

The Sumter Expedition

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On the morning of April 13, Captain Fox and his team of volunteers were preparing their captured schooner for a planned operation off the Charleston Bar. The day was bright and mostly clear, although the wind was strong, suggesting challenging conditions for their mission. As midmorning approached, an ominous black smoke began to billow from the harbor, signaling increased activity and conflict in the surrounding area.

By this time, Captain Rowan of the *Pawnee* expressed growing impatience, urging immediate action against their enemy forces. However, Captain Fox advised against such a reckless move. He recognized that without the support of the *Powhatan*, a direct assault would likely lead to disaster for their smaller contingent. The absence of the *Powhatan* was a critical factor in their strategic planning, as engaging the enemy without adequate backup could endanger not only their mission but also their lives.

Fox's leadership was instrumental in maintaining a focus on survival and proper tactics, despite the heightened tensions indicated by the smoke and rising gunfire in the harbor. Rather than rushing into action, he encouraged restraint and patience among his crew. The situation demanded careful assessment rather than impulsive decisions that could result from the pressure of the moment.

Overall, this early part of the day was marked by anticipation and unease. The crew was on high alert, aware of the importance of their forthcoming engagement and the significant risks involved. The decisions made in these moments could be pivotal, setting the tone for the ensuing confrontation and determining the fate of Captain Fox and his team as they navigated the complicated landscape of naval warfare and strategy in a time of unrest.