

Confession

The chapter titled "Confession" revolves around Major Anderson at Fort Sumter during a crucial period of communication and decision-making leading up to the outbreak of conflict. The mail delivery delays—lasting three to four days—heightened Anderson's sense of isolation, complicating his attempts to communicate effectively. Distrust in the telegraph due to potential intercepts left the mail, which both sides considered confidential, as the primary means of communication.

On April 7, Anderson received an unexpected copy of President Lincoln's orders to resupply Fort Sumter, under a plan crafted by Captain Gustavus Fox. This revelation shocked Anderson, as it contradicted his prior understanding that the fort would be evacuated. The following day, on April 8, Anderson penned a private letter to his friend, Adjutant General Thomas in Washington, suggesting that Thomas should destroy it upon reading. He cautioned that Fox's expedition would be perceived as a betrayal by the South, undermining previous assurances given to the Confederate commissioners. Anderson expressed that it was now too late for him to offer advice regarding Fox's plan, which he interpreted as potentially disastrous.

Anderson noted that he had been misled by Lincoln's aide, Ward Lamon, into believing that an evacuation would occur. Frustrated, he lamented his ignorance of Fox's expedition, stating, "I ought to have been informed that this expedition was to come." He revealed his inner sentiments, stating, "We shall strive to do our duty," while admitting, "my heart is not in the war which I see is to be thus commenced."

Ultimately, this emotionally charged letter, which displayed Anderson's conflict over the situation, never reached its intended destination. Instead, it ended up on a desk in the Charleston Hotel, highlighting a moment of personal turmoil amid impending broader conflict.