

STATE CONVENTION

AND

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ADOPTED IN JANUARY, 1861.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

Published by Order of the Convention.

A N A D D R E S S

SETTING FORTH THE DECLARATION OF THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES WHICH INDUCE AND JUSTIFY THE

SECESSION OF MISSISSIPPI

FROM THE

FEDERAL UNION

AND THE

ORDINANCE OF SECESSION.

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1861.

A DECLARATION

THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES WHICH INDUCE AND JUSTIFY THE SECESSION OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI FROM THE FEDERAL UNION.

In the momentous step which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery—the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of the commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin.

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That we do not overstate the dangers to our institution, a reference to a few facts will sufficiently prove.

The hostility to this institution commenced before the adoption of the Constitution, and was manifested in the well-known Ordinance of 1787, in regard to the Northwestern Territory.

The feeling increased, until, in 1819-20, it deprived the South of more than half the vast territory acquired from France.

The same hostility dismembered Texas and seized upon all the territory acquired from Mexico.

It has grown until it denies the right of property in slaves, and refuses protection to that right on the high seas, in the Territories, and wherever the government of the United States had jurisdiction.

It refuses the admission of new slave States into the Union, and seeks to extinguish it by confining it within its present limits, denying the power of expansion.

It tramples the original equality of the South under foot. It has nullified the Fugitive Slave Law in almost every free State in the Union, and has utterly broken the compact which our fathers pledged their faith to maintain.

It advocates negro equality, socially and politically, and promotes insurrection and incendiarism in our midst.

It has enlisted its press, its pulpit and its schools against us, until the whole popular mind of the North is excited and inflamed with prejudice.

It has made combinations and formed associations to carry out its schemes of emancipation in the States and wherever else slavery exists.

It seeks not to elevate or to support the slave, but to destroy his present condition without providing a better.

It has invaded a State, and invested with the honors of martyrdom the wretch whose purpose was to apply flames to our dwellings, and the weapons of destruction to our lives.

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It has broken every compact into which it has entered for our security.

It has given indubitable evidence of its design to ruin our agriculture, to prostrate our industrial pursuits and to destroy our social system.

It knows no retreating or hesitation in its purposes; it stops not in its march of aggression, and leaves us no room to hope for cessation or for pause.

It has recently obtained control of the Government, by the prosecution of its unallowable schemes, and destroyed the last expectation of living together in friendship and brotherhood.

Utter subjugation awaits us in the Union, if we should consent longer to remain in it. It is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. We must either submit to degradation, and to the loss of property worth four billions of money, or we must secede from the Union framed by our fathers, to secure this as well as every other species of property. For far less cause than this, our fathers separated from the Crown of England.

Our decision is made. We follow their footsteps. We embrace the alternative of separation; and for the reasons here stated, we resolve to maintain our rights with the full consciousness of the justice of our course, and the undoubted belief of our ability to maintain it.

AN ORDINANCE

TO DISSOLVE THE UNION BETWEEN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI AND OTHER STATES UNITED WITH HER UNDER THE COMPACT ENTITLED "THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

The people of the State of Mississippi, in Convention assembled, do ordain and declare, and it is hereby ordained and declared as follows, to-wit:

SECTION 1ST. That all the laws and ordinances by which the said State of Mississippi became a member of the Federal Union of the United States of America be, and the same are hereby repealed, and that all obligations on the part of the said State or the people thereof to observe the same, be withdrawn, and that the said State doth hereby resume all the rights, functions and powers which, by any of said laws or ordinances, were conveyed to the government of the said United States, and is absolved from all the obligations, restraints and duties incurred to the said Federal Union, and shall from henceforth be a free, sovereign and independent State.

SECTION 2ND. That so much of the first section of the seventh article of the Constitution of this State as requires members of the Legislature, and all officers, executive and judicial, to take an oath or affirmation to support the Constitution of the United States, be, and the same is hereby abrogated and annulled.

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SECTION 3RD. That all rights acquired and vested under the Constitution of the United States, or under any act of Congress passed, or treaty made, in pursuance thereof, or under any law of this State, and not incompatible with this Ordinance, shall remain in force and have the same effect as if this Ordinance had not been passed.

SECTION 4TH. That the people of the State of Mississippi hereby consent to form a Federal Union with such of the States as may have seceded or may secede from the Union of the United States of America, upon the basis of the present Constitution of the said United States, except such parts thereof as embrace other portions than such seceding States.

Thus ordained and declared in Convention the 9th day of January, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-one.

W. S. BARRY, *President.*F. A. POPE, *Secretary.*

IN TESTIMONY of the passage of which, and the determination of the members of this Convention to uphold and maintain the State in the position she has assumed by said Ordinance, it is signed by the President and Members of this Convention this the fifteenth day of January, A. D., 1861.

Adams County—A. K. Farrar, J. Winchester.

Attala—E. H. Sanders.

Amite—D. W. Hurst.

Bolivar—M. H. McGehee.

Carroll—J. Z. George, W. Booth.

Claiborne—H. T. Ellett.

Cochran—J. L. Alcorn.

Copiah—P. S. Catching, B. King.

Clarke—S. H. Terral.

Choctaw—W. F. Brantley, W. H. Witty, J. H. Edwards.

Chickasaw—J. A. Orr, C. B. Baldwin.

Clackson—A. C. Powell.

Calhoun—W. A. Sumner, M. D. L. Stephens.

DeSoto—J. R. Chalmers, S. D. Johnston, T. Lewers.

Franklin—D. H. Parker.

Green—T. J. Roberts.

Hinds—W. P. Harris, W. P. Anderson, W. B. Smart.

Holmes—J. M. Dyer, W. L. Keirn.