

# Preparations

On Wednesday, April 10, the primary concern for Major Anderson at Fort Sumter was food supply. He instituted half rations for the garrison, predicting they would last only two more days, until dinnertime on April 12. The men made do with rice scavenged from broken window glass left over from earlier. Assistant Surgeon Crawford documented this dire situation in his journal, noting Anderson's strict management of the limited resources. The officers became adept at salvaging crumbs from their meals, and during one meal, Major Anderson reprimanded Doubleday for leaving a piece of cracker behind. The men were reduced to having only one cracker each morning and night, supplemented by rice and coffee for supper. In a desperate act of resourcefulness, Doubleday managed to find and save a potato that had been stepped on.

That night, in anticipation of potential conflict, Anderson ordered his men to relocate their bedding from the barracks into the fort's casemates, preparing for the worst. Meanwhile, Confederate General Beauregard expressed concern about the possibility of a Union fleet arriving under the cover of darkness, as overcast skies would conceal the ships from view. The wind remained strong on the bay, but the tide was predicted to rise around eight p.m., making Charleston's harbor more navigable for the Northern ships.

To counter any incoming fleet, a detail of soldiers and enslaved individuals set about filling three outdated vessels with flammable materials. These vessels were strategically placed in a channel next to Fort Sumter, where they could obstruct and illuminate any enemy ships attempting to approach the fort. Should the Union fleet arrive, the hulks were to be ignited, providing a clear line of sight as part of the defensive strategy.

This chapter underscores the harrowing preparations and the state of desperation faced by Anderson and his men as tensions escalated on the eve of anticipated confrontation. The scarcity of resources and the looming threat of an attack characterized the tense atmosphere at Fort Sumter during this pivotal moment.