

Firewood

****Summary of "Firewood, The Demon of Unrest"****

In the cold days and nights at Fort Sumter, a storm loomed on the horizon. On March 26, Chief Engineer Foster reported the demolition of the last temporary building on the parade, as the fort resorted to burning lumber and one condemned gun carriage for fuel. Outsiders tended to romanticize the situation, focusing on the heroism surrounding Major Anderson and his vastly outnumbered garrison, which was often depicted as a classic David versus Goliath tale, with Anderson's forces standing firm against a much larger enemy.

However, the reality faced by Anderson's men was stark and pragmatic. Captain Doubleday, in a memorandum, stressed the importance of critical defense measures, detailing specific points on the fort's structure that required vigilance. He suggested positioning one of the fort's drums at the center of each flank to sound the alarm at the first sign of an attack, and even proposed constructing a secure privy to enhance safety.

Anderson's nephew, R.C. Anderson, found the events thrilling, sharing the excitement with his children, who referred to Major Anderson as "Uncle Robert Major." R.C. expressed a deep sense of duty and commitment to his family in his letters, stating that had he not had a family to protect, he would have joined his uncle at Fort Sumter, regardless of the perils. This sentiment underscored a poignant contrast, as Major Anderson also had family responsibilities to consider.

In a separate letter, R.C. candidly conveyed a deep fear of defeat, stating that the surrender of Fort Sumter and the raising of South Carolina's flag in place of the American flag would be a calamity too overwhelming for him to bear. Such a misfortune, he argued, would crush his spirit far more than any personal loss, including the announcement of his uncle's death, which he believed would not affect him as deeply. This exchange highlights the emotional and psychological weight carried by those associated with the fort during these tense times.