

# Ominous Doings

**\*\*Chapter Summary: "Ominous Doings"\*\***

From December 28 to 31, South Carolina exhibited ominous signs of preparing for war as tensions escalated around Fort Sumter. Governor Pickens emphasized the need for local planters to construct gun batteries along the Santee River and Winyah Bay, evoking a sense of patriotism reminiscent of their forefathers from the Revolutionary War. On December 28, he imposed a prohibition on all arms shipments to Fort Sumter, while allowing mail delivery, stating that the ban aimed to prevent violence. Despite his intentions, Major Anderson observed the construction of new military outposts by South Carolina forces as preparations for a looming conflict.

In a letter dated January 1, Anderson expressed confusion regarding Pickens's aggressive stance, recalling his control over Charleston's supply routes, which could severely impact the state's access to resources. He inferred that he could close the harbor and impede communication, although he maintained that such measures would only be employed defensively.

Anderson took some pride in the support he received from military officials who considered his transfer to Fort Sumter a wise strategic move, complimenting him for taking necessary actions to safeguard his command. Despite prior disapproval from former war secretary Floyd regarding his decision, Anderson's approach was well-regarded by many in the U.S. Army, including the esteemed General Winfield Scott, who had been incapacitated for several days by illness.

On December 30, General Scott composed a secret message to President Buchanan, suggesting reinforcement for Anderson's garrison at Fort Sumter with 250 recruits, additional weapons, and supplies. He requested discretion in these operations without referring to the War Department. Scott's vision included dispatching the U.S.S. Brooklyn, a formidable steam warship, to demonstrate American military strength.

As New Year's Eve approached, Scott instructed the commander of Fort Monroe to prepare the Brooklyn and equip it with troops and munitions while maintaining utmost secrecy about their movements. Meanwhile, the garrison at Fort Sumter awaited any sign of hope from the North, longing to see reinforcement amidst the growing trepidation surrounding their situation .