52%
Orangeburg District				
Orange	406	84%	78	16%

St. Matthew's	--	--	--	--
Sumter District				
Claremont	532	61%	335	39%
Clarendon	255	43%	340	57%

Sources: 1830 United States Census; Issues of *The Charleston Mercury*, *The Charleston Courier*, and *The Greenville Mountaineer* for October 1834.

Methodology: The author used data from the 1830 census to compile a spreadsheet listing all the men in each census age category in each district. He calculated the total number of voters by adding up all the men in the "20 to 29," "30 to 39," "40 to 49," "50 to 59," "60 to 69," "70 to 79," "80 to 89," "90 to 99," and "Over 100" categories and pro-rating the "15 to 19" category to estimate the number of boys who had turned 21 by election day. The author estimated that 60% of the boys in the "15 to 19" category in 1830 had turned 21 by October 1834.
Contemporary editors often calculated a district's party strength by listing the candidate with the highest number of voters from each party. Although this method is inexact, it represents the closest possible approximation for most districts, and the author has therefore adopted it, as well.

Appendix 5: Party Votes, 1832-1834

Table 1: Nullifier Votes by District, 1832-1834

District	**1832**	**1833**	**1834**
Abbeville	1666	1364	1354
Barnwell	1101	--	1001
Beaufort	619	--	647
Charleston	2030	--	1744
Chester	1096	1069	1001
Chesterfield	343	--	148
Colleton	433	--	375
Darlington	497	445	441
Edgefield	1630	1627	1563
Fairfield	1202	--	--
Georgetown	348	--	304
Greenville	500	412	419
Horry	58	28	31
Kershaw	341	--	143
Lancaster	439	--	261
Laurens	1482	--	1365
Lexington	624	--	421
Marion	772	691	689
Marlboro	271	609	495
Newberry	1156	--	1001
Orangeburg	864	--	--
Pendleton	2490	2526	2506
Richland	783	--	718
Spartanburg	831	969	840
Sumter	983	--	787
Union	1352	1338	1152
Williamsburg	283	--	310
York	1116	1138	1039

Table 2: Union Votes by District, 1832-1834

District	**1832**	**1833**	**1834**
Abbeville	946	925	1033
Barnwell	595	--	565
Beaufort	99	--	92
Charleston	1669	--	1544
Chester	757	773	739
Chesterfield	559	--	406
Colleton	212	--	261
Darlington	666	564	611
Edgefield	610	329	172
Fairfield	103	--	--
Georgetown	221	--	260
Greenville	1293	1412	1509
Horry	363	205	363
Kershaw	603	--	338
Lancaster	632	--	579
Laurens	985	--	861
Lexington	0	--	391
Marion	500	535	410
Marlboro	0	46	22
Newberry	137	--	0
Orangeburg	145	--	--
Pendleton	1255	1457	1346
Richland	259	--	244
Spartanburg	1893	1909	1875
Sumter	776	--	675
Union	523	540	538
Williamsburg	283	--	318
York	1082	1112	1067

Sources: Issues of *The Charleston Mercury*, *The Charleston Courier*, *The Greenville Mountaineer*, and *The Camden Journal* for October 1832, October 1833, and October 1834.

Appendix 6: Partisan Mobilization During the Nullification Winter

Table 1: Governor Robert Y. Hayne's "Volunteer Force"

District	Artillery	Cavalry	Infantry	Additional Volunteers	Total
Abbeville	73	102	1113		1288
Barnwell		55	870		925
Beaufort			467		467
Charleston	333		1103	114	1550
Chester		75	925		1000
Chesterfield			130		130
Colleton			400		400
Darlington			224		224
Edgefield		130	2020		2150
Fairfield	50	200	1900		2150
Georgetown		30	140		170
Greenville			120		120
Horry					0
Kershaw		65	125		190
Lancaster			64	96	160
Laurens	40	120	700		860
Lexington			440		440
Marion			144		144
Marlboro			70		70
Newberry		130	970		1100
Orangeburg	50	44	450		544
Pendleton		180	1120		1300
Richland	120	120	400		640
Spartanburg		56	630		686
Sumter		45	360	695	1100
Union		120	850	380	1350
Williamsburg			263		263
York		60	840		900
Total	666	1532	16,838	1285	20,321

Statement from Governor Robert Y. Hayne: "The exact number of volunteers organized I am not even now able distinctly to state. The incompleteness of the returns and the fact that the organization of many of the Corps was arrested by the compromise bill, puts it out of my power to be minutely accurate on this subject. My returns show upwards of 20,000 organized Volunteers, and I think the whole number, organized and unorganized, may be safely estimated at 25,000."

Table 2: Percentage of Volunteers

District	Military-Age Men	Volunteers	Percentage
Abbeville	2966	1288	43%
Barnwell	2065	925	45%
Beaufort	1211	467	39%
Charleston	4762	1550	33%
Chester	1926	1000	52%
Chesterfield	1004	130	13%
Colleton	1097	400	36%
Darlington	1279	224	18%
Edgefield	2865	2150	75%
Fairfield	1967	2150	109%
Georgetown	495	170	34%
Greenville	2028	120	6%
Horry	625	0	0%
Kershaw	846	190	22%
Lancaster	1235	160	13%
Laurens	2477	860	35%
Lexington	1011	440	44%
Marion	1342	144	11%
Marlboro	817	70	9%
Newberry	1859	1100	59%
Orangeburg	1463	544	37%
Pendleton	4300	1300	30%
Richland	1281	640	50%
Spartanburg	2991	686	23%
Sumter	1799	1100	61%
Union	2010	1350	67%
Williamsburg	542	263	48%
York	2186	900	41%
Total	50,449	20,321	40%

Methodology: The author used data from the 1830 census to compile a spreadsheet listing all the men in each census age category in each district. He calculated the total number of military-age men (18-45) by adding up all men in the “20 to 29” and “30 to 39” categories and pro-rating the “15 to 19” and “40 to 49” categories. The author estimated that 80% of the boys in the “15 to 19” category in 1830 had turned 18 by December 1832, and that 40% of the men in the “40 to 49” category in 1830 were under 46 by December 1832.

Note: Hayne’s official returns listed no volunteers from Greenville or Horry Districts. Contemporary newspapers, however, indicate that at least 120 men volunteered in Greenville.

Table 3: Union Society Membership

District	**Membership**
Abbeville	262
Barnwell	
Beaufort	
Charleston	1457
Chester	900
Chesterfield	800
Colleton	150
Darlington	
Edgefield	300
Fairfield	
Georgetown	
Greenville	1000
Horry	487
Kershaw	
Lancaster	700
Laurens	
Lexington	
Marion	450
Marlboro	
Newberry	
Orangeburg	
Pendleton	200
Richland	
Spartanburg	1500
Sumter	
Union	
Williamsburg	
York	800
Total	9006

Table 4: Percentage of Union Society Members

District	**Military-Age Men**	**Union Society Members**	**Percentage**
Abbeville	2966	262	9%
Barnwell	2065	--	--
Beaufort	1211	--	--
Charleston	4762	1457	31%
Chester	1926	900	47%
Chesterfield	1004	800	80%
Colleton	1097	150	14%
Darlington	1279	--	--
Edgefield	2865	300	10%
Fairfield	1967	--	--
Georgetown	495	--	--
Greenville	2028	1000	49%
Horry	625	487	78%
Kershaw	846	--	--
Lancaster	1235	700	57%
Laurens	2477	--	--
Lexington	1011	--	--
Marion	1342	450	34%
Marlboro	817	--	--
Newberry	1859	--	--
Orangeburg	1463	--	--
Pendleton	4300	200	5%
Richland	1281	--	--
Spartanburg	2991	1500	50%
Sumter	1799	--	--
Union	2010	--	--
Williamsburg	542	--	--
York	2186	800	37%
Total	50,449	9006	18%

Sources: "An Account of the Number of Volunteers Raised During the Nullification Crisis," Governors' Messages, SCDAH; Joel R. Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, 22 February 1833; Issues of *The Charleston Courier* and *The Greenville Mountaineer* for January and February 1833.

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