

# Storm

On April 8, Captain Fox prepared to launch his fleet with pride, having transitioned from a Navy man to leading a significant military expedition to Charleston, confident that the presence of the **Powhatan** meant victory. The tug **Uncle Ben** departed New York that evening, followed by Fox aboard the **Baltic** the next morning, expecting a successful rendezvous with his fleet off Charleston two days later.

However, as the **Baltic** navigated out of New York Harbor, it faced a fierce Atlantic gale that disrupted Fox's plans. The storm scattered his vessels: the **Uncle Ben** took refuge in Wilmington, while the **Yankee** was blown past Charleston to Savannah. The **Freeborn** skipped the expedition altogether due to its risks, as its owners chose to keep it in New York. Unaware of these setbacks, Fox remained optimistic, believing the mission was proceeding as intended but likely delayed by the tempest. He anticipated meeting the rest of the fleet, particularly the **Powhatan**, equipped with troops and artillery, at Charleston Harbor.

Meanwhile, on the same day, Major Anderson and his men at Fort Sumter were alarmed by an explosion near Fort Moultrie, which revealed a new Confederate battery equipped with four substantial guns. This discovery deeply unsettled Anderson and prompted a reevaluation of their defensive strategies. The new battery increased the Confederate gun positions around the harbor to nineteen, which worried the Union forces significantly. Anderson recognized the threat posed by the battery, dictating that their defenses, particularly the parapet, would be off-limits to keep his men safer, though this decision limited their firepower.

In Washington, Confederate commissioners expressed their rising concerns about misleading assurances from Secretary Seward. On April 8, one commissioner received a cryptic message urging continued faith regarding Sumter, which only heightened their anxiety. Frustrated with the perceived indecision of Lincoln's administration, they tasked their secretary, James Pickett, with demanding a formal meeting with Lincoln, but he only received an outdated memorandum from Seward, exacerbating their frustrations .