

# THE GATHERING STORM

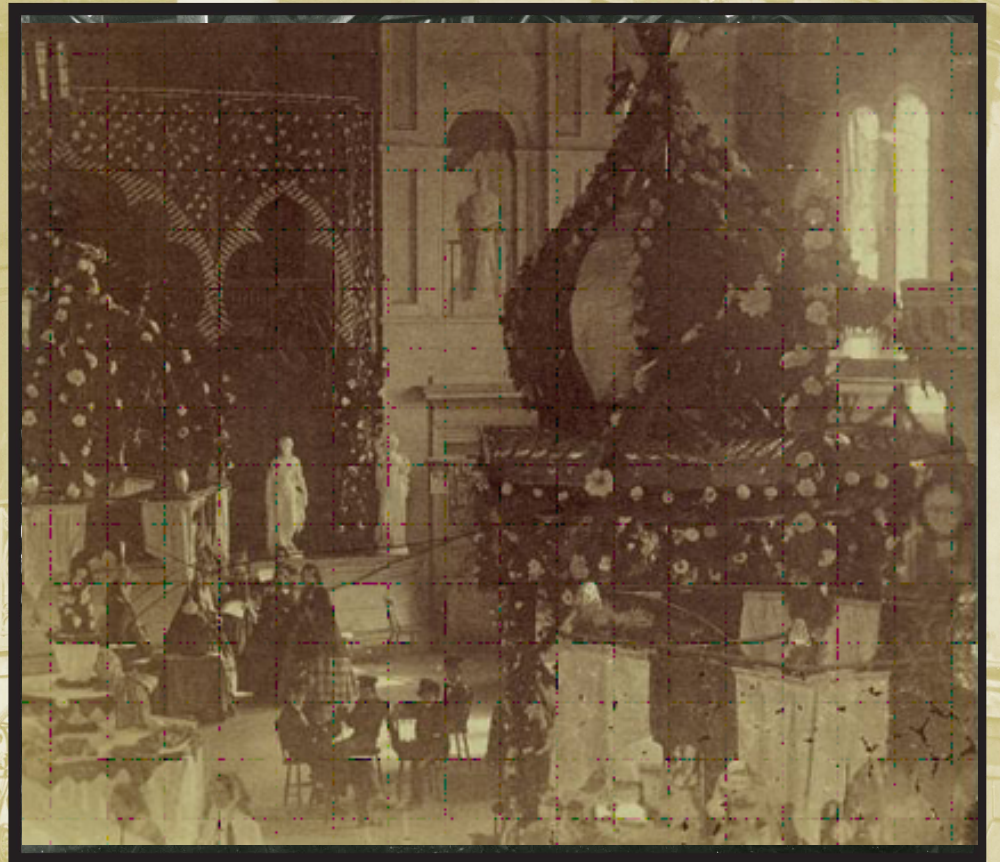
IMAGES OF AMERICA ON THE EVE OF THE CIVIL WAR

## Secession

On December 20, 1860, six weeks after Lincoln's election as president, South Carolina's leaders met in the banquet and concert hall of the St. Andrew's Society and voted to secede from the United States. Thereafter, the hall became known as Secession Hall. President James Buchanan declared the act illegal, as did President-elect Lincoln, but it did not quell the tide. Mississippi was next to secede, on January 9, 1861, followed the next day by Florida and by Alabama the day after that. By February 1, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas had also seceded. But the states of the upper south remained in the Union, with Virginians voting two-to-one against secession just eight days before the bombardment of Fort Sumter.



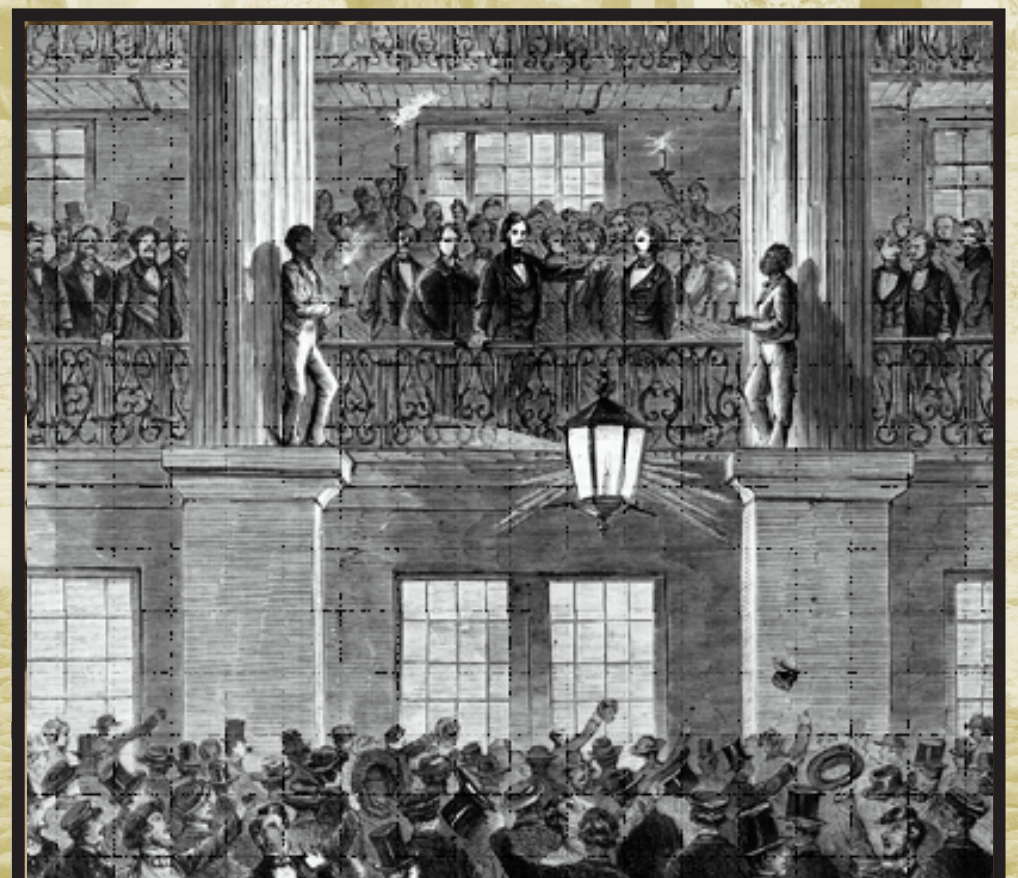
This circa 1860 photograph shows Charleston's Secession Hall and the Circular Church. Both buildings were destroyed in a December 1861 fire. *Bob Zeller Collection*



Another circa 1860 photograph, possibly by Charleston photographer George S. Cook, shows the interior of Secession Hall. *Library of Congress*



Alexander Hamilton Stephens, shown here in a striking post-war photograph with an African-American man holding his crutches, was vice president of the Confederate States of America. *Library of Congress*



Jefferson Davis was inaugurated president of the Confederate States of America on February 18, 1861 in Montgomery, Alabama. *Library of Congress*