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Aleph, UCLA Undergraduate Research Journal for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0zt1r5pc>

Journal

Aleph, UCLA Undergraduate Research Journal for the Humanities and Social Sciences, 12(0)

ISSN

2639-6440

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Publication Date

2015

DOI

10.5070/L6121039026

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Conflict and Compromise: The Nullification Crisis

Adam El-Sahn

“Everything dear to our country is at stake.”¹ This statement by South Carolina Governor Robert Hayne best encapsulates sentiments felt throughout the country during the winter of 1832-1833. It was a turbulent time in the United States as President Andrew Jackson faced the very real possibility of an armed insurrection against federal laws in South Carolina. The fate of the American experiment seemed to hang in the balance as the “nullifiers” and the “nationalists” argued over which vision of the Constitution would prevail. This essay explores the deeply interrelated economic, political, and social underpinnings of the Nullification Crisis of 1832-1833. This essay will argue that the Nullification Crisis is a compelling part of American history because it serves as a critical milestone on the road to the Civil War. It helped lay down the intellectual foundations of secession and spur the sectional divide while still demonstrating the “spirit of compromise,” in which both parties made concessions to each other, which allowed the republican form of government to remain functional. First, this essay will offer an analysis of the conflict by examining the Tariff of 1828, an act that served as the catalyst for the crisis by indicating underlying economic and cultural differences between Northern and Southern states. Next, I shall discuss the political discourse that provided the intellectual foundation for both sides’ actions during the crisis.

What follows is a brief review of the frantic events of that fateful winter of 1832-1833. Finally this paper will examine the Nullification Crisis' resolution and long-term effects particularly with regards to the build-up to the Civil War.

This essay will rely principally on primary source documents from William Freehling's *The Nullification Era* as well as secondary analysis of Harry L. Watson's *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America*. I will also heavily incorporate Jon Meacham's Pulitzer Prize-winning Jacksonian biography, *American Lion*, when discussing the events of the winter of 1832-1833. I will incorporate Matthew Brogdon's article, *Defending the Union: Andrew Jackson's Nullification Proclamation and American Federalism*, when discussing the political ramifications of the Nullification Crisis. The literature that I have read on the Nullification Crisis does not establish a link between the Nullification Crisis and the Civil War. I intend to use the aforementioned sources to support my assessment that the Nullification Crisis, in part, helped lay down the foundation for the Civil War as part of a greater continuum of Southern political thought.

The Tariff of 1828, which became known throughout the South as the "Tariff of Abominations," was the immediate cause of the Nullification Crisis. Tariffs are taxes levied on imports designed to artificially increase the prices of foreign goods to give domestic industries a competitive advantage. Prominent Jacksonian historian Harry Watson noted that during the late 1820s, Northern manufacturers petitioned Congress to enact heavy protective tariffs, claiming that "America's 'infant industries' needed protection from British competition. Without the protective tariff, they maintained, America would always remain in a colonial relationship to Europe, supplying unprocessed staples such as cotton in return for manufactured products."² Congress acceded to the manufacturers' demands and enacted the Tariff of 1828, which resulted in "most imports competing with Ameri-

can-made goods [being] taxed between one third and one half their value.”³ While the majority of Northerners perceived the tariff as greatly beneficial to the national economy, many in the South denounced it as a scourge that placed an unfair burden on their people. Southerners believed they gained little benefit and much pain from a tariff system that raised prices for consumers. In addition, as cotton provided much of the region’s prosperity, many Southerners were already reeling from the economic devastation caused by the stagnant depreciation of cotton prices throughout the 1820s. Cotton prices had never quite recovered from the damage caused by the Panic of 1819, which was caused by massive over-speculation in western lands and a depreciation of cotton prices from their post-war highs during the mid 1810s.

Unlike most Northern manufacturers, the majority of Southern plantation owners were unconcerned about the welfare of the domestic manufacturing industry. Southern planters were almost entirely dependent on European trade and were consequently worried about the negative impact a high protective tariff would have on their own trade network. They were worried that “high tariffs worsened the agricultural depression by raising the cost of manufactured goods purchased by farmers and planters and lowering the foreign demand for agricultural exports.”⁴ The Tariff of 1828 placed two powerful interests (Northern manufacturers and Southern planters) at odds with each other. The growth of political parties during the 1820s and early 1830s also reflected a growing sectional basis for supporting or opposing tariffs. Jacksonian Democrats framed themselves as the party of the people. They claimed that they wanted to restore “the federal government to the ideal of Jeffersonian republicanism, in which farmers and artisans could pursue their individual liberty free of any government intervention that favored the rich and powerful.”⁵ Although the Democrats were a major national party, they were particularly powerful in the West and in the South.

The opposition was fragmented during the early 1830s but led by several prominent politicians; chief among them was Henry Clay. Henry Clay was an incredibly powerful politician from Kentucky who by the early 1830s had already been Speaker of the House of Representatives and Secretary of State under John Quincy Adams. Clay and the opposition tended to favor “a protective tariff, a national bank, and federal subsidies for internal improvements . . . to bind Americans together in an integrated national market.”⁶ The debate over the tariff set the course for a larger debate over the role of the federal government to emerge.

Southerner planters saw the tariff as a concerted effort by leaders of a federal government that supported the interests of Northern manufacturers at the expense of the South. Prominent South Carolinian and sitting Vice President John C. Calhoun penned an anonymous manifesto about the tariff known as *The South Carolina Exposition and Protest* in which he claimed, “So partial are the effects of the system, that its burdens are exclusively on one side, and the benefits on the other.”⁷ Southerners increasingly expressed dissent against national policies designed to favor Northern manufacturing interests at the expense of the Southern economy. They were also concerned that the economic policy pushed by the federal government was inconsistent with the intentions of the framers’ belief in the limited nature of the federal government. Many slaveholders, particularly in South Carolina, which had a majority of its population enslaved, were worried that an expanding federal government that emphasized the interests of Northern manufacturers would eventually turn its sights towards the institution of slavery. Slavery was one of the primary dividing elements between North and South. Southerners considered the institution of slavery absolutely essential to preserving the viability of the plantation system, which was the central cornerstone of the Southern economy and culture. They were therefore particularly sensitive to anything they perceived

might erode the viability of slavery.

The South's fear of federal encroachment upon the long-term survival of the institution of slavery highlighted the growing conflict over the scope of federal authority. The debate over the role and responsibilities of the federal government was a highly contentious issue in antebellum American politics. Renowned Civil War historian Joan Waugh noted that "for virtually the entire time between the adoption of the Constitution in 1787 and the start of the Civil War, states' rights was an important political issue."⁸ Issues of states' rights and the scope of the federal government would be at the heart of the political debate leading up to the Nullification Crisis. In response to the Tariff, and what he perceived as federal encroachment on the sovereignty of his native state, Calhoun articulated what he believed to be the proper method of Constitutional interpretation in the *South Carolina Exposition*. The *Exposition* laid out the idea of a compact theory of government. Calhoun's compact theory was a virulent defense of states' rights and laid down a belief in the nature of government which put the ultimate authority with the states. Calhoun and his associates who helped pen the *Exposition* insisted on the independent and original sovereignty of the states. Because in Calhoun's opinion the states were the origin of national sovereignty, he believed that the states retained the right to act in their best interests, even if it meant superseding federal law.

Calhoun's ideas became more highly publicized in 1830 when fellow South Carolinian, Senator Robert Hayne, defended Calhoun's political ideology in a series of celebrated debates with Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster known as the Hayne-Webster Debates. The Hayne-Webster debates were a series of oratory battles on the Senate floor that laid down the philosophical underpinnings behind both parties' political beliefs. Hayne "argued that the Constitution is a compact to

which the individual states are parties... [He] interpreted the Constitution as though it were a treaty and therefore subject to construction by the individual parties to it.”⁹ Calhoun and his cohorts believed the federal government’s constitutionally-derived power ultimately flowed from the sovereignty of the states. Therefore it followed that a state had the ultimate say in what the Constitution meant and thus had the right to nullify a federal law when it felt that the law was in conflict with the Constitution. Calhoun believed that nullification provided a safety valve for minority groups who felt crushed by the majority consensus. By providing a means of protection for minority groups, Calhoun felt that his doctrine of nullification would help preserve the Union by maintaining the satisfaction of all its contingent states.

Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster believed that the ideas espoused by the South Carolinians made a complete mockery of the Constitution. Webster pointed to the Constitution’s Article VI Supremacy Clause, which plainly states: “This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof...shall be the supreme Law of the Land.” He also directed Sen. Hayne’s attention to Article III, Section 2: “The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, [and] the Laws of the United States.” Using the Constitution’s text as evidence for his assertions, Webster ably demolished Hayne’s position. He argued that “No State law is to be valid which comes in conflict with the Constitution or any law of the United States” and that the ultimate authority on the constitutionality of a questionable piece of legislation lay within the scope of the Judiciary not the states.¹⁰ He added that if the nation were to accept the legitimacy of nullification, it would reduce the federal government to the ineffectual state that was at the heart of the problems with the Articles of Confederation.

During the period in which the Articles of Confederation was the governing document of the United States, the majority of governmental authority lay vested within the individual states. The federal government was effectually at the mercy of the individual states as its unicameral legislative body required unanimous consent from the states to act.¹¹ The federal government was particularly crippled by its inability to raise an army or levy taxes. Consequently, the government found itself dealing with the impossible task of fixing America's tremendous financial crisis after the revolution. The Articles of Confederation, which were premised around the idea of strong state governments and independent sovereignty of states, had the effect of endowing the states with tremendous freedom and power at the expense of crushing the federal government into an ineffectual entity.

Webster also attacked the so-called compact theory of the origins of the Constitution during the Hayne-Webster debates. He argued, "that the whole people, in their sovereign capacity, ratified the Constitution and that it was therefore meant to serve their collective interests, not the interests of the individual states."¹² The People, not the States, according to Webster, were the source of the government's power and as such, it was both the state and federal government's responsibility to act in the collective best interests of the people. Countering Hayne's notions of original state sovereignty, Webster claimed: "We are all agents of the same supreme power, the People... The General Government and the State Governments derive their authority from the same source."¹³ The Webster-Hayne debates laid down the intellectual foundations for the arguments that both sides would use in 1832, but the debates did not conclusively settle anything. The influential ideas espoused during the debates did, however, leave both nationalists and nullifiers alike more secure in the belief that they enjoyed constitutional justification for their respective positions.

President Andrew Jackson, despite his southern loyalties and slaveholder status, had strong feelings against nullification. Days after his famous dinner toast duel with Vice President Calhoun in April of 1830, he famously told a South Carolina Congressman, “give my compliments to my friends in your State, and say to them, that if a single drop of blood shall be shed there in opposition to the laws of the United States, I will hang the first man I can lay my hand on engaged in such treasonable conduct, upon the first tree I can reach.”¹⁴ President Jackson’s warning made it abundantly clear that he would not tolerate any attempt to impede the execution of federal law; however, so long as the theory of nullification remained within the realm of theory, he would not take any overt action against it.

Congress was well aware of the anger brewing in the cotton-growing South and sought to appease Southerners by passing the Tariff of 1832, which lowered the 1828 rates but was still highly protectionist. Calhoun’s political philosophy had gained significant traction, particularly in South Carolina. Supporters such as Robert Hayne, Pierce M. Butler and Robert W. Barnwell flocked to it as a result of the discontent that had been building over the last four years.¹⁵ The newly elected South Carolinian legislative body of 1832 now had a supermajority of nullification supporters. The Nullifiers saw the Tariff of 1832 as not nearly enough of a compromise and called for a state Nullification Convention. On November 24, 1832 the Convention passed the *Ordinance of Nullification*, which declared that the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832 were “unauthorized by the Constitution of the United States ... and are null and void.”¹⁶

The South Carolina *Ordinance of Nullification*’s core political underpinnings were derived from the political theory espoused in Calhoun’s *Exposition*. The *Ordinance* leveled serious charges against the federal government, claiming that Congress had exceeded its constitutionally enumerated powers and had

“violated the true meaning and intent of the Constitution.”¹⁷ Relying strongly on Calhoun’s ideas of Constitutional interpretation being a responsibility of the states, South Carolina took it upon itself to interpret what it believed was the “true meaning of the Constitution.”¹⁸ Using the foundation laid out in Calhoun’s *Exposition* as justification, it determined that its interpretation superseded any Supreme Court ruling. South Carolina took heavy measures against what it saw was an expansive and unconstitutional set of tariffs. It ordered all state officials to declare loyalty to the State and the *Nullification Ordinance* or face removal from office and loss of political privileges. It also ordered its courts to ignore any Supreme Court rulings on the constitutionality of the tariffs. Finally, the State issued a stern warning to President Andrew Jackson and the federal government he headed, declaring:

“We, the People of South Carolina...are determined to maintain this, our Ordinance and Declaration, at every hazard, Do *further Declare*, that we will not submit to the application of force, on the part of the Federal Government, to reduce this State to obedience; but that we will consider the passage, by Congress, of any act...to coerce the State...as inconsistent with the longer continuance of South Carolina in the Union.”¹⁹

The statement contained two very alarming messages: South Carolina, a state of the federal union, not only openly defied the constitution by espousing nullification, but also threatened armed resistance to a federal law and possible secession.

President Andrew Jackson now saw the nullifiers as a categorical threat to the security of his beloved Union and the institution of democracy as a whole. Although he was sympa-

thetic to the plight of his fellow Southerners, the rough-and-ready general was not about to acquiesce to the demands of those who directly threatened the sanctity of the Union. President Jackson sought to find a way out of the emerging mess and resolve the situation as peacefully as possible by waving both the carrot and the stick at his fellow Southerners. He could threaten to bring the heavy hand of the federal government, but he would not do so without first trying to reason with the nullifiers and convince them of the error of their ways. On December 11, 1832 Jackson responded to the *Ordinance* with his own *Nullification Proclamation*. President Jackson's *Proclamation* attempted to refute the legal and ideological justifications behind Nullification. He claimed:

“The Constitution of the United States...forms a government, not a league. The power to annul a law of the United States, assumed by one State, [is] incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed.”²⁰

President Jackson warned the nullifiers that by standing on the side of nullification and disunion they were going down a very dark and treacherous path. “Disunion by armed force is treason,” he insisted, and treason he would not tolerate.”²¹ President Jackson, borrowing from Webster's 1830 arguments, claimed that the doctrine of nullification was patently unconstitutional.²² He pointed to the potential slippery slope that nullification could bring if successful: the federal government would be reduced to a completely ineffective body and the nation would return to

its state under the Articles of Confederation. President Jackson made it abundantly clear to the nullifiers in South Carolina that he had no sympathy for the idea of nullification and he certainly would not tolerate an armed resistance to federal law.

After Jackson issued his *Proclamation* it seemed as if South Carolina and the federal government were at an impasse. Tensions mounted throughout the country, and both sides, convinced of their legitimacy, began lambasting the other's position. President Jackson and his cabinet continued to claim that South Carolina's actions were pushing the Union to the brink of destruction. Meanwhile, the nullifiers in South Carolina began portraying Jackson as a tyrant seeking to infringe on their natural right to protect their economic interests. As the bellicose rhetoric increased, both sides began to mobilize their forces in preparation for the impending showdown. On December 17, 1832, one week after he issued the *Nullification Proclamation*, President Jackson told Secretary of War Lewis Cass, "We must be prepared to act with promptness and crush the monster in its cradle before it matures to manhood. We must be prepared for the crisis."²³ As the days went by Jackson "raged to everyone within earshot of his determination to march to South Carolina at the head of an army and wage war, if necessary, to hang Calhoun and his cohorts."²⁴ In South Carolina, Governor Robert Hayne was also busy mobilizing men, equipment, and arms for what he saw as a defense of his state's sovereignty.

The rest of the country watched anxiously as tensions began to reach critical point. South Carolina's *Ordinance* was to take effect on February 1, 1833. With the first day of nullification looming, President Jackson pressed Congress to pass the Force Act, which gave him the power to use the military to enforce the federal tariff. Jackson technically already had the power to use military force to enforce federal legislation, but he wanted a congressional stamp of approval. As Jacksonian biographer

Jon Meacham pointed out: “Two existing laws – one from 1795, the other from 1807-- gave Jackson all the technical power he needed both to call out state militias and to use federal troops to enforce federal law.”²⁵ However, President Jackson was also aware of the political subtlety necessary to defuse the situation. He wanted Congress to pass the Force Bill to demonstrate to South Carolina that he had the support of the rest of the country. With the threat of open conflict looming, the halls of Congress were bustling as congressmen and senators from all parts of the country were desperately trying to avert the crisis.²⁶ The solution would come from the only thing that allows a democratic government to function: compromise.

Early American political history was filled with critical issues being resolved by compromise. Examples of important compromises include the Three-Fifths Compromise, the attachment of the Bill of Rights to ensure ratification of the Constitution, and the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Like the great issues before, the Nullification Crisis would also be defused through compromise. Historian Harry Watson observed President Jackson’s important role in what would emerge as the Compromise of 1833:

“As South Carolina and the President staked out rival and extreme positions in the crisis, initiative passed into Congress to resolve the issue. In addition to the Force Bill, the Administration called for rapid tariff reduction to meet the just complaints of South Carolina, and the nullifiers reciprocated by extending the date when their ordinance would take effect.”²⁷

Northern and Southern representatives alike realized the need to lower the tariff levels, but they were at odds over the level

of reduction necessary. Seeing the opportunity to increase his political prominence by forging a compromise, Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, a prominent Whig politician who supported tariffs, introduced a series of bills aimed at averting violence in South Carolina. The result was the Compromise of 1833, which reduced the federal tariff (although not entirely at a rate that the Southern planters were hoping for). The national tariff rates were to be reduced “very gradually, to give manufacturers enough time to adjust, but would end by renouncing protection by 1842.”²⁸ The Compromise Tariff was balanced by the passage of the Force Act, which gave Jackson Congress’ approval to use military force to enforce federal laws. In Henry Clay’s words, the Force Act was the sword to the Compromise Tariff’s olive branch.²⁹ The compromise gave South Carolina what it wanted, but reinforced the fact that the United States Government would not put up with insubordination from the states.

With the passage of the Force Act and the Compromise Tariff, the ball was placed squarely back in South Carolina’s court. Other Southern states may not have been happy with the tariff, but they were not willing to side with South Carolina and their ideas of nullification. Meacham notes:

“As January ended, it was clear that the battle would be between Washington and South Carolina [alone]. After flirting with Calhoun and the nullifiers, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and North Carolina decided to let South Carolina stand alone. Mississippi’s ultimate decision was representative of the rest of the South’s: ‘We detest the tariff but we will hold to the Union.’”³⁰

South Carolina now stood alone, and it soon realized it was out of options. Its fellow Southern States would not come to its aid,

and the compromise tariff was the best deal it was going to get. In the face of mounting pressure South Carolina relented.

Despite the direness of their situation, the South Carolinians would not go down passively. “South Carolina claimed victory and rescinded its nullification of the tariff, though the convention stuck by its principles and defiantly nullified the Force Act. National authorities ignored the provocation and rejoiced that the crisis had passed without bloodshed.”³¹ Once again it appeared that compromise had saved the Union. Initially it seemed that Jackson had decisively turned away the compact theory proponents and established the clear supremacy of the federal government over the states. However the peace brokered by the Compromise of 1833 proved to be a short-term solution to a conflict that would inevitably be settled not in the halls of Congress, but on battlefields throughout the nation. Southerners, until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, would remain particularly sensitive whenever sectional interests, which were invariably caused by the issue of slavery, were brought to the national forefront. Their determination to preserve the peculiar institution caused them to feel alienated from their Northern countrymen. They would become worried about the stability of their entire way of life under what they perceived to be a federal government whose policies favored Northern growth and economic power. This fear of a Northern attack on the institution of slavery would cause an entire generation of Southerners to promote Southern nationalism and secession.

The Nullification Crisis had serious long-term repercussions and ultimately laid the seeds that would manifest thirty years later into the Civil War. A major impact that the nullification crisis had was the emergence of a new Southern political ideology. The ideas that emerged from Calhoun’s *Exposition* and were critical during the Nullification Crisis would once again emerge in the years building up to the Civil War. After the Nul-

lification Crisis, the nation saw a period of relative tranquility between the sections. However following the Mexican-American War and the cession of nearly half a million square miles of western territory through the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, sectional tensions again began to emerge over conflicting stances regarding expansion of slavery into the new western territories. In the face of mounting sectional tensions over the issue of slavery and expansion, Congress once again forged a set of compromises in hopes of preserving the Union. The Compromise of 1850 was the last chapter of the political story of the Great Triumvirate of Clay, Webster and Calhoun. It called for the admission of California as a free state, termination of slave trade within the District of Columbia, the enactment of a new fugitive slave law, and the adoption the principle of popular sovereignty in the western territories of Utah and New Mexico. Four years later the idea of popular sovereignty caused a national uproar when ambitious Senator Stephan A. Douglas proposed applying it to the Nebraska Territory, which was clearly north of the 36'30 line that demarcated free from slave states according to the 1820 Missouri Compromise. The sectional fervor that resulted from the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act ultimately put the country on a collision course to the Civil War.

Historian of the sectional crisis of the 1850s Eric Walther noted that by the start of the Pierce Administration in 1853, “sectional politics had become so intertwined within the fabric of American society.”³² Sectional tensions continued to come to a head during the 1850s, and after the passage of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, it became outright violence. Meanwhile the spirit of compromise that helped end the Nullification Crisis and was carried on in the compromise forged in 1850 was increasingly absent in Washington D.C. By the late 1850s, Congress had become so tense and hyper-sectionalized that “on February 4 [1858] the House debate grew so superheated that thirty or

more congressmen actually came to blows, literally fighting... divided precisely along sectional lines.”³³ Faced with growing sectionalism, Southerners looked back upon Calhoun’s ideas of nullification and secession.

During the 1850s, men like Robert Barnwell Rhett, who replaced Calhoun’s seat in the Senate, were instrumental in driving the South down the path of secession. Rekindling the sentiments of that fateful winter in 1833, Rhett proclaimed on the Senate floor: “I will secede, if I can from this Union. I will test, for myself and for my children, whether South Carolina is a State or a humbled and degraded province, existing only at the mercy of an unscrupulous and fanatical tyranny.”³⁴ Secessionists were keen on the Calhounite belief that remaining in the Union was no longer in their best interests. They, like Calhoun, believed that if it was no longer in their best interests to remain in the Union, they should secede.

When the Southern states finally seceded, they paid homage to the issues at stake during the Nullification Crisis. Remnants of the hostility towards protective tariffs can even be found in the Confederate Constitution. Article One, Section 8, Clause 1 states: “Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises for revenue...but no... duties or taxes on importations from foreign nations [shall] be laid to promote or foster any branch of industry.”³⁵ The Nullification Crisis had such a tremendous effect on the framers of the Confederate Constitution that they thought it was necessary to write into their Constitution a clause that forever settled the issue of protective tariffs within their new country. Ironically, the Confederate Constitution makes no mention of the doctrine of nullification; and like the Federal Constitution claims that all judicial power lays vested within the courts. However the Confederate Constitution does pay homage to Calhoun and the importance he placed on state conventions. Unlike the Feder-

al Constitution, which requires a supermajority of states to call for an amendment, the Confederate Constitution only requires three states to call for an amendment to be brought up before a national convention. This idea of a national constitutional convention was mentioned in Calhoun's *Exposition* as a way for the national government to counter a state's nullification ordinance.

The Nullification Crisis is an important moment in early American political history. The crisis originated as a dispute over the federal tariffs; however, what emerged was something that would radically affect political thought for the next thirty years. Out of the crisis came two opposing schools of thought on the fundamental nature of American government. The crisis also highlights the South's constant fears about Northerners using the power of the federal government to attack the institution of slavery. The states' rights focus that became the principal political belief of most Southern politicians after the Nullification Crisis was predicated on the idea that strong state governments would best be able to preserve the institution of slavery. President Andrew Jackson was not worried about the sanctity of the institution of slavery as long as he was president. He decisively led his coalition of nationalists to affirm federal supremacy over the states. Calhoun's doctrine of nullification, as well as his status as a prominent national politician, was thoroughly crushed in the winter of 1833. However, the crisis would leave a lasting legacy in the South and it opened the door to a whole new set of Southern beliefs that revolved around sectionalism and the right of the states to secede from the Union.

In a larger sense Robert Hayne was correct when he said "Everything dear to our country is at stake." The Nullification Crisis challenged the very principles of democratic rule. The idea of majority rule was brought into conflict with what was believed to be a struggle for the preservation of minority rights. Nullification questioned the essence of the American Consti-

tution and squarely asked the American people: What is the nature of our government? Secessionist thought that emerged from the Nullification Crisis challenged the critically important concept of the Union, which was absolutely essential to how the nineteenth-century American framed his perception of the country he lived in. Finally, Southerners feared that if they lost the debate over the legitimacy of nullification, the sanctity of the institution of slavery would be jeopardized by a federal government that seemed to be bending towards the will of the North at their expense. This fear would fester over the decades building up to the Civil War and would ultimately reach its climax with the election of Republican presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln. The fear that Lincoln would attack the institution of slavery spurred South Carolina to secede on December 20, 1860. Unlike the winter of 1832-1833, the Secession Winter of 1860-1861 saw the remainder of the South follow South Carolina's lead and caused many of the ideologies that squared off thirty years earlier to manifest once more on the battlefield of America.

Notes

¹ Meacham, Jon. *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2009, 233.

² Watson, Harry L. *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America*. Ed. Eric Foner. New York: Hill and Wang, 1990, 113.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Goldfield, David R. *The American Journey: A History of the United States*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2011. Print., 268.

⁵ Goldfield, 265.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁷ Wilentz, Sean. "John C. Calhoun on States' Rights, 1828."

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⁸ *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*. Calhoun, John Caldwell, Robert Lee. Meriwether, William Edwin. Hemphill, and Clyde Norman. Wilson. Vol. X. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1977. Print, 444-532.

⁹ Brogdon, Matthew S. "Defending the Union: Andrew Jackson's Nullification Proclamation and American Federalism." *Review of Politics* 73.2 Academic Search Complete., 251.

¹⁰ Freehling, William W., ed. *The Nullification Era: A Documentary Record*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967, 88.

¹¹ Goldfield, 184.

¹² Brogdon, 252.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹⁴ "U.S. Senate: Art & History Home John C. Calhoun, 7th Vice President (1825-1832)." *U.S. Senate: Art & History Home John C. Calhoun, 7th Vice President (1825-1832)*. United States Senate, Web. 14 May 2013. <http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/VP_John_Calhoun.htm>.

¹⁵ Meacham, 222.

¹⁶ Freehling, William W., ed. "The Ordinance of Nullification". *The Nullification Era: A Documentary Record*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967, 151.

¹⁷ Freehling, 150.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁰ Watson, 127.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Meacham, 233.

²⁴ Watson, 127.

²⁵ Meacham, 241.

²⁶ Watson, 128-29.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

²⁹ Meacham, 245.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 242.

³¹ Watson, 129.

³² Walther, Eric H. *The Shattering of the Union: America in the 1850s*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2004, 27.

³³ *Ibid.*, 142.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁵ “Constitution of the Confederate States; March 11, 1861.”
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March 11, 1861. Yale Law School. Web. 26 May 2013. <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/csa_csa.asp>.

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