

PETTUS

DELEGATES TO THE S.C. SECESSION CONVENTION, 1860

There were four major candidates for president of the United States in 1860. The Democratic Party split with the northern Democrats and southern Democrats nominating different candidates. Southerners opposed to secession formed a new party called the Constitutional Union Party.

The Republican party, formed only six years before, chose a moderate on the issue of slavery, Abraham Lincoln who got less than 40 per cent of the popular vote but enough electoral votes to keep the election from being thrown into the House of Representatives, which Southerners wanted to see happen.

With the election of Lincoln, South Carolina was determined to secede from the Union, whether or not other southern states followed her example. The delegates who were elected to attend the Secession Convention had no doubt that they were expected to vote for secession. They went to Columbia determined to preserve the institution of slavery and saw Lincoln's election as a signal that the north had voted its opposition to slavery.

Who were the delegates from this area and what were their backgrounds? York District had five delegates: Col. William Blackburn Wilson, .R. T. Allison, Andrew Baxter Springs, Samuel Rainey, Sr. and A. I. Barron. Col. Wilson was one of York District's most distinguished lawyers. Springs was a planter who was also active in banking and railroad development and had served in the legislature. He was trained in the law but never practiced it. Allison and Barron were medical doctors. Rainey was a well-to-do planter.

Chester had 4 delegates: Alexander Quay Dunovant, John McKee, Thomas Wade Moore and Richard Woods. Dunovant was a planter who had been a member of the state legislature. McKee was a merchant and clockmaker with a store on "Chester Hill." Thomas Wade Moore, a physician, had served three terms in the state legislature. Richard Woods was a planter who was known as a "kind and indulgent master to his slaves."

Lancaster District, smaller in population than York or Chester, had three delegates: Dr. William Columbus Cauthen, Dr. Robert L. Crawford and Rev. David P. Robinson. Besides practicing medicine, Dr. Cauthen was an active planter, a railroad promoter and had spent three terms in the state legislature. Crawford practiced medicine, was very active in civic affairs and was known as one of the best farmers in the District. David P. Robinson was a native of Abbeville, educated at Erskine and became minister of Shiloh A.R.P. Church in 1848. He was also a planter.

Dr. Robert Crawford of Lancaster District was the only one of the secession ordinance signers who was killed in action. Dr. Crawford volunteered his medical services as soon as the war started and was wounded three times before he was killed while conferring with his picket guards at Suffolk, Virginia in 1863.

John McKee of Chester District, a native of County Down, Ireland, was the oldest delegate to the Secession Convention. He was 73 years of age when he signed the ordinance

Andrew Baxter Springs of Fort Mill resisted secession and made a speech in the convention against it, but, nevertheless, when the state seceded he volunteered his services. He served first on the front in Virginia and then was drafted by the S. C. legislature as a state commissioner of the Soldier's Relief Board for York District. With practically no money from the state, Springs did a remarkably good job of supplying York District soldiers with food and clothing.

Dr. William C. Cauthen of Lancaster District was one of the youngest delegates to the convention. He signed the ordinance on his 35th birthday. Cauthen suffered from tuberculosis and did not serve in the war. When Sherman's troops came through the Heath Springs area, a detachment entered Dr. Cauthen's second-floor bedroom where Cauthen lay

in the last stages of tuberculosis. When Cauthen refused to reveal where the family valuables were hidden, the troops "dragged him out and flogged him unmercifully." Dr. Cauthen died a few months later.

After the war, Alexander Dunovant and Rev. David Robinson left the state. Dunovant moved to Texas and Robinson, who left the A.R.P. Church for the Presbyterian Church moved to Mecklenburg County, N. C.

So far as known, none of the 12 signers ever expressed any regret for casting their votes for secession from the union. sue of slavery, Abraham Lincoln Lincoln received he got wishto the Secession Convention had served in the legislature., a native of County Down, Ireland, At age 73, McKee was the oldest of all of the delegates.

What happened to the Secession Convention delegates during the war they started? At least four of the 12 men were actively involved., much of it from his own pocket

Alexander Dunovant of Chester District served as a colonel on the staff of Governor McGraff.

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