

# Bloody Sunday

On Sunday, April 14, the day designated for the evacuation of Fort Sumter, the atmosphere was warm and sunny. Black smoke ascended from the fort as Edmund Ruffin and the Palmetto Guard boarded a steamer, joining a crowd of spectators excited for the departure of Major Anderson and his garrison. Though anticipated to occur by 9 a.m., the evacuation faced several delays that stretched into the afternoon. Major Anderson boarded the Catawba to begin the transfer process to the Isabel, which would subsequently take the men to the waiting Baltic. When questioned about a cannon salute to mark the occasion, Anderson revealed his emotional strain, stating, “No, it is one hundred, and those are scarcely enough,” before succumbing to tears.

As they waited, Ruffin recorded shared stories of their experiences during the siege, noting that the fort had survived without significant damage despite the cannon fire's intensity. It was nearly three o'clock when the first of the anticipated hundred cannon reports echoed, marking the end of Anderson's time at Sumter. Amidst the smoke, a sense of calm enveloped the area.

During preparations at 2 p.m., Captain Doubleday mustered the men. They lined up, while the guns that Anderson had previously ordered to remain silent were prepared to fire in salute as the fort's flag was lowered. Tragically, as the salute commenced, a misfire occurred, resulting in the immediate death of a soldier named Private Daniel Hough. The chaotic moment necessitated a pause in the salute, allowing time for Hough's burial, an event characterized by solemn respect from both Confederate and Union soldiers.

With somber ceremonies concluding, the salute resumed, albeit reduced to fifty rounds. By 4 p.m., Anderson led his men out amidst the music of “Yankee Doodle” and subsequently transferred to the Isabel. As night fell, the men remained in the harbor, witnessing celebratory fireworks from Charleston, where a jubilant crowd reveled in the day's events.

While some perceived the day's occurrences as a potential groundwork for peace, prominent figures within the Confederate leadership viewed it as a significant moment of Southern resilience, having seized a powerful fort from the Union without casualties amidst the bombardment. The irony lay in the fact that an intense display of cannon fire, with thousands of shells exchanged, had resulted in no deaths, yet it would herald a war that claimed more American lives than any previous conflict.