

THE BERT AND PEGGY DUPONT LECTURE

PRELUDE TO WAR, A GENTLEMEN'S AFFAIR: THE STORY BEHIND THE BATTLE OF FORT SUMTER, APRIL 1861

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CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

This evening, I will suggest some rethinking of a common belief that South Carolina impetuously fired on Fort Sumter and began the War against Southern Independence, usually called by a less accurate name. I asked your president, Dr Phil Mackowiak, if that approach might be too provocative. He replied, "No, that would be a welcome break from medicine and science." We are after all, he said, in Charleston.

An appropriate history of what happened between North and South before December 1860 explains the cause of secession of seven states. The Battle of Fort Sumter occurred on April 12th and 13th, 1861. The Regular Army of the United States of America at the time consisted of only some 16,000 officers and soldiers. Two days after the battle, newly inaugurated President Lincoln called up 75,000 militia men, and that has been called the start of the war. It was the immediate cause of the secession of four more states, Virginia 2 days after Lincoln's call up of the 75,000 troops, then Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Intent counts for much in the prelude to a war. The South aimed no threat at the North. The Confederate States of America wanted only an uncontested divorce. The property settlement was minimal: two forts lying offshore, Fort Pickens in Pensacola Harbor and Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor (1).

On May 3, 1861, President Lincoln again, not the US Congress, called up 42,000 additional volunteers and increased the size of the regular US Army by almost 23,000 soldiers. In July 1861, the US Congress sanctioned Lincoln's acts and authorized 500,000 additional volunteers. Yielding or compromising on the troublesome issue of Fort Sumter and four formerly Federal installations around Charleston Harbor, all manned by only 90 men, would have prevented the loss of 620,000 lives during the ensuing war and the unwarranted burning of cities, towns, and villages in Georgia and South Carolina.

The Southern states, long displeased about what they considered unacceptable and growing national political power arranged specifically

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against their economic interests and their way of life, took the right of exit which was not denied by the Constitution. The Ninth and 10th Amendments, they said, provided for secession. Lincoln thought otherwise and took upon himself certain powers. A catastrophe followed.

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

In this country today, most accept the current received interpretation: the South was impulsive and wrong. Those who immediately accept such an interpretation of the firing on Fort Sumter and the ensuing war often have scant knowledge of the history. As a succinct example of general ignorance of facts, we can briefly examine the contents of the "Emancipation Proclamation," a strategic move during the war. Many or most members of this learned audience believe it freed slaves in America, believe it ended slavery. Not so. Checking the facts is as easy as reading the brief document, less than two pages long, easily accessible on the Internet.

Issued on September 22, 1862, and taking effect on January 1, 1863, the proclamation declared free only those slaves held in parts of the South that were not occupied by Union troops. Unashamedly, President Lincoln wrote in the middle of the proclamation that his document was "a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion," not at all an idealistic measure to free all slaves in America, South and North. Lawyer that he was, Lincoln in the "Emancipation Proclamation" listed all those states and parts of states that were currently in rebellion against the United States, the word rebellion an argument for a counterargument. Slaves in 13 parishes (counties) of Louisiana were not freed by Lincoln because Union forces occupied those counties, and the same is true of seven counties and two cities in Virginia. These counties contained 300,000 un-emancipated slaves who continued in slavery after the proclamation went into effect. Neither did the proclamation cover half a million slaves in the slaveholding border states, such as Maryland and Delaware, which were Union states. Colonel Shaw, in the movie "Glory" discusses this fact with the surgeon. The slaves in question were not freed until almost 2 years later, 7 months after the war ended, by the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution, adopted on December 6, 1865.

The London *Times* wrote at the time, "Where he has no power Mr Lincoln will set the negroes free; where he retains power he will consider them as slaves." The leftist and influential 20th century American historian Richard Hofstadter in 1948 said that the "Emancipation Proclamation" had "all the moral grandeur of a bill of lading."

Some 20th century black intellectuals, such as W.E.B. DuBois and James Baldwin, said that the “Emancipation Proclamation” was essentially worthless. Please do not condemn the bringer of historical facts, whatever the surprise at the facts. They are not hard to discover. For example, I am just an English teacher, not a historian.

THE AIM THIS EVENING

A few minutes ago, I said the aim tonight is to respond to the belief among many that South Carolina impulsively, impetuously fired on Fort Sumter. All who are interested in the subject can read the political background to the Battle of Fort Sumter, choosing the bias of historians and commentaries to suit their predispositions. What I will offer this evening for the most part are the facts of what occurred on the scene in and around Charleston Harbor between late November 1860 and mid-April 1861. I will mention 19th century sources that contain contemporary accounts of what happened during these months that were stressful to both sides because of what seemed to be an impending doom.

A STANDOFF AMONG GENTLEMEN, ALL SOUTHERNERS

In November 1860, Major Robert Anderson, US Army, was ordered to assume command of Fort Moultrie on Sullivan’s Island. A few weeks before the secession convention in Charleston, December 18 to 20, 1860, the major wrote a report to Colonel Samuel Cooper, Adjutant General (2) of the United States Army, later to become Adjutant General of the Confederate States Army. The report included a discussion of defending both Castle Pinckney and Fort Sumter. He concluded the report: “I need not say how anxious I am, indeed determined, so far as honor will permit, to avoid collision with the citizens of South Carolina” (3). Major Anderson was a pro-slavery, former slave owner from Kentucky who, as a United States Military Academy (USMA) graduate and Federal Army officer, was to remain loyal to the Union.

The Assistant Adjutant General of the US Army, Major Don Carlos Buell, soon came to Charleston from Washington to inspect what the Union naturally considered Federal fortifications despite a looming threat of secession. On December 11, Buell instructed Major Anderson, “You are to hold possession of the forts in this harbor and, if attacked, you are *to defend yourself to the last extremity* [emphasis mine]. The smallness of your force will not permit you, perhaps, to occupy more than one of the three forts [Moultrie, Sumter, and Castle Pinckney]...

and you may put your command into either of them [Fort Moultrie or Fort Sumter] which you deem most proper to increase its power of resistance." This unambiguous directive told Major Anderson how to proceed. As a Regular Army officer, of course Major Anderson would carry out his orders.

SECESSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The South Carolina Secession Convention met in Columbia, South Carolina, on December 17, 1860, and moved to Charleston the next day. The vote to secede 2 days later was unanimous, 169 to 0. US President James Buchanan announced that the secession was illegal but did nothing to stop it.

"The union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of the 'United States of America,' is hereby dissolved." That statement was to affect the lives of millions alive on December 20, 1860, and the lives of millions to be born. South Carolina had announced that it was free of the Union.

Ten days later, President Buchanan learned of Buell's verbal orders to Major Anderson and changed them. He ordered the Secretary of War to write to Major Anderson these words: "It is neither expected nor desired that you should expose your own life, or that of your men, in a hopeless conflict in defense of these forts.... It will be your duty to yield to necessity and make the best terms in your power." Buchanan was different from his successor Lincoln.

AN ACT OF WAR

Governor Pickens was anticipating Major Anderson's moving of his forces to Fort Sumter. On December 18, 1860, just before the Ordinance of Secession on December 20, the governor ordered a boat with a detachment of troops to patrol the harbor between Forts Moultrie and Sumter. If the commander of these waterborne troops found Major Anderson attempting to occupy Fort Sumter, he was to prevent it, to resist it by force, and then immediately to take Fort Sumter.

On the night of December 26, Major Anderson's men were ordered to turn their overcoats to hide the military buttons and to take off their caps, so as to be taken for the civilian laborers who passed daily between Forts Sumter and Moultrie. The ruse was successful, a turn-coat matter one might say. The act of soldiers posing as civilians in war historically has been viewed as an act of perfidy. With the ruse, Union troops took Fort Sumter without a shot fired. They had spiked the guns at Fort Moultrie and set fire to their carriages. Some at the time and

later considered this clandestine move to Fort Sumter an act of war, the first in the coming conflict. US Secretary of War at the time, John B. Floyd, could not believe Major Anderson had made such a move, because there was no order for such an act. He asked the major to explain his action.

Soon after Major Anderson moved his command to Fort Sumter, two aides of Governor Pickens, Colonel J. Johnston Pettigrew, and Major Ellison Capers, Citadel Class of 1857, arrived at the fort and demanded "courteously, but peremptorily" that Major Anderson return with his command to Fort Moultrie. The major replied, also courteously, that he "could not and would not" meet the governor's request. Colonel Pettigrew said the move to Fort Sumter had violated an agreement between former Governor William H. Gist and President James Buchanan that no reinforcements would be sent to Fort Sumter. Major Anderson replied that reinforcements were not involved, only a transfer of his command to another fort, which he had a right to do as commander of the harbor. He seemed not to have heard of the unwritten agreement mentioned by South Carolina Colonel Pettigrew. Moving fresh, armed troops to a fort would normally be considered reinforcing the fort.

As Colonel Pettigrew and Major Capers were leaving, Major Anderson said, "In this controversy between the North and the South my sympathies are entirely with the South. These gentlemen [referring to his officers, who were present at the conversation] know it perfectly well." His sense of duty to the United States Army, he said, "overrode any personal feelings in the matter."

THE STAR OF THE WEST AFFAIR

In early January 1861, a ship named *Star of the West* was sent secretly from New York to Charleston to resupply and reinforce Fort Sumter. The ship contained a 3-month subsistence supply for the fort and 200 selected troops who were told to remain unseen below deck as they approached Charleston Harbor. Reinforcement of the fort was not allowed by the South Carolina governor. Word got out that a reinforcement ship was headed for Fort Sumter. All concerned around the harbor knew of the "secret" plan but Major Anderson. On January 9, 1861, as the *Star of the West* crossed the bar and was entering Charleston Harbor, a battery of Citadel cadets on Morris Island fired a warning shot in front of the bow and then fired on the Union ship, forcing it to turn around and head back for New York. Many around Charleston thought this was the opening of the war. Later that day, Major Ander-

son wrote to Governor Pickens that he had no notice that war had been declared. Officers aboard the *Star of the West* highly complimented the Citadel cadets for their shooting competence, saying the guns were fired rapidly and with a will. A humorist aboard the ship remarked, "The people of Charleston pride themselves upon their hospitality, but it exceeded my expectations. They gave us several balls before we landed."

TWO COURTEOUS NOTES FROM S.C. AND FROM THE C.S.A.

About January 21, 1861, Governor Pickens sent two emissaries to Fort Sumter under a white flag, one a former Federal judge now secretary of state for South Carolina, the other the secretary of war for the state. They had with them a note for Major Anderson "to induce the delivery of Fort Sumter to the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina." Politely sending his regrets to the gentlemen from South Carolina, Major Anderson said that because such a decision was solely up to his government, he would not surrender the fort.

In early March 1861, the Confederate government in Montgomery, Alabama, formed as the Confederate States of America under a provisional constitution on February 8, assumed control of military operations at Charleston, and sent an officer to take charge, Brigadier General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, an 1838 graduate of West Point, where one of his instructors was Robert Anderson, an 1825 graduate of the academy.

In March there was much in newspapers about the upcoming evacuation of Fort Sumter. Finally, thinking the evacuation was a certainty, General Beauregard in late March wrote to Major Anderson, "Having been informed that Mr Lamon, the authorized agent of the President of the United States, advised Governor Pickens, after his interview with you at Fort Sumter, that yourself and command would be transferred to another post in a few days, and understanding that you are under the impression I intend under all circumstances to require of you a formal surrender or capitulation, I hasten to disabuse you, and to inform you that our countries not being at war, and wishing as far as it lies in my power to avoid the latter calamity, no such condition will be expected of you, unless brought about as the natural result of hostilities." It was a diplomatic and courteous note, says Milby Burton in his *Siege of Charleston*, 1970, "more like a communication to an old friend than one to a potential enemy." In a letter to the secretary of war, General Beauregard said of Major Anderson, "In my opinion, a

most gallant officer, incapable of any act that might tarnish his reputation as a soldier.”

FINALLY LINCOLN ACTS

Major Anderson at this time was reporting to the government in Washington that he and his men were seriously short of food that might last until April 10 if they went on short rations. As usual, he received no reply from Washington. On April 3, he wrote that his bread would last only 4 or 5 days. No reply.

Finally, Lincoln acted. On March 29, he had sent a note to his secretary of war: “I desire than an expedition, to move by sea, be got ready to sail as early as the 6th of April next.” Despite many rumors of evacuation, Fort Sumter apparently was to be reinforced, a move expressly forbidden by Southern authorities after months of patient and unsatisfying negotiations regarding the evacuation of the fort. US Naval Captain Gustavus Fox, commanding the reinforcement expedition, was instructed to enter Charleston Harbor and send a boatload of provisions to Fort Sumter and to do no more, unless he was stopped or fired upon. In either of those cases, he was to try to force a passage, with the help of US Navy ships beyond the harbor, and supply the fort not only with provisions but also with troops.

The Lincoln government, in office for a month, had left Major Anderson ignorant of what was going on behind the scenes and about how he was to negotiate with Governor Pickens and later with General Beauregard. Early in April, Major Anderson received his first orders from US Secretary of War Cameron, dated April 4: An expedition was being sent to him before April 15, because Captain Fox had told the secretary of war that Major Anderson could hold out till then. Secretary Cameron’s orders to Major Anderson said that if the flag was still flying over Fort Sumter, the expedition “will attempt to provision you, and, in case resisted, will endeavor to reinforce you. ...You will therefore hold out, if possible, till the arrival of the expedition....Whenever, if at all, in your judgment to save yourself and command, a capitulation becomes a necessity, you are authorized to make it.”

Major Anderson was “deeply affected” by this communiqué because he knew the Confederate forces at this stage would allow neither supplies nor reinforcements to be landed. He had been confined in the fort for months. He had hoped peace would be maintained by negotiations about the possession of Fort Sumter. With the expected arrival of reinforcements all was changed, and war was inevitable. He replied at once to the secretary of war that his order surprised him. He was

assured that his command would be evacuated by peaceful means. This expedition of resupply and reinforcement would be disastrous to everyone, he said, with considerable loss of life. He concluded his letter, "We shall strive to do our duty, though I frankly say that my heart is not in the war which I see is to be thus commenced. That God will still avert it, and cause us to resort to pacific measures to maintain our rights, is my ardent prayer." This letter was seized by Confederate authorities and read by General Beauregard. It never reached Washington.

Up to this point, about April 5, obviously Major Anderson, the South Carolina authorities, and the Confederate authorities including General Beauregard, wanted to resolve the issue of the fort by negotiation and by peaceful means. None of them wanted war. However, as nothing had been heard from Washington for months, Major Anderson continued to do his duty and hold the fort until otherwise informed. Both sides felt the mounting pressure.

MORE EVIDENCE OF POLITE RELATIONS DURING THE STALEMATE

During the continuing negotiations about the evacuation of Major Anderson's command, Confederate batteries around the harbor were systematically firing their guns to determine the exact range of Fort Sumter. This practice also aided those in the fort by showing them what to expect and by suggesting to them the size and number of guns in each battery. During this firing practice a 10-inch mortar shell, as big as a basketball, burst so close to Fort Sumter that it brought a protest from the commander. He wrote a letter to General Beauregard stating that the shell had exploded so near that it was dangerous to the fort's occupants. "I have never regarded myself as being in a hostile attitude towards the inhabitants of South Carolina," he said. "I most earnestly hope that nothing will ever occur to alter, in the least, the high regard and esteem I have for so many years entertained for you. I am, dear general, yours, very truly ROBERT ANDERSON, Major, U.S. Army, Commanding."

This letter by Major Anderson was written on April 6. General Beauregard replied the next day that he had given orders to the mortar battery commander to fire his guns in other directions when practicing. He added, "Let me assure you, Major, that nothing shall be wanting on my part to preserve the friendly relations and impressions which have existed between us for so many years."

A week later, Major Anderson was forced to capitulate to his former student and friend General Beauregard. The relief expedition was on its way. Both sides prepared for war.

A thoughtful hearer of this account can imagine some of the conflicting and distressing emotions Major Anderson was suffering at this point. The end of the story shows what this conflict did to the gentleman major after the battle was concluded. He was not physically wounded, but emotionally and physically he was a wreck.

A LAST DEMAND, SOON REVISED IN ATTEMPT TO AVOID WAR

Realizing that negotiations were no longer possible, on April 10, President Jefferson Davis, with support of his cabinet, instructed Secretary of War Walker to order General Beauregard to make one last demand on Major Anderson for the evacuation of Fort Sumter: "You will at once demand its evacuation and if this is refused proceed, in such a manner as you may determine, to reduce it." The next day the general initiated a final attempt to avoid war. It was rejected, resulting in a war none on the scene wanted.

About 3:45 p.m. on April 11, a small boat bearing a white flag approached the wharf at Fort Sumter. It contained Colonel James Chesnut Jr (4), Lieutenant Colonel A. R. Chisolm, and Captain Stephen D. Lee, three of Beauregard's aides. In the guardroom, the three greeted Major Anderson and handed him a dispatch from General Beauregard. The demand read:

"SIR: The Government of the Confederate States has hitherto forbore from any hostile demonstration against Fort Sumter in the hope that the Government of the United States, with a view to the amicable adjustment of all questions between the two governments, and to avert the calamities of war, would voluntarily evacuate it....I am ordered by the Government of the Confederate States to demand the evacuation of Fort Sumter....all proper facilities will be afforded for the removal of yourself and your command, together with company arms and property, and all private property, to any post in the United States which you may select. The flag which you have upheld so long and with so much fortitude, under the most trying circumstances, may be saluted by you on taking it down."

Surgeon Crawford, one of Anderson's officers, remarked: "Was ever such terms granted to a band of starving men?" Had Lincoln not interceded a few days earlier, another few days might well have solved the problem without war.

With every one of his officers at Fort Sumter, Major Anderson retired to another room. They read the dispatch and unanimously refused the demand. Major Anderson wrote his reply:

“I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication demanding the evacuation of this fort, and to say, in reply thereto, that it is a demand with which I regret that my sense of honor, and my obligations to my government, prevent my compliance. Thanking you for the fair, manly and courteous terms proposed, and for the high compliment paid me, I am, General, very respectfully, your obedient servant, ROBERT ANDERSON, Major, First Artillery, commanding.”

The Confederate military emissaries received the written reply, and Major Anderson walked with them to the dock where their boat waited. He asked if the Confederate batteries under General Beauregard’s command would open fire upon receiving this reply.

W.A. Swanberg gives an account of the brief remarks at the dock as the Confederate officers were about to depart:

“Colonel Chesnut pondered. ‘I think not,’ he said. ‘No, I can say to you that he will not, without further notice [to you].’

“‘I shall await the first shot,’ Anderson said, ‘and if you do not batter us to pieces, we shall be starved out in a few days.’

“It was a remark which in strict military propriety he should not have made, would never have made had he considered these men enemies who must be destroyed rather than gentlemen who had a legitimate grievance” (5).

Major Anderson’s reference to being starved out surprised Colonel Chesnut. He asked if he might report this reference to General Beauregard. Major Anderson confirmed the truth of the reference but would not allow it to be put into the form of a report.

FINAL CHANCE TO AVOID WAR BETWEEN GENTLEMEN

A little after 5:00 pm, the general’s three aides arrived in the city and delivered Major Anderson’s reply to General Beauregard, adding orally the major’s spoken statement. All of this information was telegraphed to Secretary of War Walker with a request for instructions. The reply from Montgomery, Alabama, was prompt and direct:

“If Major Anderson will state the time at which, as indicated by him, he will evacuate, and agree that in the meantime he will not use his guns against us unless ours should be employed against Fort Sumter, you are authorized thus to avoid the effusion of blood.” Secretary Walker added that if these terms were refused, General Beauregard was to fire on Major Anderson, his friend, and to reduce the fort.

Both sides watched out beyond the bar for the arrival of Lincoln’s relief expedition. Little in Washington could be done in secret in

spite of attempts. Both sides expected Lincoln's relief expedition hourly.

About 1:00 am, Friday, April 12, 1861, Beauregard's three aides again arrived at Fort Sumter in a boat bearing a white flag. They presented to Major Anderson another communication from General Beauregard stating that he had received word of the major's being "starved out" and offered a stipulation:

"If you will state the time which you will evacuate Fort Sumter, and agree in the meantime that you will not use your guns against us unless ours shall be employed against Fort Sumter, we will abstain from opening fire upon you."

Major Anderson read the demand and again gathered with his officers for consultation. He asked Surgeon Crawford how long the men could hold out and was told about 5 days, the last 3 without food. Major Anderson stalled, and after a considerable delay to see if the US Navy relief fleet would come into view to the northeast, he replied to Colonel Chesnut that he would evacuate Fort Sumter by noon on April 15th, "Should I not receive prior to that time controlling instructions from my Government or additional supplies."

Colonel Chesnut said the reply contained too many "ifs." He sat down and wrote the following reply which he handed to Major Anderson:

"Sir, By authority of Brigadier General Beauregard, commanding the Provisional Forces of the Confederate States, we have the honor to notify you that he will open fire of his batteries on Fort Sumter in one hour from this time." It was 3:20 am when Major Anderson walked the Confederate officers to the wharf and cordially shook hands with them. As a farewell he told them: "If we never meet in this world again, God grant that we may in the next..." (6).

IT WAS TO BE WAR

When the aides left in their boat, Major Anderson woke his troops and told them the bombardment would begin within the hour. He had the large garrison flag raised over the fort, where it flew for 34 hours till the end of the battle.

The rowboat took Colonel Chesnut and the other two aides to Fort Johnson on the northeast point of James Island. They reported to Captain George S. James commanding one of the batteries there and ordered him to open fire toward Fort Sumter with one of his 10-inch mortars. Precisely at 4:30 am, the high, sparking, steep parabola of the mortar shell would be a signal for batteries around the harbor to open fire. "It was to be war," as Milby Burton put it.

THE BATTLE

Hour after hour Fort Sumter was pummeled by a semicircle of steel emanating from batteries around the harbor, Mount Pleasant Battery, the Floating Battery, Fort Moultrie, Cumming's Point Battery, and Fort Johnson (Figure 1). Castle Pinckney and the tip of Charleston peninsula were too distant from Fort Sumter to engage. Early in the morning of April 13th, Confederate "hot shot," heated round shot, started a huge fire in the barracks which spread to the hospital and the magazine. The Union gunners were red-eyed, coughing, and otherwise suffering from heat and smoke.

Throughout the battle, Union troops inside Fort Sumter returned fire in several directions, but their cannon were fewer in number and their ammunition dwindled. Toward the end they were ordered by Major Anderson to fire only one round every 10 minutes. Each time a Union round went downrange toward a CSA battery, Confederate gunners on Morris and Sullivan's Islands mounted their parapets and cheered for their opponents' courage.

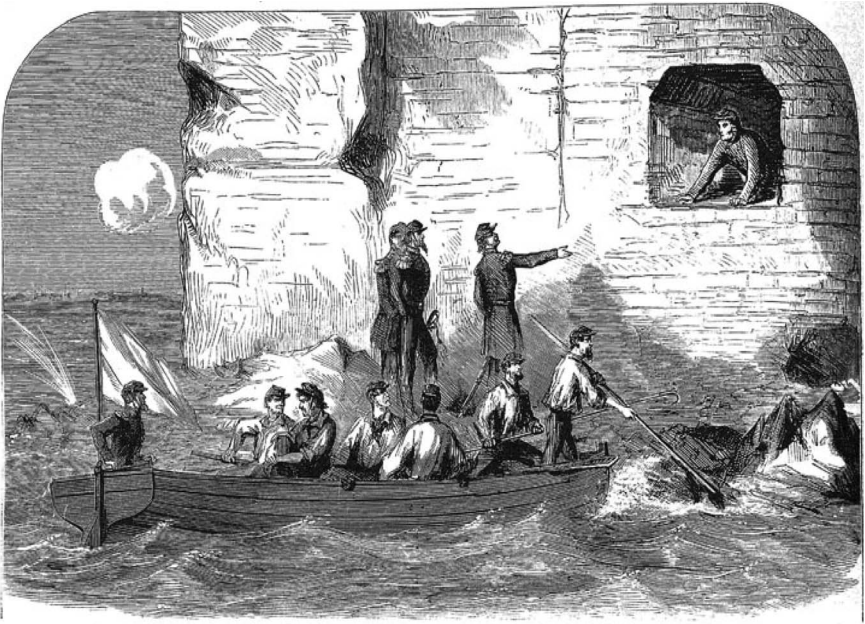
At 1:00 pm the second day, April 13, the Union flag was shot down. Confederate gunners ceased fire. The commander of forces on Morris Island, Brigadier General James Simons, sent Colonel Louis T. Wigfall to Fort Sumter to ask if Major Anderson would surrender to General



FIG. 1. Battle of Fort Sumter, April 12, 1861, Charleston, South Carolina.

Beauregard. The colonel had to crawl through an open embrasure (Figure 2). Major Anderson came up, and Colonel Wigfall said to him, "Major Anderson, I am Colonel Wigfall. You have defended your flag nobly, sir. It's madness to persevere in useless resistance. General Beauregard wishes to stop this, and to ask upon what terms you will evacuate this work." Major Anderson knew that further resistance was useless, and he quietly remarked, "I have already stated the terms to General Beauregard. Instead of noon the 15th, I will go now." The two of them discussed the terms of surrender. Major Anderson and his garrison would be allowed to leave the fort with their arms and all company property. He requested permission to salute the flag. The colonel again complimented the major on his heroic resistance. About 1:30 pm, Major Anderson ordered the garrison flag lowered and a hospital sheet raised in its place, ending almost 34 hours of continuous bombardment of Fort Sumter. When Colonel Wigfall and his aide approached Morris Island, Confederate troops waded into waist-deep water and carried the two men ashore on their shoulders.

Soon Major Anderson accepted authorized terms of surrender from General Beauregard by way of his three aides, allowing the salute to



MAJOR ANDERSON'S INTERVIEW WITH COLONEL WIGFALL THROUGH THE PORT-HOLE OF FORT SUMTER.

FIG. 2. Colonel Wigfall Negotiates with Major Anderson (see <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/mssc/ftsumter/interview.htm>).

the Union flag “as an honorable Testimony to the gallantry and fortitude with which Major Anderson and his command defended their post.” The general also sent Fire Chief M.H. Nathans to deal with the flames in the fort and Surgeon General R.W. Gibbes with medical aid.

Major Anderson and his garrison had suffered terribly from the ordeal of hour after hour of bombardment. They had not slept for many hours. They were exhausted by their loading and firing of the guns in the fort, and they were almost completely done in by battling the large fire within the fort that raged out of control. A witness just after the bombardment ended said, “they looked worn, haggard, and ready to drop from sheer exhaustion.” Surgeon Crawford, one of Major Anderson’s senior officers, remarked that “the enthusiasm that for so long inspired them seemed to have gone.”

AFTER THE BATTLE

As a result of 3307 “hot shot” and regular cannon shot and shell and the resulting fire within the walls, the fort was largely a wreck. On Sunday, April 14th, the day after the surrender, boats filled the harbor containing people wanting a close view of the still smoldering fort. They lined the beaches, and soldiers were fascinated with the view of Fort Sumter. The city’s church bells pealed, and residents attended commemorative services thankful that the victory was practically bloodless. That afternoon Citadel cadets who had been stationed on the Battery downtown performed a dress parade that entirely pleased the spectators. People coming from a 50-mile radius contributed to jamming Charleston’s streets.

The strain Major Anderson had endured the past few months had left him a broken man, but few realized that as he stood in the ruins of Fort Sumter receiving aides, newspaper correspondents, and politicians, chatting pleasantly. General Beauregard, further to his credit, did not go to Fort Sumter because his presence might embarrass his old friend. President Jefferson Davis, in a telegram to General Beauregard, said, “If occasion offers tender my friendly remembrance to Major Anderson” (7). At the fort that day, Major Anderson met Major Stevens of the Iron Brigade and complimented him on the battery’s shooting ability. Brandy was sent over, accepted, and consumed. To make the remaining hours pleasant for the Union garrison and to aid in their departure, much was tendered and accepted.

These officers were gentlemen of the Old South, of the Old Army, not yet controlled by an ideologue from the Midwest whose power in Washington came between attempts at compromise. They were not the

hot-headed rebels sometimes portrayed, especially three generations after gentlemen such as Major Anderson and General Beauregard and his aides had departed this earthly scene. For two and a half generations, the mutual respect largely remained, as cinema and other sources up to the 1930s and 1940s often portrayed, still honoring Southerners' belief in their cause. The country turned a corner following the social disruptions and realignments of the 1960s. The victors in the War against Southern Independence, honoring a gentlemanly accord for nearly a century afterwards, at length rewrote settled and honorable history with their revisions, as victors will do, especially true in the last few decades. History is a story, and stories have points of view. The revisionist view since the 1960s offends many in the South, about a third of the United States, the nation's most populous region.

DEPARTURE OF MAJOR ANDERSON AND HIS GARRISON

Major Anderson was allowed to fire a 100-gun salute to his flag, during which a premature explosion killed one of his soldiers and wounded five others. Major Anderson continued with the salute, reducing the number from 100 to 50. The Confederate steamer *Isabel* was placed at Major Anderson's disposal to take his men out to the Union fleet that was anchored off the bar and outside of the battle during the 2-day engagement. Captain Abner Doubleday, upon boarding the *Isabel*, was stopped by a South Carolina officer who asked him why he had shot a hole in the Moultrie House, a grand hotel built in 1850 on Sullivan's Island. Captain Doubleday replied, "The landlord had given me a wretched room there one night, and this being the only opportunity that had occurred to get even with him, I was unable to resist it." The Southern officer laughed heartily, and said, "I understand it all now. You were perfectly right, sir, and I justify the act" (8).

Stuck on a sandbar beside Fort Sumter the steamer *Isabel* had to wait all night for the tide to rise. Major Anderson and his men could not help witnessing the flag raising and the celebration Sunday afternoon inside the fort. The next morning, Monday, April 15th, the steamer passed slowly by Morris Island going to the fleet. Major Anderson observed a remarkable acclaim. Confederate gunners who had shelled him for 34 hours lined the beach, heads uncovered, silent while the ship containing the major and his command passed before them. By contrast, the Confederate troops there had nothing but scorn at the apparent cowardice of the fleet that did not attempt to rescue "so gallant an officer and his command." Actually, the small fleet was still

awaiting the arrival of the heavily gunned *Powhatan* and the *Pocahontas*, which failed to show up. When Major Anderson and his men reached New York, they were widely honored as heroes.

Major General Samuel Jones, Confederate States Army, who later assumed command of the defenses of Charleston, said of Major Anderson, "He was a well-trained and tried soldier, and an accomplished gentleman, with a high and scrupulous sense of honor. He acted as might have been expected of such an officer so circumstanced." Milby Burton said, "Anderson lived, fought, and nearly died by his sense of honor."

Confederate troops on Morris Island gave a soldier's burial to Private Daniel Hough who was killed by the premature explosion during the salute in the fort. They fired a volley over his grave. A man of the cloth came over from Charleston to read the burial service. Another Union soldier, wounded during the explosion during the artillery salute after the surrender of Fort Sumter, slowly recovered in a Charleston hospital. Six weeks later, General Beauregard signed a pass requesting that the Union soldier be allowed to go through the lines unharmed.

Major Anderson, not wounded physically during the Battle of Fort Sumter, was still a casualty. The strain of the responsibility of keeping peaceful relations with South Carolina, and then with the Confederate States of America while the Union government vacillated, had wrecked him both emotionally and physically. That made him a battle casualty as much as if he had been seriously wounded during the bombardment. He returned to New York where he was feted and celebrated, his name having become a household word. Despite official requests, he could not write his report about the battle of Fort Sumter. He left it to someone else who simply submitted a single sentence giving the major's statement to Secretary of War Cameron. The brevity of the report conveyed Major Anderson's mixed emotions of pride and failure in his attempt to hold and defend Fort Sumter.

WHAT NOW?

The Confederate States now held Fort Sumter. Would there be war or compromise? James Hammond, former South Carolina Governor and recent US Senator, said he was amazed that war should have come even after seven states had seceded. The passionately opinionated Charleston *Mercury* thought no war would ensue after Major Anderson surrendered Fort Sumter. Many South Carolinians reading the editorials in newspapers and listening to political harangues for the last several months believed the disunion was to be resolved peaceably.

Some, however, predicted that secession would lead to war. William H. Gist, governor of South Carolina just before Francis W. Pickens, predicted that "two battles will end the war and our independence will be acknowledged." Apparently paying little attention to what politicians said, General Beauregard looked to creating a series of defenses for Charleston and indeed for the protection of the entire coast.

The War against Southern Independence in effect had begun.

WHO STARTED THE WAR?

Evidence above of recorded and dated conversations, often with witnesses present, and evidence of letters and telegrams show that by about April 5, 1861, Major Anderson, the South Carolina authorities, and the Confederate authorities including General Beauregard, wanted to resolve the issue of the fort by negotiation and by peaceful means. When Major Anderson received the letter from Simon Cameron, US Secretary of War, dated April 4, his response shows that he was stricken with dismay. The hoped-for negotiation and peaceful evacuation would be swept aside with impending resupply and probable reinforcement. That will "produce most disastrous results throughout our country," he had written to Secretary Cameron (9).

President Lincoln's note to Secretary of War Cameron on March 29, when he finally acted, seems to have been the step that would result in war, and he knew it. He ordered Secretary Cameron to supply and reinforce Fort Sumter, and all leaders on both sides in Charleston and around the harbor knew that would result in war. Washington knew it also. All leaders on the scene were hoping for a peaceful solution. President Lincoln had been receiving reports about the Charleston scene at least since he took office on March 4. On March 29 in the note to Secretary Cameron he acted on what he had decided to do.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. South Carolina could not tolerate a federal fort blocking an important sea port. The state had control of Fort Sumter after secession on December 20, 1860, until Major Anderson moved Union troops to the fort on December 26. That act, some have said, led to the ensuing war.

2. The adjutant general is the chief administrative officer of the army.

3. Quotations are taken from a variety of contemporary sources such as the *Charleston Mercury* newspaper, *Journal of the South Carolina Executive Councils of 1861 and 1862*, and the *Journal of the Conven-*

tion of the People of South Carolina, 1862. E. Milby Burton in *The Siege of Charleston, 1861–1865* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1979) cites these and many other sources in his detailed account of what transpired during the few crucial months from November 1860 to April 1861. It is a convenient place to follow what was happening almost day by day between the Secession Convention in December 1860 and the Battle of Fort Sumter on April 12th and 13th, 1861. I followed his first 60 pages closely. Footnote 3 in the text refers to Burton, *The Siege of Charleston*, p. 7.

4. Colonel James Chesnut Jr, later Brigadier General Chesnut, was the husband of Mary Boykin Chesnut, writer of the famous diary of life among the upper society of Confederate officers and politicians and their wives during the war years, later published as *A Diary from Dixie*. They lived in a plantation house near Camden, South Carolina.

5. Swanberg, W.A. *First Blood* (New York, 1957), p. 292.

6. This comment and much else in this account is found in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 1884–1887, 4 volumes. Capt. Stephen D. Lee, CSA, wrote the account of Major Anderson's last words before the bombardment, in Vol. I, p. 76, and many historians have drawn on it since that time. Captain Lee was there at the scene on the wharf of Fort Sumter that early morning of April 12, 1861. The volumes of *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* and the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1880–1891, 70 volumes, are cited often in E. Milby Burton's *Siege of Charleston* and in other histories containing accounts of the lead-up to the war.

7. Roman A. *The Military Operations of General Beauregard* (New York, 1884), I, 52.

8. Abner Doubleday A. *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860–61* (New York, 1876), p. 162.

9. Swanberg, *First Blood*, p. 282.