



# INSIDE THE VAULT

South Carolina Ordinance of Secession  
with Professor Charles Dew

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022

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THE  
GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE  
*of*  
AMERICAN HISTORY

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# How to Participate



- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature.
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.

## For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.





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# Charles Dew

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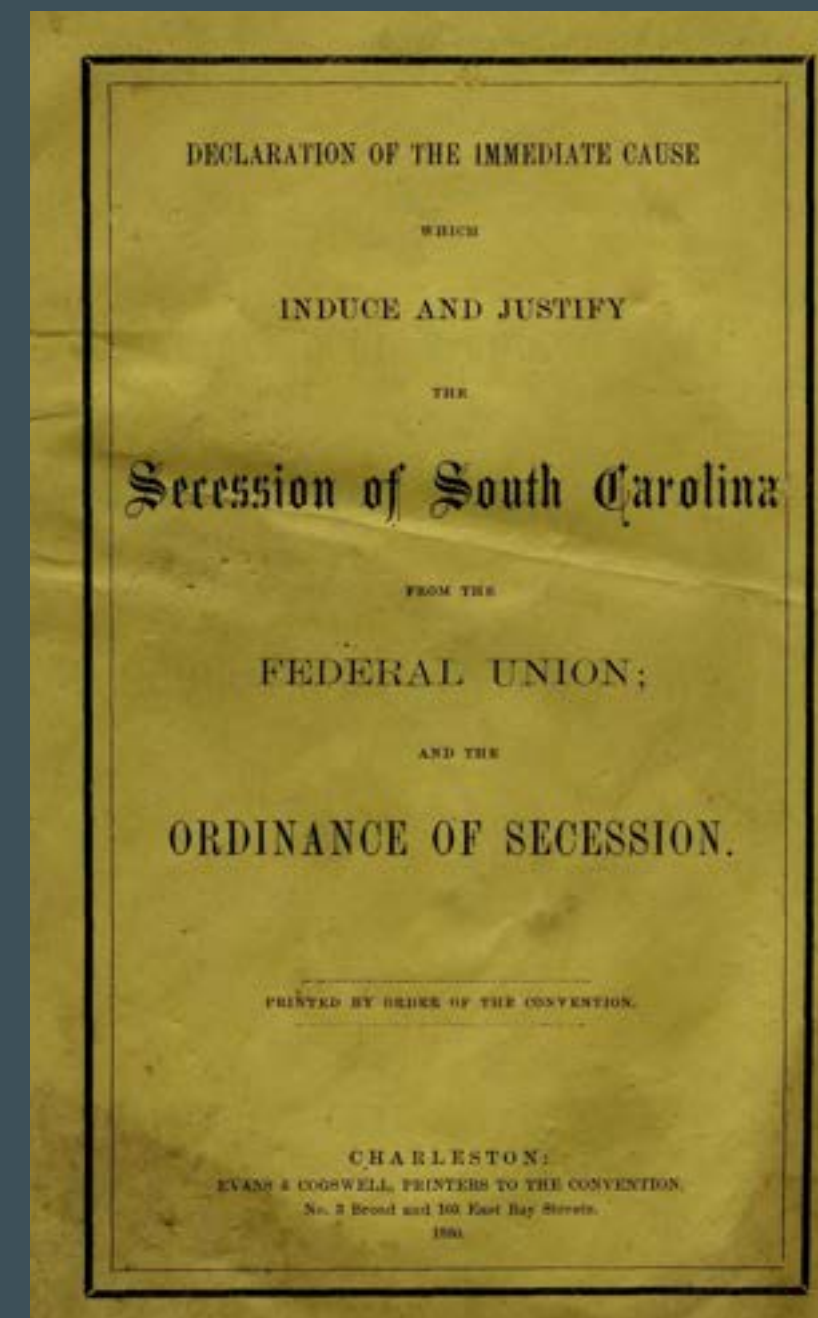
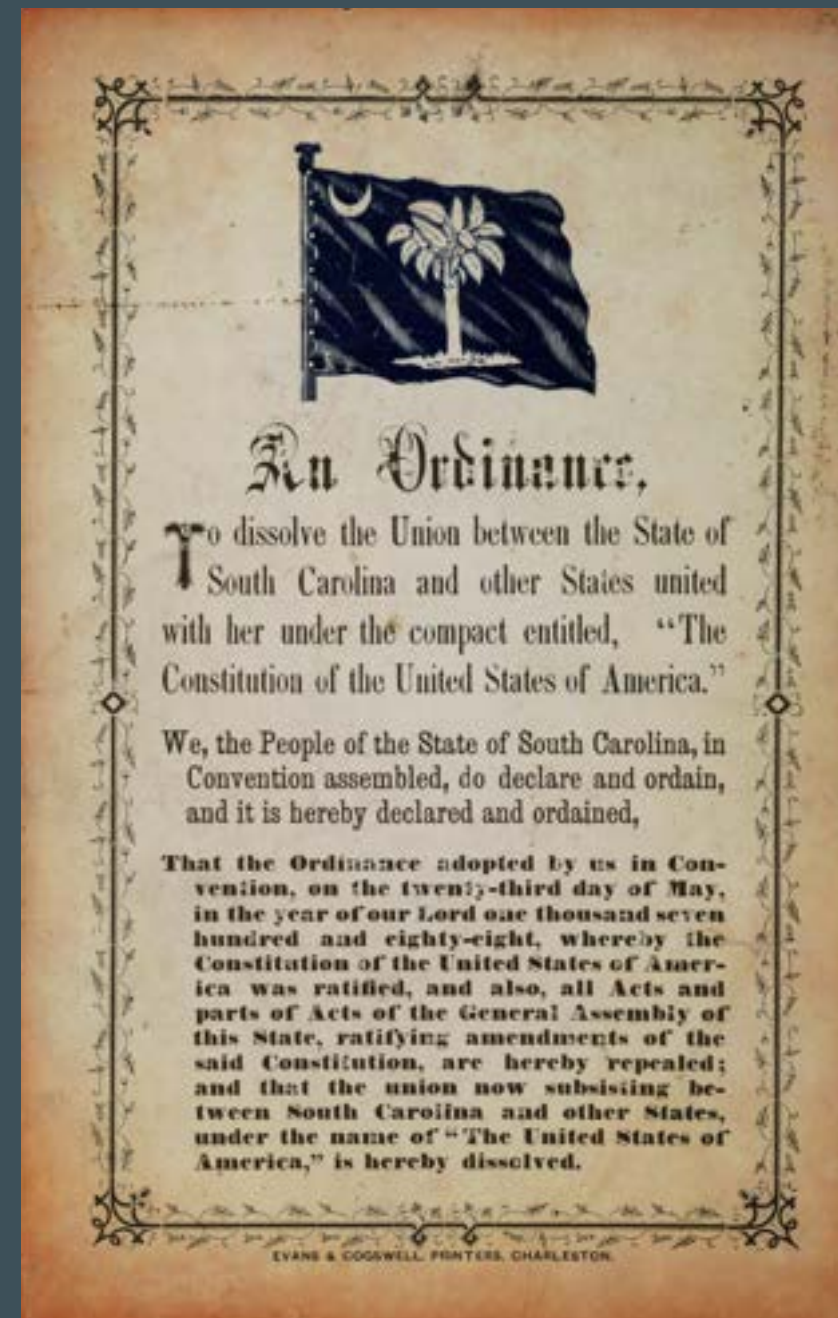
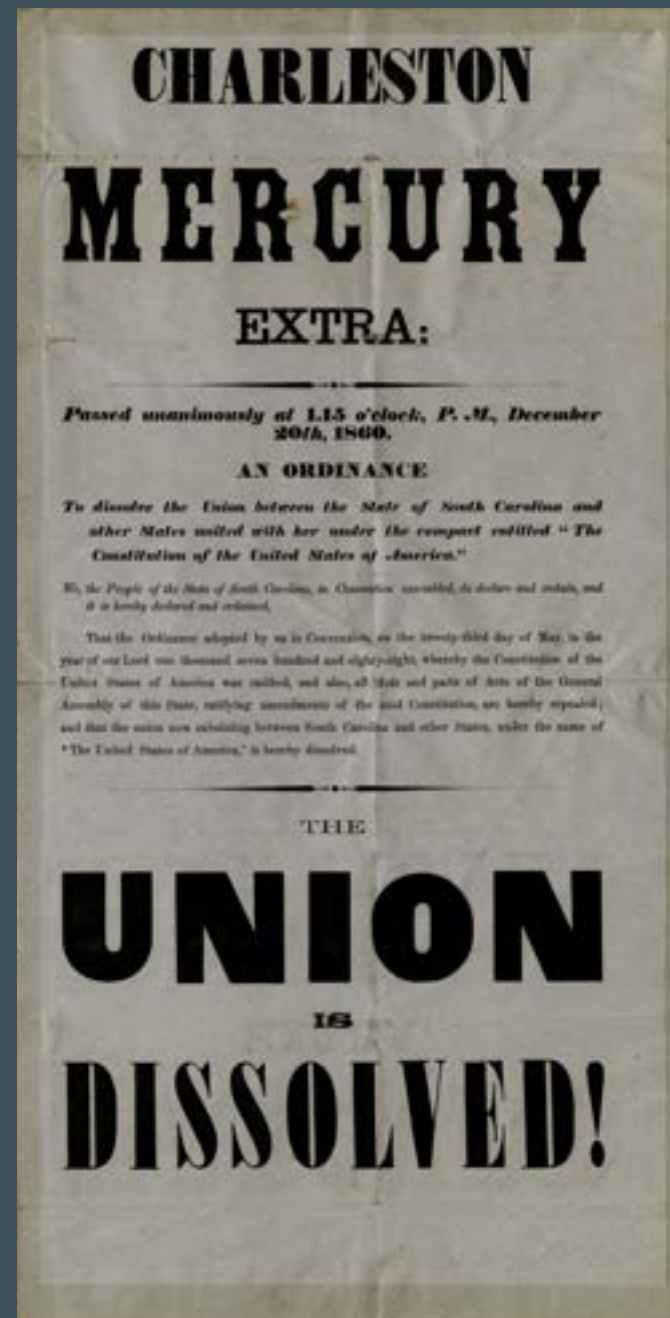


Charles B. Dew is Ephraim Williams Professor of American History, Emeritus, at Williams College. His teaching and scholarship have centered on the American South: the antebellum years, the institution of slavery, the coming of the Civil War, and the era of Reconstruction and the New South. His major writings include the following books: *Ironmaker to the Confederacy: Joseph R. Anderson and the Tredegar Iron Works*, *Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge*, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*, and *The Making of a Racist: A Southerner Reflects on Family, History, and the Slave Trade*.



# Today's Documents

- "The Union Is Dissolved!"
- South Carolina Ordinance of Secession
- Declaration of the Immediate Cause



“The Union Is Dissolved!”

1860

**CHARLESTON**

**MERCURY**

**EXTRA:**

*Passed unanimously at 1.15 o'clock, P. M., December  
20th, 1860.*

**AN ORDINANCE**

*To dissolve the Union between the State of South Carolina and  
other States united with her under the compact entitled “The  
Constitution of the United States of America.”*

*We, the People of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and  
it is hereby declared and ordained,*

*That the Ordinance adopted by us in Convention, on the twenty-third day of May, in the  
year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, whereby the Constitution of the  
United States of America was ratified, and also, all Acts and parts of Acts of the General  
Assembly of this State, ratifying amendments of the said Constitution, are hereby repealed;  
and that the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of  
“The United States of America,” is hereby dissolved.*

THE

**UNION**

IS

**DISSOLVED!**

*Charleston Mercury, “The Union Is Dissolved!,” 1860.*

*(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC02688)*





# Where Do We Begin?

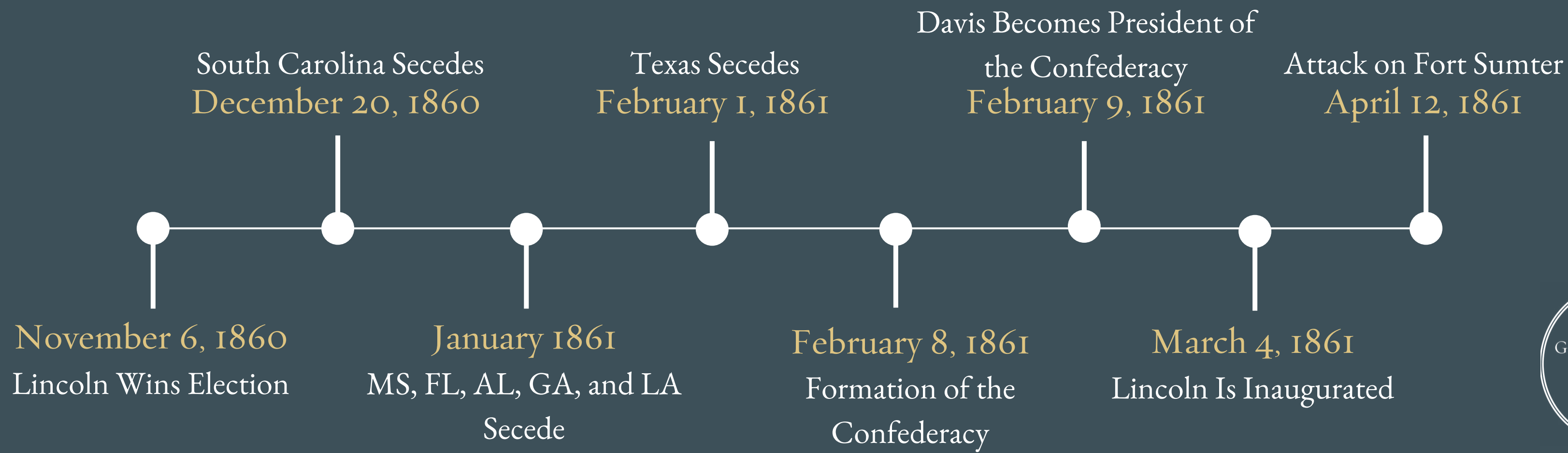
- 1619 - Introduction of enslaved Africans to Virginia
- 1775-1783 - Revolutionary War
- 1787 - US Constitution
- 1793 - Cotton Gin
- 1804 - Reopening of the Slave Trade in South Carolina
- 1846-1848 - Mexican-American War ends
- 1850 - Compromise of 1850
- 1854 - Kansas-Nebraska Act
- 1857 - *Dred Scott* Decision
- 1859 - John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry



# Timeline

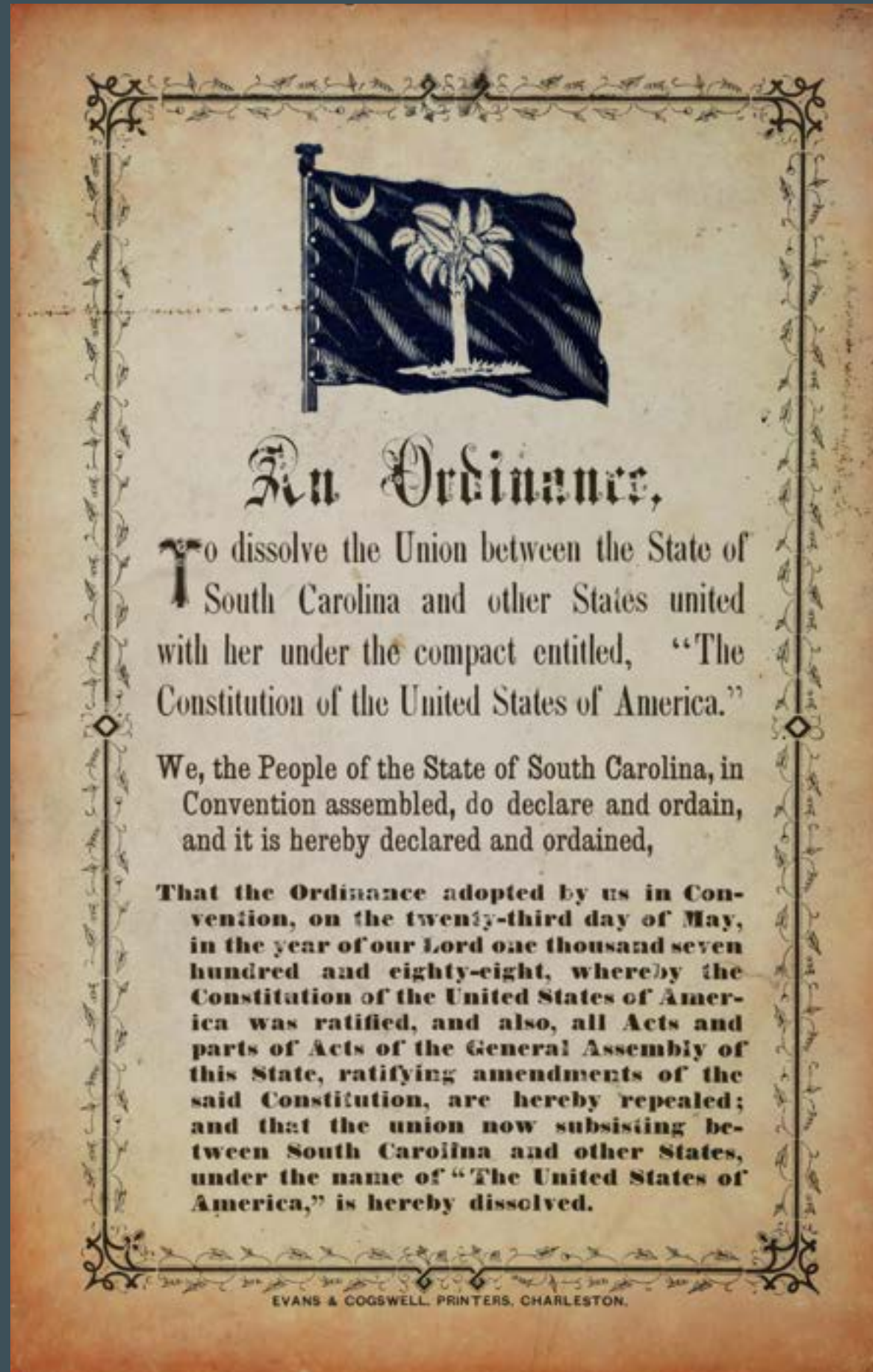


*Twenty-star American  
"Abolitionist Flag," 1859.  
(The Gilder Lehrman  
Institute, GLC05762)*

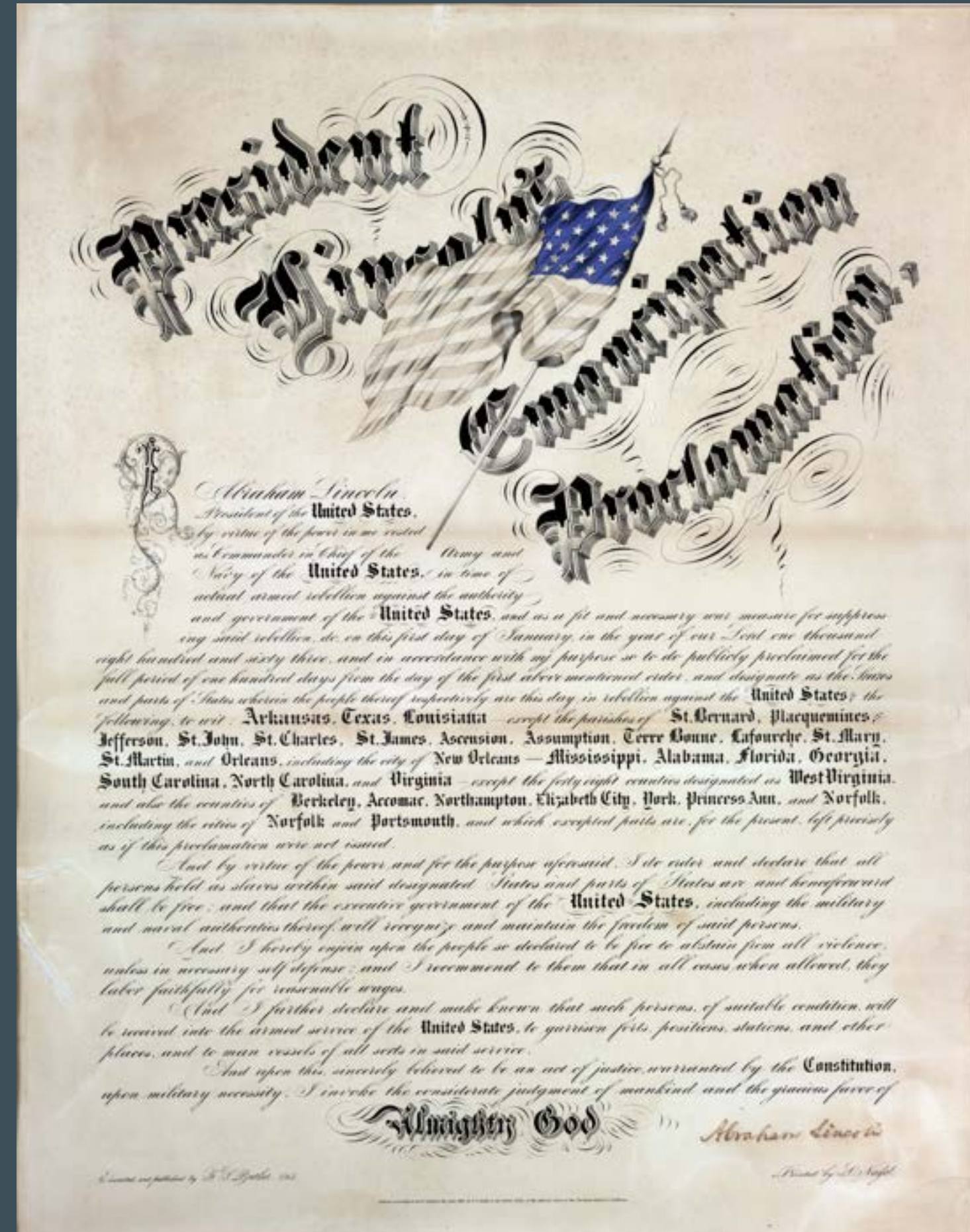




# Two Pivotal Documents



South Carolina Convention,  
*South Carolina Secession Ordinance*, 1860.  
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC05987.15)



Abraham Lincoln,  
*Emancipation Proclamation*, 1863.  
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00742)





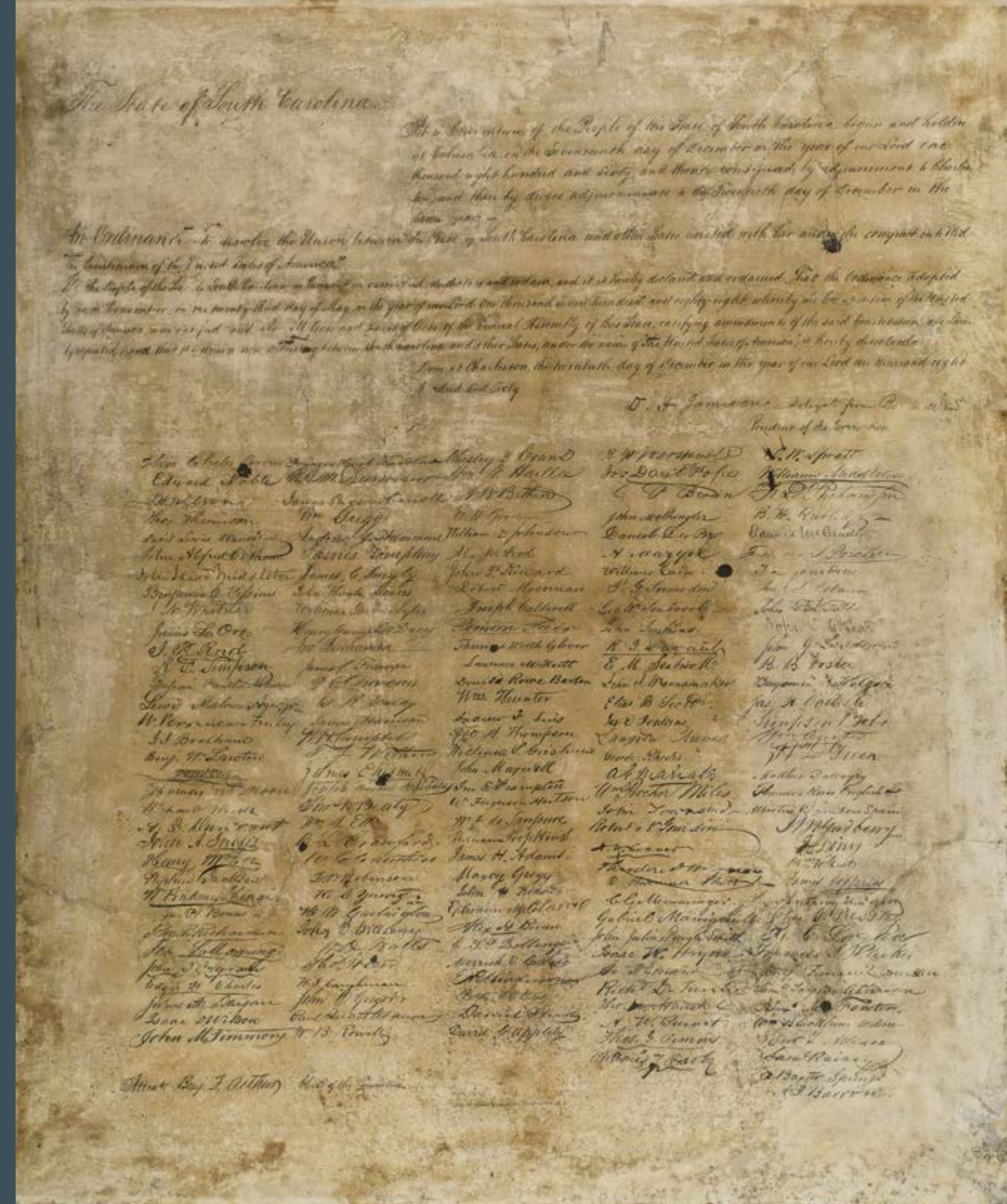
# Ordinance of Secession

1860

"An Ordinance to dissolve the Union between the State of South Carolina and other States united with her under the compact entitled, 'The Constitution of the United States of America.'

We, the people of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and it is hereby declared and ordained,

That the Ordinance adopted by us in Convention, on the twenty-third day of May, in the year of our Lord one-thousand Seven hundred and eighty-eight, whereby the Constitution of the United States of America was ratified, and also, all Acts and parts of Acts of the General Assembly of this State, ratifying amendments of the said Constitution, are hereby repealed; and that the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other states, under the name of 'The United States of America,' is hereby dissolved."



South Carolina Convention, *The Ordinance of Secession for the State of South Carolina*, 1861.  
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00395)





# Declaration of the Immediate Cause

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## 1860

DECLARATION OF THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE  
WHICH  
INDUCE AND JUSTIFY  
THE  
*Secession of South Carolina*  
FROM THE  
FEDERAL UNION;  
AND THE  
ORDINANCE OF SECESSION.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CONVENTION.

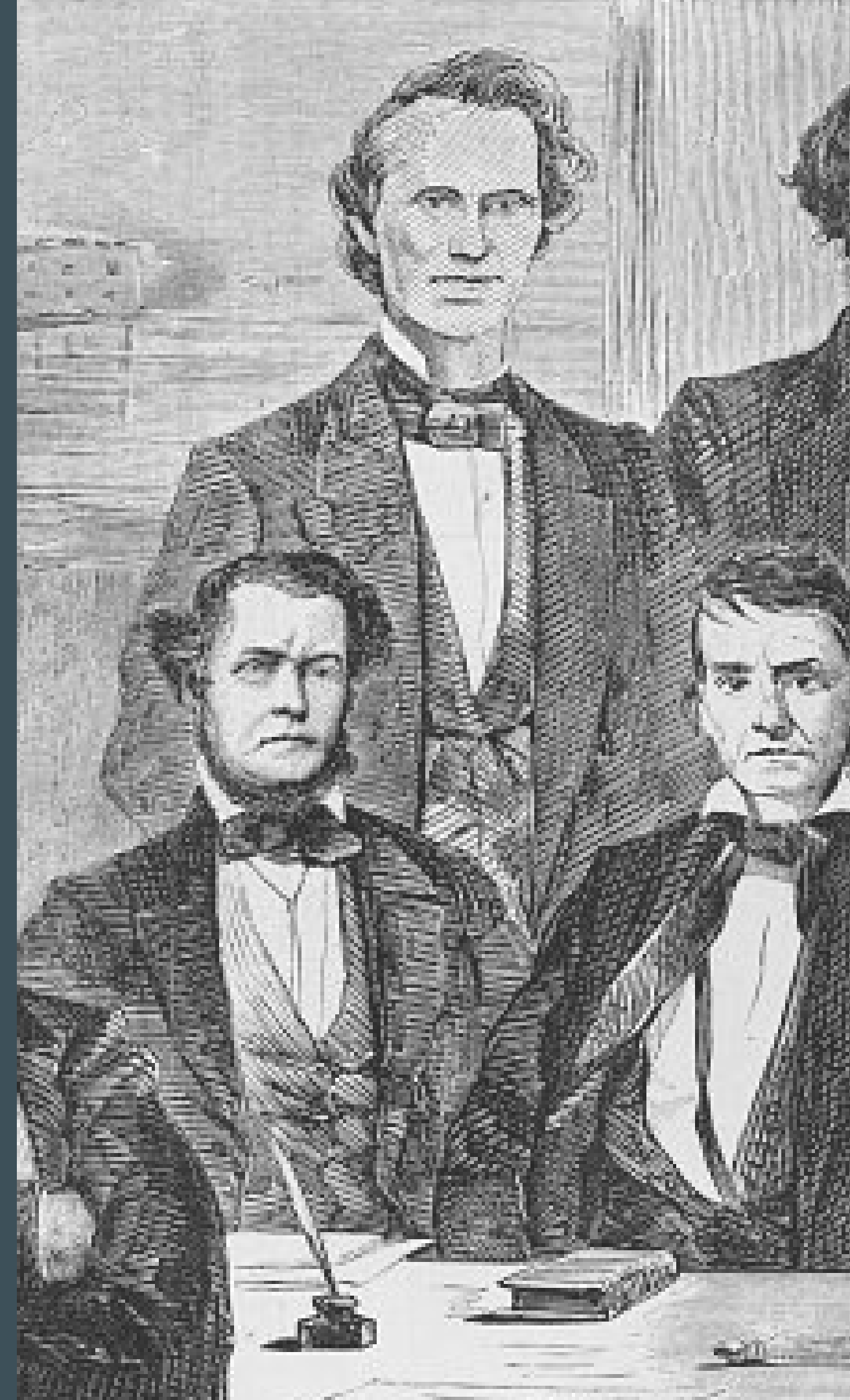
CHARLESTON:  
EVANS & COGSWELL, PRINTERS TO THE CONVENTION,  
No. 3 Broad and 103 East Bay Streets.  
1860.

South Carolina Convention, *Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union; and the Ordinance of Secession*, 1860. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00373)



# Christopher Memminger

- Born in Germany on January 9, 1803.
- Immigrated to Charleston, South Carolina, with his mother after his father's death.
- Became a prominent attorney after graduating from South Carolina College.
- Chaired the Finance Committee of the South Carolina State Legislature.
- Contributed to the draft of the Confederate Constitution.
- Appointed as Secretary of the Treasury for the Confederacy by Jefferson Davis.
- Resigned after the Confederacy's credit collapsed in 1864.



*The Cabinet of the Confederate States at Montgomery, 1861.*

(Library of Congress, 2002735895)



# Fugitive Slave Clause

quences.  
In the present case, that fact is established with certainty. We assert, that fourteen of the States have deliberately refused for years past to fulfil their constitutional obligations, and we refer to their own Statutes for the proof.

The Constitution of the United States, in its 4th Article, provides as follows :

“No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.”

This stipulation was so material to the compact, that without it that compact would not have been made. The greater number of the contracting parties held slaves, and they had previously evinced their estimate of the value of such a stipulation by making it a condition in the Ordinance for the government of the territory ceded by Virginia, which now composes the States north of the Ohio river.

The same article of the Constitution stipulates also for rendition by the several States of fugitives from justice from the other States.

The General Government, as the common agent, passed laws to carry into effect these stipulations of the States. For many years these laws were executed. But an increasing hostility on the part of the non-slaveholding States to the Institution of Slavery has led to a disregard of their obligations, and the laws of the General Government have

South Carolina Convention, *Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union; and the Ordinance of Secession*, 1860.

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00373, page 7)





# Ordinance of Secession

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## 1860

ceased to effect the objects of the Constitution. The States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, have enacted laws which either nullify the Acts of Congress or render useless any attempt to execute them. In many of these States the fugitive is discharged from the service or labor claimed, and in none of them has the State Government complied with the stipulation made in the Constitution. The State of New Jersey, at an early day, passed a law in conformity with her constitutional obligation; but the current of anti-slavery feeling has led her more recently to enact laws which render inoperative the remedies provided by her own law and by the laws of Congress. In the State of New York even the right of transit for a slave has been denied by her tribunals; and the States of Ohio and Iowa have refused to surrender to justice fugitives charged with murder, and with inciting servile insurrection in the State of Virginia. Thus the constitutional compact has been deliberately broken and disregarded by the non-slaveholding States, and the consequence follows that South Carolina is released from her obligation.

The ends for which this Constitution was framed are declared by itself to be “to form a more perfect union, “establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for “the common defence, promote the general welfare, and “secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”

These ends it endeavored to accomplish by a Federal Government, in which each State was recognized as an equal, and had separate control over its own institutions. The right of property in slaves was recognized by giving to free persons distinct political rights, by giving them

South Carolina Convention, *Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union; and the Ordinance of Secession, 1860.*

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00373, page 8)





# Election of Abraham Lincoln

## 1860

For twenty-five years this agitation has been steadily increasing, until it has now secured to its aid the power of the Common Government. Observing the *forms* of the Constitution, a sectional party has found within that article establishing the Executive Department, the means of subverting the Constitution itself. A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the administration of the Common Government, because he has declared that that "Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free," and that the public mind must rest in the belief that Slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

On the 4th March next, this party will take possession of the Government. It has announced, that the South shall be excluded from the common Territory; that the Judicial Tribunals shall be made sectional, and that a war must be waged against slavery until it shall cease throughout the United States.

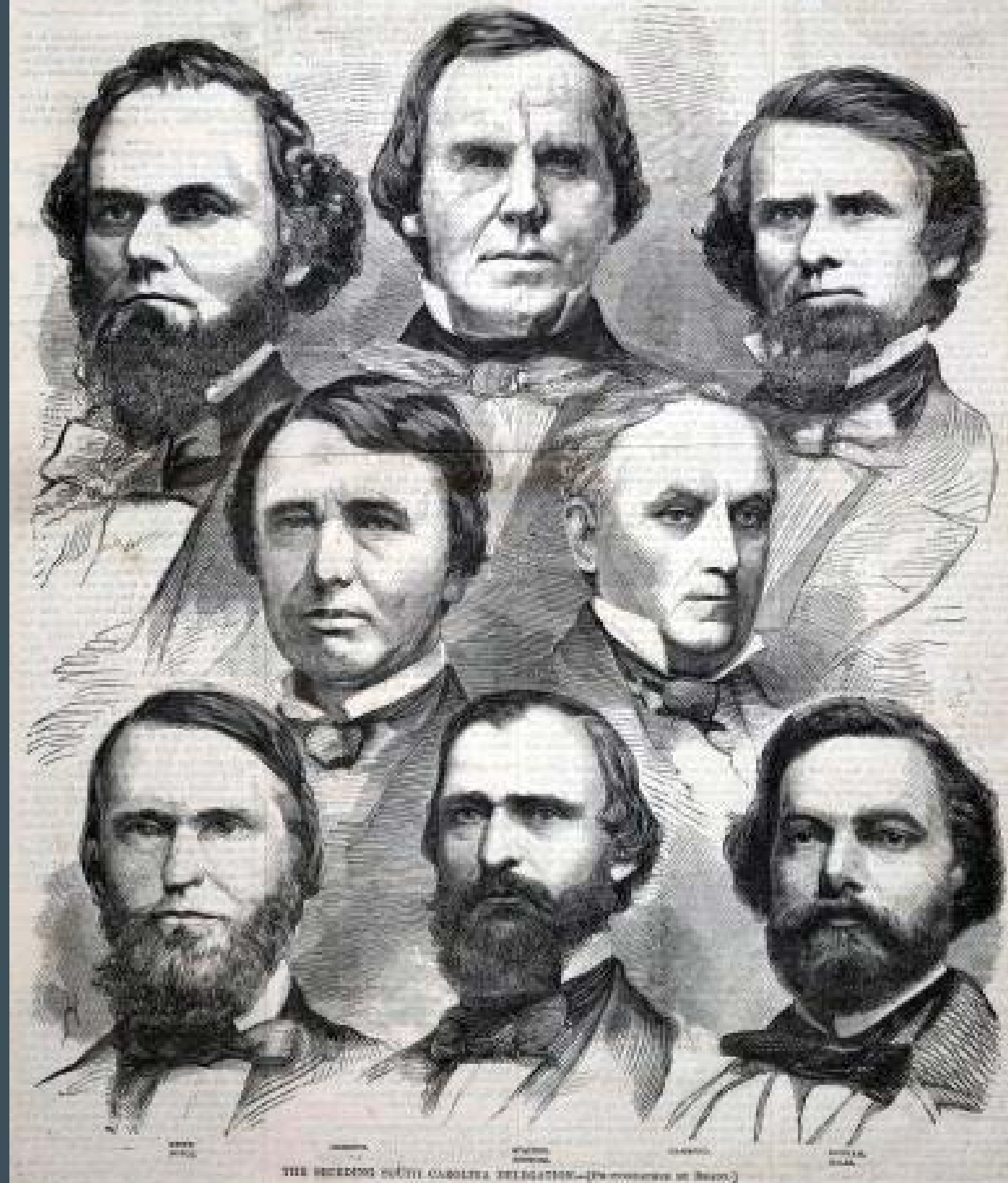
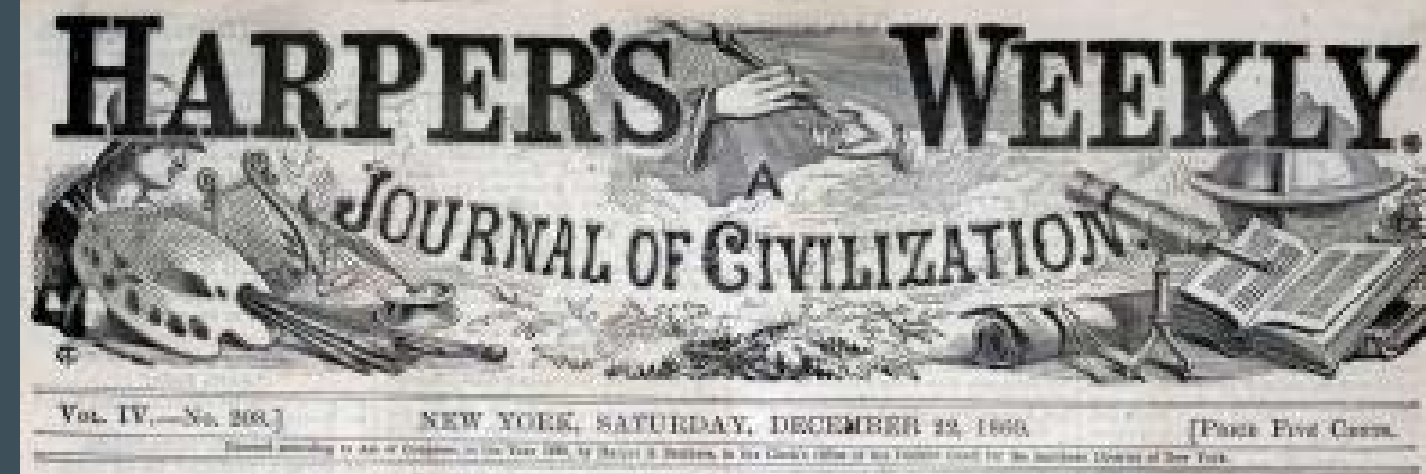
South Carolina Convention, *Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union; and the Ordinance of Secession*, 1860. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00373)





# Texas Fire Scare

- The 1860 fires across Texas were blamed on abolitionists.
- John McQueen spoke in Austin on February 1, 1861.
- He argued that Lincoln and Republicans would destroy the Southern way of life.



Winslow Homer, *The Seceding South Carolina Delegation*,  
from *Harper's Weekly*, December 22, 1860.  
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC01733.02)



# Fort Sumter

1861

[Pencil inscription at the top:]

With the new flag of the south now raised and our Southern Sons in our stronghold at Sumpter [sic], we will see which sister states join the cause.

[Pencil inscription on the back:]

General Pillow,

The seriousness of the situation can best be shown, needless to say. Leadership is important and Southern Sons are called to free our oppressions. Such a call is made to you without demand. Pillow – Tennessee, your life, your heritage in in the fore front of jeopardy rally and lead without hesitation in [illegible]. Hesitation means defeat. Defeat means death. Death means failure under the hands of scoundrels [sic] but for God who we allow to guide our destiny.

M. T.

Davis. Char. S. C. April



George S. Cook, *Confederate Flag raised over Ft. Sumter, 1861.*

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute,

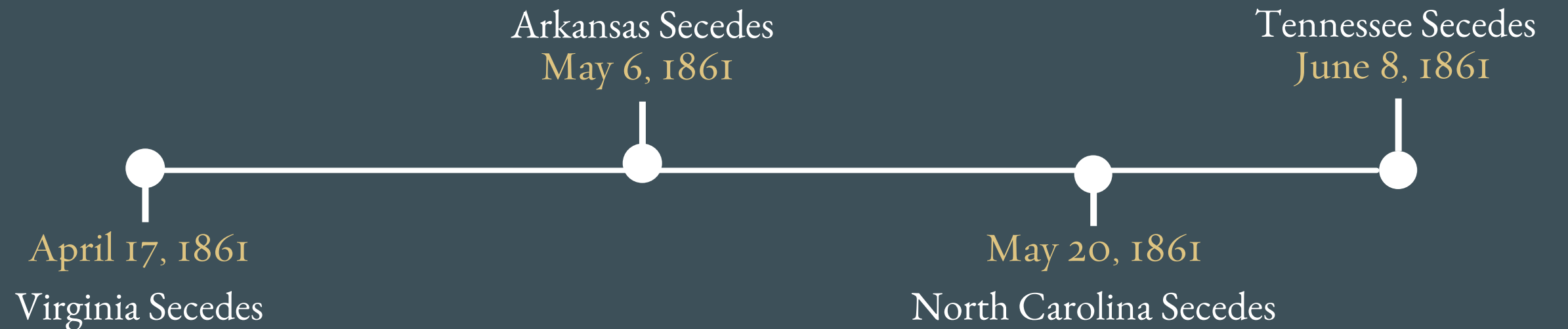
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# Secession Continues

*Lloyd's New Political Chart, 1861. With a Map of the United States, Showing the Free States, Border Slave States, Cotton States, and Territories, in Different Colors. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC04243)*





# Upcoming Programs

**INSIDE THE VAULT:** January 5 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)

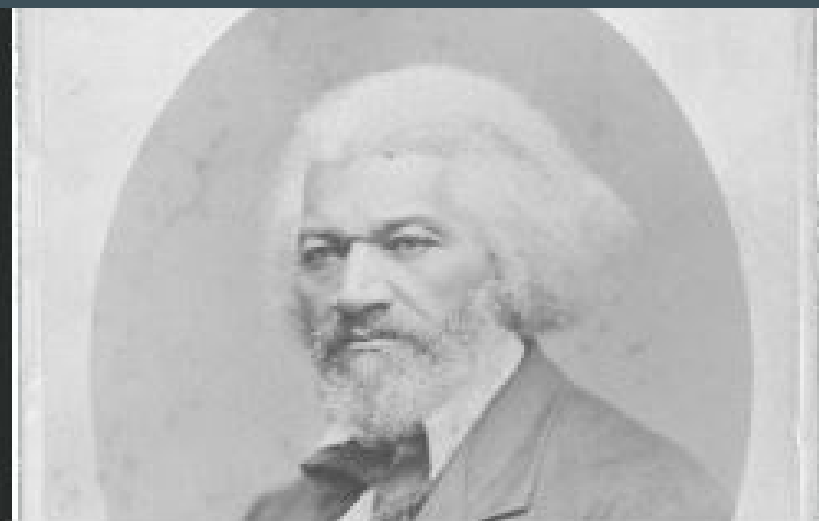
- We will be joined by Dr. Jesse Erickson (The Morgan Library & Museum) to discuss documents from the Morgan's current exhibition, *Fighting to Learn: Black Enfranchisement and Education in the Gilder Lehrman Collection*.

**BOOK BREAKS:** December 4 at 2 pm ET (11 am PT)

- Kermit Roosevelt will discuss his book *The Nation That Never Was: Reconstructing America's Story*.



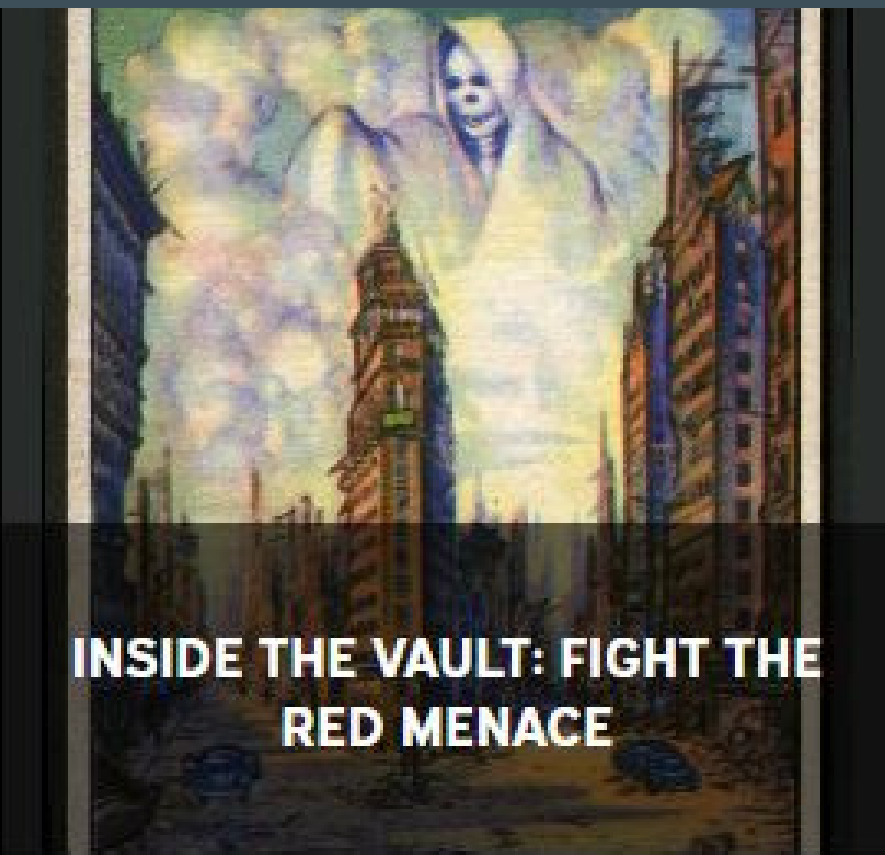




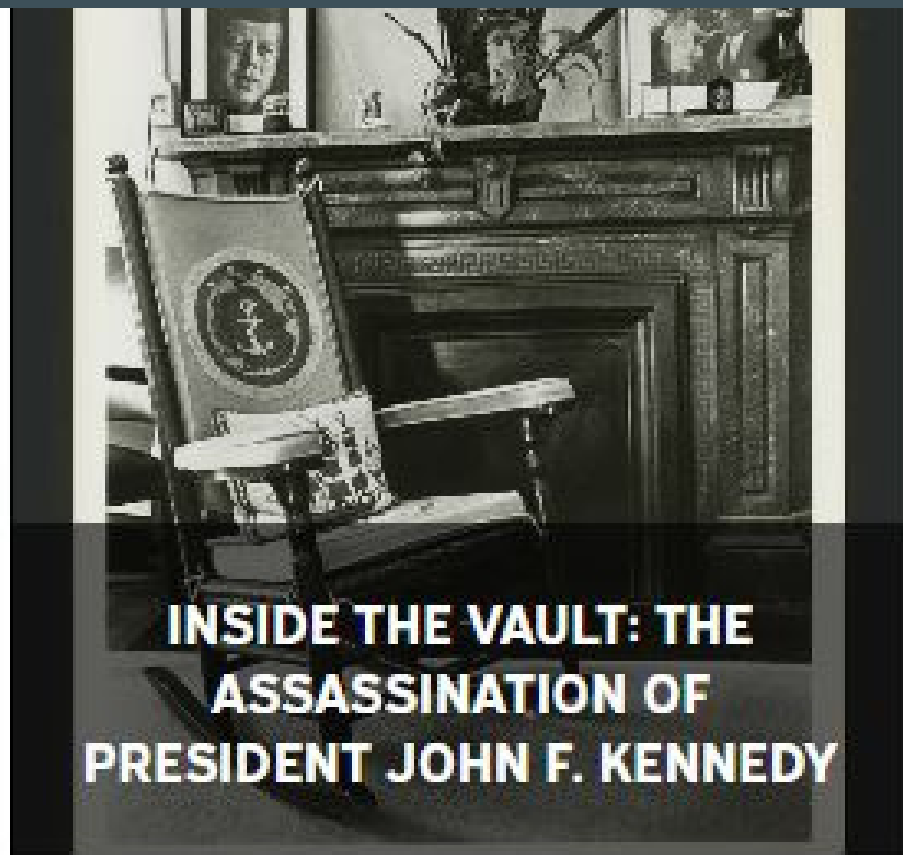
**INSIDE THE VAULT: DAVID BLIGHT DISCUSSES FREDERICK DOUGLASS DOCUMENTS**



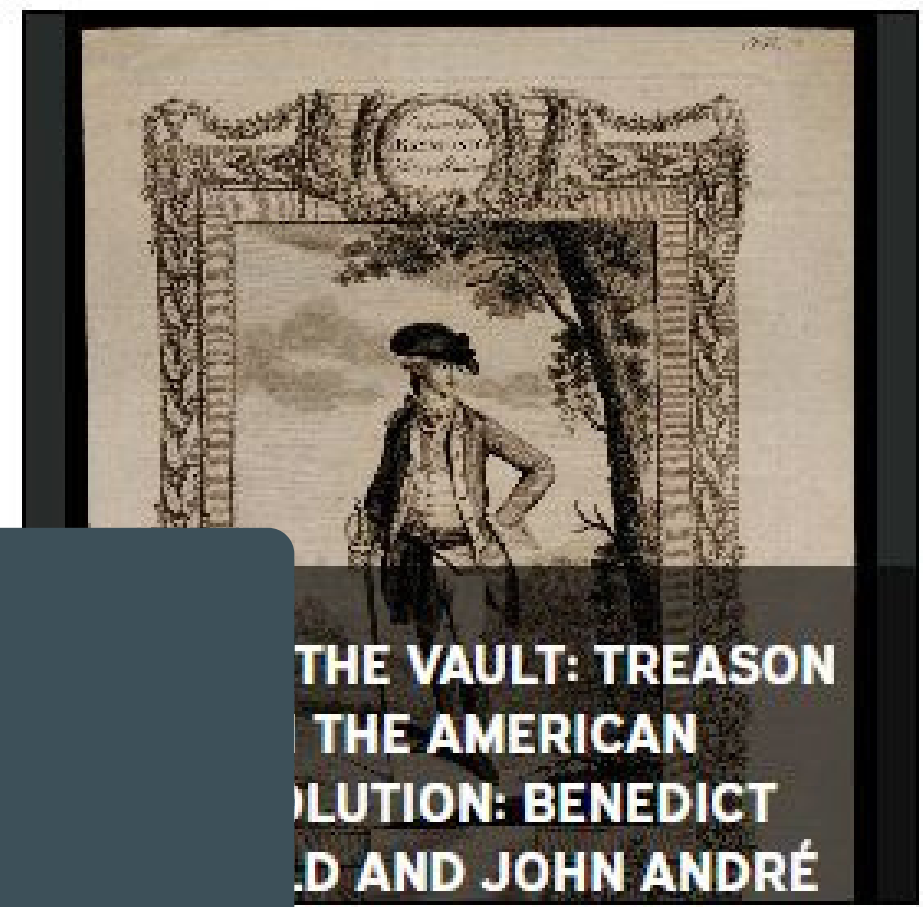
**INSIDE THE VAULT: WASHINGTON'S CROSSING OF THE DELAWARE RIVER**



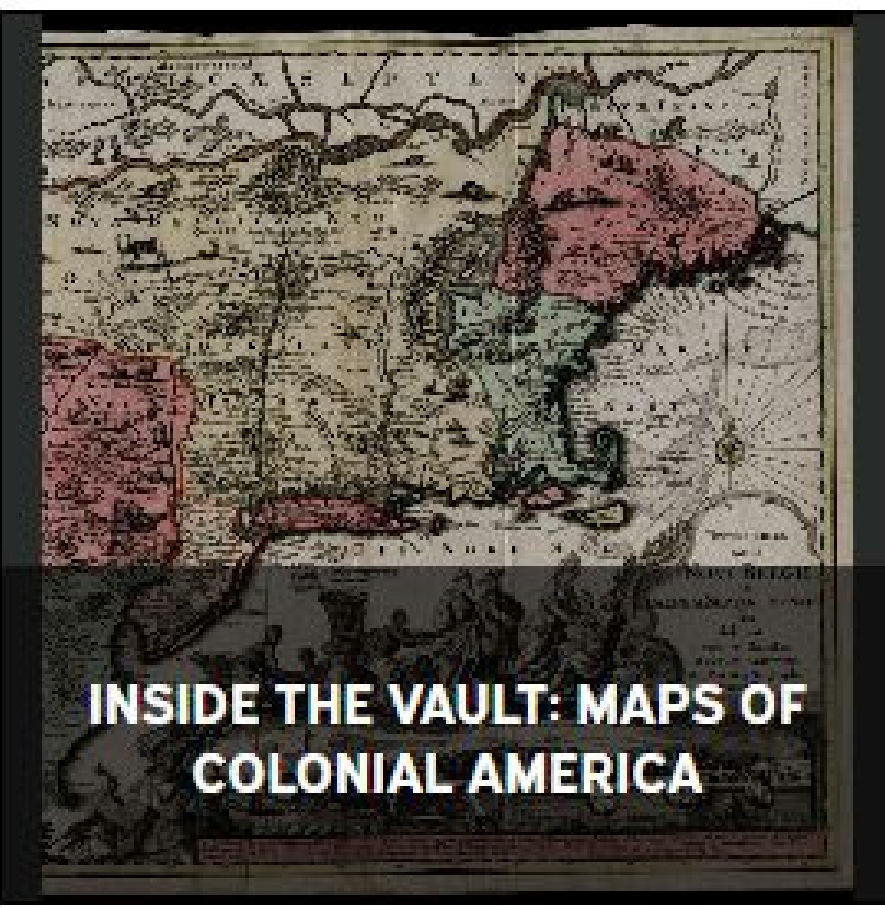
**INSIDE THE VAULT: FIGHT THE RED MENACE**



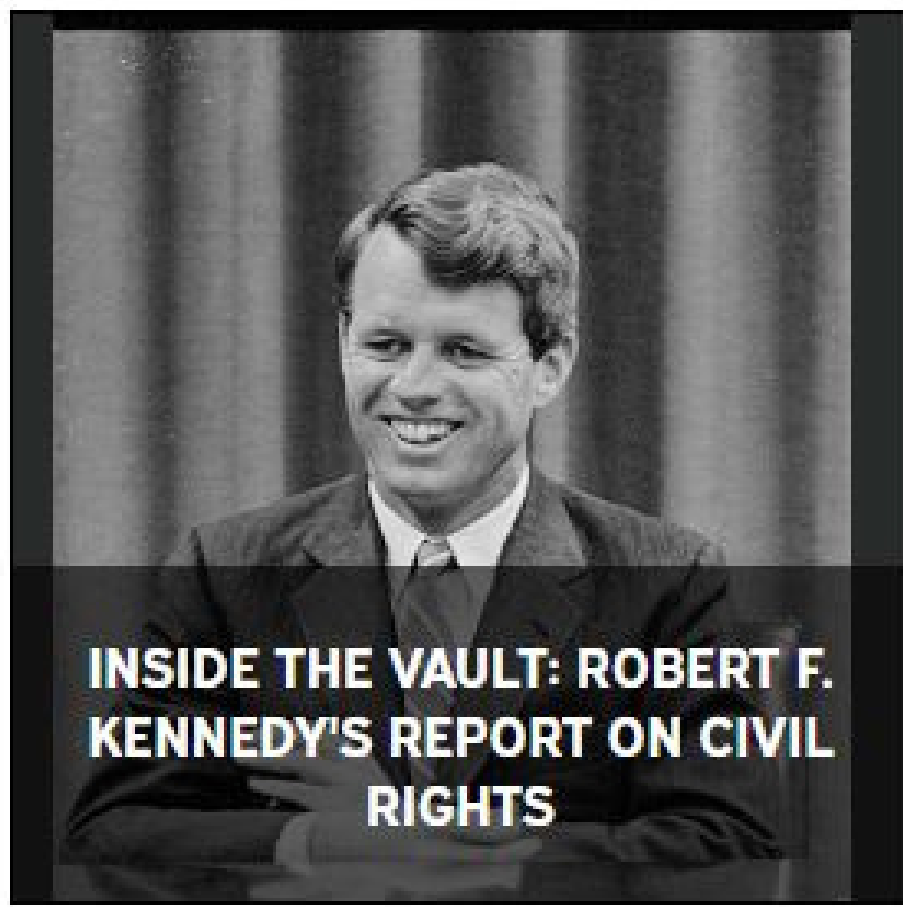
**INSIDE THE VAULT: THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY**



**THE VAULT: TREASON IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: BENEDICT ARNOLD AND JOHN ANDRÉ**



**INSIDE THE VAULT: MAPS OF COLONIAL AMERICA**



**INSIDE THE VAULT: ROBERT F. KENNEDY'S REPORT ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

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