

Interesting News

Interesting news was circulating around Fort Sumter as Private Millens wrote to his father about the increasing military presence in Charleston between March 1 and 3. He observed that fortifications around the area were nearing completion, and Morris Island had been transformed into a highly fortified position with multiple batteries. Millens also mentioned a new weapon under development, a floating battery, which was nearing readiness but was also cumbersome. This new addition to the Confederate arsenal was expected to be placed dangerously close to their own fortifications and equipped with heavy artillery, intensifying the threat to Fort Sumter. Millens, however, remained uncertain about the future, noting that much depended on the decisions of the newly inaugurated President Abraham Lincoln, whose policies would have a profound impact on the course of events.

On March 1, the Confederate States officially assumed control of military operations in Charleston, appointing General Beauregard as the commander of Confederate forces. Secretary of War, Leroy P. Walker, informed Governor Pickens that President Jefferson Davis strongly believed in the urgent need to capture Fort Sumter but stressed the importance of thorough preparations. Walker emphasized the necessity of a well-coordinated initial strike to ensure the success of the operation and avoid any demoralization among the troops or backlash from the Southern populace. This strategic caution reflected the South's awareness of the political and military challenges they would face in the coming conflict. Beauregard's appointment was a clear signal of the South's resolve, and the preparations were set into motion, though they were marked by careful planning to avoid unnecessary losses.

When Beauregard arrived in Charleston, he was greeted with enthusiasm and admiration by the local population. The Confederate general was welcomed with gifts and respect, a sign of the high hopes placed on him by the people of Charleston. Among his staff was Samuel Wragg Ferguson, a former officer in the U.S. Army, who had embraced the Confederate cause and was eager to seize the opportunities that the secession of the Southern states had provided. His background and knowledge of the military strategies of the Union were seen as valuable assets as the South prepared for the looming conflict. The community's response reflected their optimism about the leadership of Beauregard, even though the full scale of the impending war was not yet fully understood.

At the same time, the Confederacy's diplomatic efforts were in full swing, with commissioners being sent to Washington, D.C., to negotiate with the Union. The first of

these, Crawford, arrived in Washington, a city already abuzz with the tension surrounding Lincoln's imminent inauguration. His arrival marked the beginning of formal efforts to reach a peaceful resolution, but the mood in Washington was one of uncertainty. The incoming president's stance on the South's secession remained unclear, and the commissioners hoped to engage with Lincoln's administration before it solidified its policies. As the nation braced for Lincoln's speech and the political maneuvering surrounding it, the South's desperation to resolve the crisis through negotiation was evident, though it was clear that conflict was rapidly approaching.

In Charleston, meanwhile, Edmund Ruffin expressed his frustration with Virginia's hesitation to secede. His disillusionment with the Union led him to leave Richmond and settle in Charleston, where he observed the increasing military preparations. Both white volunteers and enslaved individuals worked together to fortify the city's defenses, reinforcing the growing sense of urgency as the South prepared for war. Ruffin's move was emblematic of the fervent belief that secession was the only path forward, and his actions signaled the deepening divisions that were splintering the nation. As he settled into the Charleston Hotel, the air was thick with anticipation about the upcoming inauguration, which was viewed as a turning point that would either lead to peace or irreparably split the country. The discussions swirling around the hotel were filled with grim predictions about the consequences of Lincoln's leadership, further emphasizing the growing tensions that would eventually lead to the Civil War.