

Peculiar Circumstances

Peculiar circumstances surrounded the events of April 13, as Private Young, stationed at Fort Sumter, noticed a sudden lull in the barrage from Confederate batteries around 1:00 PM. This unexpected quiet unsettled the oarsmen, who, fearing the worst, began to voice their concerns and express a desire to leave, anxious for their safety.

Meanwhile, Louis T. Wigfall, a prominent Confederate figure, arrived at the fort, despite lacking the official orders that would have made his negotiation legitimate. Wigfall, eager to take action, presented himself as the Confederate negotiator and offered to meet any terms Anderson would demand to prevent further bloodshed. Anderson, recognizing the gravity of the situation, agreed to the terms previously outlined by General Beauregard, which included evacuating the fort and rendering a formal salute to the flag as a symbol of surrender. Without delay, Anderson ordered the American flag to be lowered and replaced with a white flag, signifying the cessation of hostilities for the moment.

Wigfall's excitement was palpable as he hurried back to the boat, eager to convey the news of the fort's surrender to the oarsmen. Their initial relief at the news was tempered by an underlying sense of uncertainty as they made their way to Morris Island. As they approached, they were met with a chorus of cheers from Confederate soldiers on the island, eager to celebrate what they believed was a decisive victory. However, soon after their arrival, another boat appeared carrying additional Confederate officers, unaware of Wigfall's unauthorized actions. These officers brought with them a message from General Beauregard, asking if Anderson required any further assistance. Upon learning of Wigfall's actions, Anderson was deeply offended, feeling humiliated by the deception. His initial reaction was to document the terms of the surrender but also to threaten to raise the American flag once again in protest. The Confederate officers quickly intervened, urging him to hold off on raising the flag until

they could consult with Beauregard, forcing Anderson to reluctantly maintain the truce for the time being.

As the tension lingered, Wigfall was ordered to return to Charleston to report to Beauregard and present the latest developments. He took Private Young with him, and on the way, they passed Fort Sumter, showing respect by dipping the Palmetto flag as they went by. Upon reaching Charleston, Wigfall was celebrated like a hero by the enthusiastic Confederate crowd, while Young, who was dressed in formal attire, felt awkward and out of place among the cheering officers, mistakenly thought to be of higher rank. Although the celebration was intense, Young's discomfort was palpable, highlighting the disparity between the joyous crowd and his own sense of being a mere observer in this rapidly unfolding drama. The mood shifted as four Confederate officers later visited Anderson to finalize the terms of the surrender, and Anderson agreed to one final request: a ceremonial hundred-gun salute in recognition of his bravery. The date for the evacuation was set for April 14, and with it, the transition of control over Fort Sumter to the Confederate forces was confirmed. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in the war, as the Palmetto Guard prepared to occupy the fort, symbolizing the Confederacy's growing power and dominance in the early days of the Civil War. The chapter captures the complexities of early Confederate victories, the emotional turmoil of the individuals involved, and the shifting power dynamics that would define the conflict moving forward.

The narrative continues to underline the mixture of pride, frustration, and strategic maneuvering as both sides of the war continued to make their moves. For Anderson, the surrender of Fort Sumter was a bitter yet necessary moment, marking the end of his command and the beginning of a much larger conflict. Meanwhile, for Wigfall and the Confederacy, the event was seen as a symbol of their strength and resolve, yet the underlying tension remained, as the true cost of the war had not yet been fully realized. This chapter serves to highlight not just the tactical decisions made but the emotional and psychological weight borne by those who lived through these tumultuous events, offering a deeper look into the personal and political ramifications that would unfold in the years to come.