

Colorful Secession Banners Filled Skies Over Yorkville

As soon as Abraham Lincoln was elected president in November 1860, secession talk filled the air. The town of Yorkville and the rural communities around it held public meetings to elect men for the state convention to be held on Dec. 17.



Nearby
History

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The young ladies of the Yorkville Female Academy (whose school was located at the present site of McCelvey Center) were quite aware of what was happening and would not be left out of the preparations. The girls designed a "secession flag" and then hoisted it to the steeple.

One side of the secession flag represented a broken chain. The top links were black linked red with white relief, which was described as "typical of the North." Below that white links were joined together in a circle to represent the South. In the center of the circle was the Sun of Freedom brightly shining. Below the South's circle were the words, "Last Asylum of Constitutional Liberty."

The opposite side of the secession flag showed the palmetto tree on a deep blue background with a Latin phrase that the girls said meant, "Now let the Palmetto State stand on her sovereignty."

Boys from the Kings Mountain Military Academy, who had been formed into the "Jaspers," turned out to see the girls' flag and vowed "they would never desert it." The Jaspers were named for Sergeant Jasper, who had raised the original palmetto flag (later the official state flag) during the Revolutionary War.

The town of Yorkville had a very large secession flag, or banner, on Congress Street between the Adickes and Springs-Moore buildings. This one was designed by Richard Hare, proprietor of Yorkville's largest marble yard and painted by John Schorb, art instructor at the Female Academy and operator of one of the earliest photographic studios in South Carolina.

The Hare-Schorb flag had one "wing," or panel, that showed the Charleston harbor with Fort Johnson and the colors of England, France and colonial South Carolina. The panel indicated a preference for free trade and a resumption of state sovereignty; said another way, South Carolina hoped to be indepen-

dent of the United States and an equal trading partner with England and France. Above this panel were painted the words, "The Rubicon is Passed."

The other wing of the Hare-Schorb secession flag showed Kings Mountain and the Blue Ridge mountains on a blue background above a large palmetto tree in the center of the banner. On this wing were painted the words, "York will Remember her Ancestry." The Yorkville Enquirer, which described all of this, commented that the idea was that "the state, nothing but the state, nothing but the whole state."

Yorkville had yet another flag flying over the new Presbyterian Church. This flag was designed by George Schorb, young son of John Schorb, the photographer. The background of this flag was scarlet and contained 15 gold stars, the large one in the center representing South Carolina. The 15 stars undoubtedly stood for the 15 states of the union which permitted slavery. Eventually, 10 of these states would follow South Carolina out of the union, but the four border states did not secede.

Another secession flag, which might have also been designed by George Schorb, showed a deep red background and one gold star. The one-star flag was similar to the Lone Star flag of Texas and doubtless was meant to communicate the message that even if South Carolina had to go alone, she, like Texas, was willing to do so.

Within one month of the first showing of the secession flags in Yorkville, South Carolina was out of the union. The girls and local women began sewing in earnest. The Jasper Light Infantry, totaling 96, had to have new uniforms. They also needed a battle flag. When the Jaspers paraded in front of the Yorkville Female Academy before departing for the war, they displayed a "handsome silk flag trimmed in silver lace given them by patriotic ladies."

The battle flag had on one side the palmetto tree and depicted the battlefield of Kings Mountain, with the motto, "He who survives his country's ruin has already lived too long." On the other side it showed Fort Moultrie with a representation of Sergeant Jasper scaling its walls. Above the fort were the words "The Ladies of Yorkville to the Jasper Guards," and below were the words "Amor Et Fide," meaning "love and confidence."

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