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# The Crisis at Fort Sumter: The Symbolic Monument That Transformed Northern and Southern Opinions During the Start of the Civil War

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**The Crisis at Fort Sumter: The Symbolic Monument That Transformed Northern  
and Southern Opinions During the Start of the Civil War**

A Thesis

Presented to the

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

And

The Honors Program

Of

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

Olivia Cecile Cabanban

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## **Abstract**

Understanding the complexity of the Battle at Fort Sumter and the changing opinions of Northerners and Southerners acts as means of delving into the deeper roots of slavery, secession, and national discourse that laced our nation's undeniable history. The first firings at Fort Sumter were the flashpoint of the entirety of the Civil War, triggering the four years of battle, death, destruction, and competing nationalisms that ensued between the North and South. Because the histories of the war—more specifically the battle of Fort Sumter—are biased because they are written from points of views laced with Confederate and Unionist undertones, comprehending the interactions between historical figures that recorded or publicized their changing opinions throughout this nebulous time accurately and without partiality is difficult. By doing so, one can conclude the overall effect the national divide had on the lives and perspectives of politicians, abolitionists, slave owners, and common folk of the national discord of the time.

## **Occurrences Leading to the Battle at Fort Sumter**

In the late 1850s, South Carolina was the pinnacle of the Cotton Kingdom for the Deep South. The state's triangular shape boasted an eastern edge that ran along the Atlantic Ocean, which made Charleston one of the South's prominent cities. The streets were laced with a resounding feeling of the colonial past, exemplified by cobblestone streets and large brick walls through the city. Because of the proximity to the Atlantic and the booming ports lining the city's coast, Charleston was an ideal location to construct fortifications. Fort Sumter was an Atlantic garrison that became a microcosm and catalyst

of the Civil War, eventually changing the future of the United States. Located across the Charleston harbor from Fort Moultrie and 50-feet above sea level, the dilapidated pentagonal fort sits on a 2.4-acre marsh island.<sup>1</sup> Construction of the federal stronghold began in December 1828, but lack of Congressional funding threatened its completion. By 1860, the fort was not yet finished.<sup>2</sup> Despite a disheveled appearance, the garrison held historical significance for South Carolinians, named for the South Carolinian cavalryman and hero of the Revolutionary War, Thomas Sumter.<sup>3</sup> Similar admiration for soldiers like Thomas Sumter was observed towards South Carolinian troops during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, Fort Sumter itself has remained a venerated symbol representative of the transformation of Northern and Southern opinions triggered by the start of the Civil War.

Prior to 1861, the First United States Artillery was centralized at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina.<sup>4</sup> During this time, treason laced Southern air. Toasts against the American flag were commonly heard, along with roaring applause against the Federal government. Though the fort held historical significance dating back to the Revolutionary War, Fort Moultrie was in deplorable condition in 1860. The Atlantic sea breeze formed sand banks against the mere 12-foot-high walls surrounding the fort and the cracks in these walls were so defined that soldiers climbed into the fort instead of using the entrance. Brevet Major General Robert Anderson feared for the vulnerability of its location to land assault and its disheveled façade because of the resulting negative

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<sup>1</sup> Morrill, Dan L., The Civil War in the Carolinas. The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, Charleston, South Carolina 2002. Print. p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Morrill, The Civil War in the Carolinas. 2002. p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Morrill, The Civil War in the Carolinas. 2002. p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Doubleday, Abner. Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie: The Opening Phase of the American Civil War as Experiences by an Officer of the Union Artillery. Driffield: Leonaur Limited, 2009. Print.

opinion of Abraham Lincoln's election in November 1860. Therefore, an estimated 85 Federal troops were repositioned to Fort Sumter on December 26, 1860.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, South Carolina militia quickly overtook the other forts of the harbor, claiming possession for the newly developed anti-Unionist government while leaving Sumter as the one remaining federally held fortification. Thus, South Carolina wished to obtain the fort so that all connection between the state and the Union could be severed.

South Carolina claiming Fort Sumter brought upon intense hostility between the seceded state and the Federal government. Major General Anderson wanted no war between the North and the South. He wrote that "I need not say how anxious I am...to avoid collision with the citizens of South Carolina" at all costs.<sup>6</sup> In November 1860, President James Buchanan revealed that South Carolina Governor William Henry Gist was threatened by the secessionists to abandon Fort Sumter.<sup>7</sup> The threat surfaced because Southerners viewed the election of Lincoln as an act of war against the South. Anderson believed that manning Fort Sumter was crucial, for without troops the South would take control of the garrison and fire upon Fort Moultrie, eventually seizing it and leaving the Federal government without a military presence in the Charleston Harbor.

A day after Lincoln's inauguration on March 5, 1861, Anderson warned the President that there was less than a two month supply of provisions at the fort. A week later, General in Chief of the Army Winfield Scott advised that to resupply and reinforce Fort Sumter, a fleet of warships and 25,000 newly trained Union soldiers must be

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<sup>5</sup> "Fort Sumter." The Civil War Trust: Saving America's Civil War Battlefields. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 19 July 2016. < <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/fort-sumter.html?tab=facts>>.

<sup>6</sup> United States War Office, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1880, Ser.1, Vol. 1, p.75.

<sup>7</sup> "Notable Visitors: Gustavus V. Fox (1821-1883)." Mr. Lincoln's White House. The Lehrman Institute, n.d. Web. 14 July 2016. < <http://www.mrlincolnswhitehouse.org/residents-visitors/notable-visitors/notable-visitors-gustavus-v-fox-1821-1883/>>.

prepared. Problematically, four to eight months were needed to obtain necessary troops, which gave no chance for the reinforcement and reclamation of Fort Moultrie and the other batteries lost to the Southerners. Gustavus Vasa Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, suggested two gunned vessels named the Pawnee and the Harriet Lane to protect a transport vessel that would arrive at the fort with supplies and troops at Sumter.<sup>8</sup> This challenged Lincoln's morals, for Fox's idea unavoidably involved bloodshed if the iron-framed ships fired against Confederate forces at the entrance of the harbor. The President was a peaceful man, disgusted by carnage associated with warfare. More importantly, Lincoln did not want to appear as an active aggressor to the South; therefore, he disapproved of Fox's plans. If seen as an antagonist, war would inevitably ensue, and many men would die. Despite his disapproval of Fox's proposal, Lincoln recognized that it was the only option that could successfully resupply Fort Sumter.

On April 6, 1861, the fort had not been supplied or evacuated. As a result, Lincoln wrote to the governor of South Carolina, Francis Wilkinson Pickens, outlining that the Fort Sumter expedition would be enacted, by only supplying the fort with provisions. This was a desperate plea by the Union to implore the South from attacking, but also a trigger of unwavering Southern patriotism to the Confederacy. A *Charleston Mercury* article dated March 25, 1861 appropriately summarizes the sentiments of Southerners speaking of their relationship: "[Anti-Unionist Southerners] are in danger of being dragged back eventually to the old political affiliation with the states and people from whom we have just cut loose".<sup>9</sup> The opposition to this danger diffused throughout the Confederate States, demonstrating the aggressive attitudes that ballooned into necessity

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<sup>8</sup> Current, Richard Nelson. Lincoln and the First Shot. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963. Print. p. 171.

<sup>9</sup> Lincoln and the First Shot. p. 133.

for war to maintain Southern patriotism to the Confederacy. Specifically, South Carolinians were anxious to take the fort that flaunted the opposing flag. The billowing Union ensign threatened the confidence necessary to capture the entirety of the Charleston Harbor, inducing further animosity. The hostility sparked by Abraham Lincoln's election, combined with Lincoln's letter to Governor Pickens, predictably triggered the outbreak of the Civil War at Fort Sumter.

Confederate Brigadier General P.G.T. Beauregard, a trained civil engineer and tenured superintendent at the Military Academy, was stationed at Charleston in 1861.<sup>10</sup> He communicated to Major Anderson's assistants his demands to surrender the fort to the Confederacy on Thursday, April 11, 1861.<sup>11</sup> By the next day, the fortification still had not been provisioned or reinforced.<sup>12</sup> Only half the amount of cannons needed to defend the fort was prepared at this time, leaving the Union scarcely prepared in comparison to the Confederate army.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, not all of these cannons had men available to fire them. Federal soldiers attempted to prepare, while forty-three Southern guns were readied and aimed towards Fort Sumter, and approximately 3400 Confederate soldiers lined Charleston Harbor. Confederate troops surrounded Fort Sumter to escalate the threat imposed on April 11, but Major Anderson refused to comply. At 4:30 a.m., a shot was fired by young cadets from the Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, from Fort

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<sup>10</sup> "P. G. T. Beauregard". Civil War Trust, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2016.

<<http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/biographies/p-g-t-beauregard.html?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>>.

<sup>11</sup> Fort Sumter: Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Council on Foreign Relations. Civil War Trust, n.d., Web. 8 July 2016. <<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/fort-sumter.html?tab=facts>>.

<sup>12</sup> Current, Richard Nelson. *Lincoln and the First Shot*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963. Print.

<sup>13</sup> "Maps of Fort Sumter, South Carolina (1861)." The Civil War Trust. Council on Foreign Relations, 2014. Web. 19 July 2016. <<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/fort-sumter/fort-sumter-maps/animated-map/>>.



Johnson on Johns Island over Fort Sumter.<sup>14</sup> This signaled naval Confederate troops to initiate the bombing of the federally held fort.<sup>15</sup> This action facilitated the initiation of the American Civil War.

As the sun rose over the harbor that morning, Union artillery responded with cannon fire. The second day of attack saw cannons firing from Fort Moultrie that set Fort Sumter ablaze. Because of this, Anderson and his commanding officers could not maintain the Union presence in the battle, while extinguishing a raging fire that was consuming a majority of the wooden structure of the fort. Approximately 3,000 shots were fired that day, from the nineteen surrounding Atlantic garrisons during the 34-hour standoff.<sup>16</sup> Union general Abner Doubleday wrote that the "...falling of the walls, and the roaring of the flames made a pandemonium of the fort".<sup>17</sup> Back in December 1860, the *Charleston Mercury* newspaper had declared "The Union is dissolved!".<sup>18</sup> The attack on Fort Sumter made the newspaper's proclamation a reality.

After the bombardment of Fort Sumter and the realization made by Anderson that they had no chance against the South Carolina army, he accepted the original terms of evacuation offered on April 11 by General Beauregard on April 13.<sup>19</sup> On Sunday afternoon, April 14, Anderson and his company marched out of Fort Sumter in the afternoon accompanied by beating war drums and billowing flags. The stoic surrender

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<sup>14</sup> "Fort Sumter." The Civil War Trust: Saving America's Civil War Battlefields. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 18 July 2016. < <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/fort-sumter.html?tab=facts>>.

<sup>15</sup> "Maps of Fort Sumter, South Carolina (1861)." 19 July 2016.

<sup>16</sup> History.com Staff. "Fort Sumter" *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 19 July 2016. <<http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/fort-sumter>>.

<sup>17</sup> "Fort Sumter." The Civil War Trust: Saving America's Civil War Battlefields. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 18 July 2016. < <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/fort-sumter.html?tab=facts>>.

<sup>18</sup> Edmonston, Catherine Devereux., Beth G. Crabtree, and James Welch Patton. *Journal of a Secesh Lady: The Diary of Catherine Anne Devereux Edmonston, 1860-1866*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Dept of Cultural Resources, 1979, Print. p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, General Robert. "Telegram Announcing the Surrender at Fort Sumter (1861)." Letter to Brigadier General P. G. T. Beauregard. 18 Apr. 1861. MS. SS Baltic off Sandy Hook, n.p.

included a fifty gun salute to the United States flag in proper military fashion. Though no soldiers were killed during the bombardment of the fort, during the fifty-gun salute misfired guns injured two soldiers. One soldier died immediately and the other succumbed to his injuries the following morning.

News of the attack and surrender spread rapidly throughout the divided nation. A telegraph dated April 18 written by Major Anderson to the S.S. Baltic stationed off Sandy Hook, Connecticut briefly documented the aftermath. After the thirty-four hour bombardment between April 12 and 13, he described that all of the quarters and the main gates were burned.<sup>20</sup> The walls were partially destroyed as well. Indicative of the loss, Anderson's supply consisted of only four barrels, three cartridges of gunpowder, and pork provisions.

Once Northerners and Southerners heard news of the bombardment, conflicting attitudes began to intensify, heightening the tension between the differently structured societies. The disagreements sparked many Northerners to more fiercely support the preservation of the Union and anti-slavery initiatives, whereas some Southerners began to brainstorm a means of separation from the Union. Analyzing the Battle at Fort Sumter and the varying perspectives of the Union before and after the conflict demonstrates how this remarkable event changed the course of American history. Fort Sumter is a symbol of Northern and Southern opinions to the initiation the Civil War, and is a crucial example of the political and social dichotomies of the time.

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<sup>20</sup> "Telegram Announcing the Surrender at Fort Sumter (1861)." Letter to Brigadier General P. G. T. Beauregard. 18 Apr. 1861.

## Reasons for the Attack

In the April 1861 attack on Fort Sumter, there were seven states of the Deep South and eight of the Upper South that had legalized the ownership of slaves. Hostility between the slave owning and non-slave owning states escalated, making Abraham Lincoln's election a spark for the secession and establishment of a contending slave holding government with their respective leadership.<sup>21</sup> As citizens of Charleston heard of Lincoln's presidential election in November 1860, they rejoiced at the fact that "the Union is dissolved; the South is free!"<sup>22</sup> The South considered Lincoln's election an act of war because he advocated for the containment of slavery, which countered Southern wishes to preserve and grow the institution.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Lincoln threatened the South because he believed secession was wrong, but also believed it was impossible. Slave states viewed Lincoln's opinions as a direct threat to the rights of these states, as awarded by the Declaration of Independence. Southern plantation owners "wanted a new and powerful slave empire extending to the Isthmus of Panama"; therefore, Northern rejection of slavery urged pro-slavery planters to take action.<sup>24</sup> As the South gained control of Fort Moultrie, Fort Johnson, and Castle Pickney, secessionist military presence developed in South Carolina, stimulating Southern cynicism towards the North.

Fort Sumter was attacked to solidify Southern control of the harbor as well as add to its repertoire of Federal owned property. The South had seized almost all Federal post offices, arsenals, and forts within their borders, allowing it to act as an independent

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<sup>21</sup> Current, Richard Nelson. *Lincoln and the First Shot*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963. Print.

<sup>22</sup> *Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton*. p. 121.

<sup>23</sup> Goodheart, Adam. *1861: The Civil War Awakening*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. Print.

<sup>24</sup> Doubleday, Abner. *Reminiscences of Fort Sumter and Moultrie*, The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Co., 1998. p. 137.

entity.<sup>25</sup> With occupancy of these garrisons, the Confederacy dominated the Charleston harbor by monitoring what moved in and out of their waters, symbolizing their new government's control against that of the Union. With this change in command of the fort, citizens disagreed whether or not war would ensue. Some believed it was inevitable, while other denied that it would happen. On the contrary, Northerners saw this as a blatant act of war.

### **The Election of 1860 and South Carolina's Secession**

The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 was one of many catalysts that fueled South Carolina's desire to secede from the Union. His Northern ideals conflicted with those of slave holding Southern plantation owners, therefore inducing tension between the two polarized sectors of society. Discord amounted to a point where South Carolina felt so threatened that the only option to maintain their lifestyle was to leave the Union, soon followed by other Southern states. Eventual formation of separate governments and militaries was likely to bring war.

In June of 1858, immediately following the Illinois Republican State convention, Lincoln made one of his most famous speeches that addressed the common thought that fervently spread across the anti-slavery states: the nation could not exist and thrive while politically divided. He wisely stated that the government could not "endure, permanently, half *slave* and half *free*."<sup>26</sup> The most recognizable phrase from his oration is "a house divided against itself cannot stand".<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Current, Richard Nelson. Lincoln and the First Shot. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963. Print.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew DelBlanco, ed., The Portable Abraham Lincoln. Viking Penguin, 1992, p.51.

<sup>27</sup> The Portable Abraham Lincoln. p.51.

By 1860, the Republican Party was the dominant, driving force in “Northern politics”.<sup>28</sup> Lincoln’s nomination solidified the Republican Party, and the outcome of the election of 1860 shocked the nation. William H. Seward, governor of New York, originally led all candidates for the Republican presidential nomination.<sup>29</sup> He enacted laws that legalized trials that helped fugitive slaves, and stated that slavery “is an *irrepressible conflict* between opposing and enduring forces and...sooner or later, [the United States] will become either an entirely slaveholding nation, or entirely a free labor nation”.<sup>30</sup> Like Lincoln, Seward also realized the brittle state of the nation. Anti-slavery Northerners appreciated his formality when addressing the masses, but also his opposition to a section of the nation. This platform allowed him great success for the northern majority in the election. In contrast, Southern voices said he was “monstrous and diabolical”.<sup>31</sup>

Lincoln assumed the position of President-elect after he defeated Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, Buchanan’s Southern Democratic Vice President John C. Breckenridge, and Speaker of the House and Constitutional Union candidate John Bell on November 6, 1860.<sup>32</sup> He won with 1,866,452 votes, comprising approximately 40% of total votes.<sup>33</sup> Despite not winning a single Southern or Border state, Lincoln was able to accumulate sufficient victories in Oregon, California, and the Northern states. President Buchanan had correctly anticipated that if Lincoln won the presidential election, South

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<sup>28</sup> Goodwins, Doris Kearns. Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln. Simon & Schuster. 2005. Print. p. 238.

<sup>29</sup> Sandburg, Carl. Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1954. Print. p. 167.

<sup>30</sup> Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years. p. 167.

<sup>31</sup> Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years. p. 167.

<sup>32</sup> “The Election of 1860.” USHistory.org. Independence Hall Association, 2008. Web. 27 July 2016. <<http://www.ushistory.org/us/32d.asp>>.

<sup>33</sup> Peter Parish, ed., Abraham Lincoln Speeches and Letters. Everyman’s Publishing, 1993. Print. p. 169.

Carolina would promptly secede from the United States of America.<sup>34</sup> With Lincoln's election, "at last the spark came that was to set fire to the magazine", U.S. military officer Abner Doubleday metaphorically stated.<sup>35</sup>

In 1860, South Carolina, specifically, was home to 301,271 white citizens, and 402,441 black slaves who served domestically and in the fields. In magnification, Charleston, specifically, was home to 29,000 whites and 37,000 blacks at the time.<sup>36</sup> Because the slave population outnumbered that of the white citizen, many believed that Northern abolitionists were sending secret agents or spies to spark slave rebellions, threatening the livelihood of the South. With all the dissatisfaction with the north and the election of a president who rejected the spread of slavery, South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union. Official secession occurred on December 20, 1860.<sup>37</sup> Then, on February 4, 1861, delegates in Montgomery, Alabama declared a government officially entitled the Confederate States of America, electing Jefferson Davis as President and Alexander Stephens as Vice President. Seven slave states were involved in the young Confederacy prior to the Battle at Fort Sumter, including South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas.<sup>38</sup>

Soon after, Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861. To him, the central idea of secession was the essence of anarchy.<sup>39</sup> He believed that a state could not independently choose to separate itself from the Union, but had to be granted the right to do so by the

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<sup>34</sup> Morrill, Dan L., *The Civil War in the Carolinas*. The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, Charleston, South Carolina 2002. p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Morrill, Dan L., *The Civil War in the Carolinas*. 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Morrill, Dan L., *The Civil War in the Carolinas*. 2002.

<sup>37</sup> "Fort Sumter: Charleston Harbor, South Carolina." *Council on Foreign Relations*. Civil War Trust, n.d., Web. 9 June 2016.

<sup>38</sup> "Confederate States of America." The Civil War Trust: Saving America's Civil War Battlefields. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 15 November 2016. <<http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/confederate-states-of-america>>.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Parish, ed., *Abraham Lincoln Speeches and Letters*. (Everyman's Library, 1993), p. 166.

Federal government. In his inauguration address, he warned to the citizens of America, “In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war”.<sup>40</sup> Coming into office, Lincoln knew extreme measures needed to be taken to avoid a war between slave holding and non-slave holding states, but recognized he had little power in preventing such a clash.

Southerners and Northerners, as well as Democrats and Republicans, differed in their opinions of the election of Lincoln. Prior to Lincoln’s election and upon news of the Republican sweeping of votes in Pennsylvania, Northern Democrat Stephen Douglas said to his fellow Unionists that because Lincoln will be president, they “must try to save the Union,” and vowed that he would “go South” to do all in his ability to suppress the division of the country.<sup>41</sup> Other more radical Northerners did not wish to prevent the country from splitting into two. Wendell Phillips, an abolitionist and Bostonian, cheered on the separation, believing the Union government would be better off without the contrasting South. He hailed disunion and supported the idea to “let the South march off [and] let the erring sisters depart in peace”.<sup>42</sup>

The election of Lincoln predictably infuriated Deep Southerners. In the Atlanta-based newspaper *Confederacy*, columnists violently spoke out, saying, “the South will never submit to such humiliation and degradation as the inauguration of Lincoln”.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, the Raleigh-based newspaper *Banner* spoke for a segment of the South that recognized that “the big heart of the people is still in the Union”.<sup>44</sup> Those who had

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Parish, ed., *Abraham Lincoln Speeches and Letters*. Everyman’s Publishing, 1993. p. 169.

<sup>41</sup> Sandburg, Carl. *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1954. p. 181. Print.

<sup>42</sup> *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*. p. 181.

<sup>43</sup> *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*. p. 183.

<sup>44</sup> *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*. p. 183.

their heart with the Union deserved the horrors of the war that would likely ensue, according to dissunionists.

The South Carolina's ordinance for secession monumentally declared the state free from the reigns of the newly elected President. The ordinance, formally named the Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union, stated that the Federal Government frequently and consistently violated the Constitution of the United States, giving reason to secede from the Union. This declaration stated the historical reasons for leaving the Federal Union for those who opposed to form an independent government. Here, writers of the ordinance stress that the United States Declaration of Independence penned that the thirteen original colonies would work as "free and independent states...with full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, [and] establish commerce." In 1778, the thirteen states entered into a group called the Articles of Confederation, where they agreed to entrust their common good into the hands of a single assembly, called Congress. With this arrangement, they agreed that each state retain its "sovereignty, freedom and independence".<sup>45</sup> Lincoln's election threatened this interpretation.

Specifically, the conglomeration of Lincoln's election and differencing interpretations of the Constitution that ignited Southern distress caused the detachment of South Carolina from the Union. One of the first sparks that triggered Southern discomfort was the election of Republican John Sherman to Speaker of the House in 1859. This animosity towards Sherman was fueled by a document he wrote demoralizing slavery, titled *Helper's Book*. He believed that "slavery was a great moral, social, civil, and

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<sup>45</sup> "The Declaration of Causes of Seceding States." Civil War Trust. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 13 July 2016. <<http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/primarysources/declarationofcauses.html>>.



political evil” and those who believe in the advancement of enslavement should be publically shamed.<sup>46</sup> This escalated secessionist mentality because the South warned that his election would be a direct declaration of war against the institution of slavery and those associated. Additionally, he believed there would be no recognition of slave owning men, whether that is in social or religious settings.<sup>47</sup>

John C. Calhoun, a U.S. statesman and fervent supporter of Southern plantation life, also believed the Union was assaulting Southern life.<sup>48</sup> In the 1830s, Calhoun wrote his *Exposition and Protest* to present to the South Carolina legislature. Here he claimed original sovereignty for citizens and advocated for the state’s ability veto or nullification of any national law that would impinge on political minority interests.<sup>49</sup> Prior to his retirement from South Carolina Congress, we predicted the Union would be destroyed if Southern states were not ensured protection of their most prized institution—slavery. Calhoun died in 1850; therefore, he was never able to see his prediction come true.<sup>50</sup> Despite this, the election of Lincoln—a Northern Republican—made Calhoun roll over in this grave, in addition to solidifying the notion that the secession of slave-owning states was necessary to maintain their way of life. Specifically, Lincoln’s election was seen as a declaration of war due to his desire to prevent slavery from expanding, despite the fact that he failed to believe blacks were socially equivalent to whites.

Originally, the South Carolina Secession Convention began December 17, 1860 in the capitol, Colombia, but an outbreak of smallpox forced it to be moved southeast to

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<sup>46</sup> Pollard, Edward A. *Southern History of the War*. New York: C.B. Richardson, 1866. Print. p. 168.

<sup>47</sup> *Southern History of the War*, p. 156.

<sup>48</sup> “Secession”. History.com. n.d. Web. 15 November 2016. <<http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/secession>>.

<sup>49</sup> “John C. Calhoun”. History.com. n.d. Web. 15 November 2016. <<http://www.history.com/topics/john-c-calhoun>>.

<sup>50</sup> “John C. Calhoun”. 15 November 2016. <<http://www.history.com/topics/john-c-calhoun>>.

Meeting Street in downtown Charleston. Coincidentally, the day the South officially seceded was the same day Anderson evacuated the troops at Fort Moultrie and moved them to Fort Sumter. As part of secession, South Carolina demanded immediate withdrawal of troops from the fort, to which the North did not comply. In addition, South Carolina was insulted by the North's violation of the Constitution; therefore, 169 men voted unanimously on December 18, 1860 to secede from the Union.<sup>51</sup> Official passage of the ordinance was enacted on December 20, 1860 at Institute Hall in Charleston.

South Carolina—the first state to separate themselves from the federal government—produced a geographical divide between the Union and the soon to be formed Confederacy. The line segregated those who supported the election of anti-slavery Abraham Lincoln to the North, and those who opposed his presidency to the South. By doing so, writers of the ordinance knew war was inevitable, proving to be the only manner to decide the legality of slave owning. Secession would put South Carolina alongside other independent nations of the world, separate from the states of the North. After South Carolina seceded in December, Mississippi followed suit on the ninth of January. Florida and Alabama did so the 11<sup>th</sup>, Georgia the 20<sup>th</sup>, and Louisiana the 26<sup>th</sup>. Texas left the Union the first of February.<sup>52</sup>

Georgia's ordinance for secession resembled that of South Carolina's, further representing Southern sentiment towards the North. The Declaration of Causes of Seceding States of Georgia was approved Tuesday, January 29, 1861. This ordinance was enacted because of "serious complaint against [the] non-slave-holding confederate

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<sup>51</sup> "Union Dissolved! (Memory)." *Union Dissolved!* American Treasures of the Library of Congress, n.d. Web. 20 July 2016 < <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm180.html>>.

<sup>52</sup> Pollard, Edward A. Southern History of the War. New York: C.B. Richardson, 1866. p. 43.

States”, hoping for an “exemption from further insults, injuries, and dangers”.<sup>53</sup> By the third month of Lincoln’s election, all of the Cotton States, besides Alabama, had seceded. All forts in the South were secured by the Confederacy, excluding those in the Charleston Harbor and Fort Pickens residing south of Pensacola, Florida.<sup>54</sup>

The idea of secession had been forming for a half a century before the attack at Fort Sumter. Arguments between the Southern and Northern cultures included conflicting morals about human rights, property rights, states rights, and constitutional rights.<sup>55</sup> In addition to differing opinions on the economic entitlement of a state, such as taxation from foreign imports, the underlying issue of slavery was an overwhelmingly prominent reason in South Carolina’s, and ultimately other seceding states, separation from the federal government. A renowned statesman and supporter of secession from South Carolina, John C. Calhoun, eloquently fought for the idea that the Southern way of life was under attack from the North.<sup>56</sup> Because the Northern infrastructure was centered on small farmsteads and industrialization while the South thrived as a plantation society, conflict arose pertaining to the legality of slave ownership.

By 1850, Southern cotton production was flourishing. European demand for cotton from the textile industry grew, initiating plantation expansion westward. Furthermore, Indian removal before the Mexican-American War ending in 1848 cleared land that could be utilized to expand the agrarian society. Southerners depended on slaves to farm products such as tobacco and cotton. Secessionists felt subjected to Union views

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<sup>53</sup> “The Declaration of Causes of Seceding States.” Civil War Trust. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 12 July 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Southern History of the War. p. 43.

<sup>55</sup> “The First Shot.” Fort Sumter National Monument. 340 Concord Street, Charleston, South Carolina. 12 July 2016.

<sup>56</sup> History.com Staff. “*Secession*.” History.com. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 4 Aug.2016. < <http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/secession> >.

and national traditions that did not align with Southern belief, such as when Lincoln declared his Republican party to have an anti-slavery mission. They detested as Lincoln said that “ the prohibition of slavery in the Territories [was] the cardinal principle of this organization”.<sup>57</sup> The Compromise of 1850 included the Fugitive Slave Act, criminalizing those who failed to return escaped slaves to their respective Southern slave owner.<sup>58</sup> This angered the South because the Constitutional law was repeatedly ignored as the North refused to return the “criminals” to the proper state of ownership, challenging Southern power.<sup>59</sup>

Northerners had similar distaste towards the South. The North feared the eradication of tariff barriers might lead to the South importing from Britain rather than the North, hurting the Union economy. This fear brought hostility because as Southern culture was defenseless with the eradication of slavery, the northern economy was left vulnerable with the possibility of secession. With the two cultures threatening each other’s existence, some realized that country’s differences may be solved through deliberation between the two opposing sides, but bloodshed was the likely answer.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “The Declaration of Causes of Seceding States.” Civil War Trust. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 12 July 2016.

<sup>58</sup> “Compromise of 1850”. ushistory.org. Independence Hall Association. 2012. Web. 04 October 2016. <<http://www.ushistory.org/us/30d.asp>>.

<sup>59</sup> “The Declaration of Causes of Seceding States.” Civil War Trust. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 12 July 2016.

<sup>60</sup> “The Declaration of Causes of Seceding States.” Civil War Trust. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 12 July 2016. <<http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/primarysources/declarationofcauses.html>>.

## **After the Attack**

Before firing the first shots of the war, some Confederates verbalized that attacking Fort Sumter would not provoke war, but rather provide a guarantee for peace.<sup>61</sup> They believed that the divided and troubled North would not dare risk hostility against a united, equipped South; therefore, there would be no challenge from the Union. Other Southerners believed that physical conflict offered consequential and negative effects—such as the infliction of war—therefore they wished to avoid it at all costs. Despite these opinions supporting a diplomatic alternative to the violent procurement of the final Union held fortification in the Charleston Harbor, opinions began to change as Union military officials and President Buchanan failed to answer the request of surrendering the stronghold. Southerners began to realize that due to the blatant divide of the nation, bloodshed and war were upon them.

Political platforms fervently divided the nation, and social norms and morals became an identifying compass of the citizens' political affiliation. Additionally, Northern opinions of secessionists changed. Instead of a unified North, division arose between Republicans who supported abolition and War Democrats who supported Lincoln against pro-slavery Peace Democrats. Though Republicans dominated the North and Democrats led the South, the soon-to-be Union and Confederacy were fiery microcosms of sentiments, and the increasingly polarized views fueled the North's steadfast occupation of Fort Sumter. Similar to the Southerners, many Northerners changed the way they thought between Federal occupancy of Fort Sumter until the end of the war in 1865. Once they realized that the Confederate States of America were to

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<sup>61</sup> Current, Richard Nelson. Lincoln and the First Shot. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963. Print.

capture the fort after provisional supply was interrupted, Northerners understood the reality of battle was upon them.

### **Southern Perspectives on the Battle at Fort Sumter**

Between October and November 1860, established secessionists doubted their disunion movement was capable of attracting a following large enough to establish a force against the Union.<sup>62</sup> Before the capture of Fort Sumter, the volunteer-based Army of the Confederate States of America consisted of a wartime provisional force as well as a permanent army. Southerners viewed their militia as a conglomeration of common folk, not as a revered army capable of destruction. After Fort Sumter was attacked and President Jefferson Davis took control of the army, citizens slowly realized the potential strength of the Confederate States of America. As states seceded and pledged their allegiance to the newly formed Confederacy, Southern rhetoric began to change. Once hesitant, the South became a viable threat to the Union, which increased their confidence to wage war against their opposition. This alteration in support transformed Southern opinion to confrontation with the North.

Smoke thickened the South Carolinian ocean breeze as a result of the bombardment that forced in the Union surrender of Fort Sumter. Charlestonians realized they had acquired the fort, resulting in immense celebrations. Church bells rang, fireworks exploded, and citizens flooded the streets with jubilation and relief that no man was killed during the action.<sup>63</sup> Citizens held different opinions on the Battle of Fort

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<sup>62</sup> Applegate, Debby. The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher. New York: Doubleday, 2006. Print. p. 26.

<sup>63</sup> Klein, Maury. Days of Defiance: Sumter, Secession, and the Coming of the Civil War. New York: Knopf, 1997. Print. p. 419.

Sumter and its effects in the later years of the war, but it was no doubt an outstanding achievement for the South.

### *Mary Chesnut*

Diaryist and author Mary Chesnut, nee Mary Boykin Miller, daughter of Mary Boykin and Stephen Decatur Miller, was born in Statesboro, South Carolina in 1823. Her father served as a U.S. congressman and senator before his service as governor of South Carolina during Mary's childhood.<sup>64</sup> When the Army of the Confederate States of America seized Fort Sumter from Union hands on April 12, 1861, Mary was 38 years old. Prior to the attack on Fort Sumter, she initiated her renowned Civil War diary on December 20, 1860, as news of South Carolinian secession spread throughout the low country.<sup>65</sup> In her informative diary formally known as *Mary Chesnut's Civil War: A Diary From Dixie*, she emphasized the events that led to the attack on Fort Sumter, the attack itself, and the undeniable results of Southern secession. Entries from *Diary From Dixie* were written in South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama and Virginia, allowing Mary to experience different Southern opinions and reactions to the friction between the Union and the South. Her diary entries of this pivotal point in the Confederacy's history provide a glimpse of the Southern reactions of the attack on Fort Sumter.

Prior to South Carolina's secession, Mary noted on December 10, 1860: "I see all of the leaders in the State are in favor of secession".<sup>66</sup> A majority of politicians favored

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<sup>64</sup> Muhlenfeld, Elizabeth. "Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut, 1823-1886." Documenting the American South. University of North Carolina Press, 1999. Web. 05 Oct. 2016.

< <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/chesnut/bio.html> >

<sup>65</sup> *Women in America*. "Mary Chesnut's Civil War, 1861-1865." U.S. History in Context. Gale, 1999. Web. 8 June 2016.

<sup>66</sup> Mary Chesnut. *A Diary From Dixie*, December 27, 1860. Diary. Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 1997. p. 4.

peacefully seceding and leaving behind the Union. It was this preference for secession of politicians that Mary observed; the desire to maintain Southern life against all odds, defined by factors such as the legality of slavery, disapproval of President Lincoln's election, and state sovereignty. Mary—though wife of slaveholder and South Carolina Senator James Chesnut, Jr.—opposed slavery, but supported South Carolina's departure from the Union. She “hope[d] the black Republicans [would] take the alarm and submit some treaty of peace that [would] enable [the South] now and forever to settle the question [of slavery and secession], and save our generation from the prostration of business and the decay of prosperity that...[came] both to the North and South from a disruption of the Union”.<sup>67</sup> Soon after she offered this opinion, she predicted, “South Carolina may be off on her own hook—a separate republic.”<sup>68</sup>

Because Mary's husband was a senator, she was allowed to sit in on political discussions, comprised of all men, where she saw first-hand the condition of the state after having freed itself from the restrictive Unionist ideals. Chesnut noticed that “[Major General] Robert Anderson united the cotton States,” through dislike of the North, following implementation of the Ordinance of Secession on December 20, 1860.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, she wrote on December 21 that “one need not regret having left Washington”, for the men at the convention, including her husband, were well-respected gentleman that would make proper decisions regarding the power of the individual state in regards to the federal government. Mary explained the historical decision that those supporting secession and formation of a Southern government held contradictory views to those opposing secession, asserting that “those who want[ed] a row [were] in high

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<sup>67</sup> Mary Chesnut. *A Diary From Dixie*. pg. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Mary Chesnut. *A Diary From Dixie*. pg. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Mary Chesnut. *A Diary From Dixie*. p. 5.



glee. Those who dread it [were] glum and thoughtful enough.”<sup>70</sup> She recognized the diverse opinions of citizens in the state, highlighting that opinion on secession before and after the signing of the Ordinance remained incongruous. Mary realized the Ordinance unquestionably would trigger war.

“Thereby hangs peace or war” as a result of the attack, agitating Southerners, due to their opposition of bloodshed, Mary observed.<sup>71</sup> On Saturday, April 13, 1861 she watched the battle at Fort Sumter from the Charleston Battery. Though she could hear the popping of cannons the night before, there was an eerie sea breeze that changed direction, and did not allow her to hear the guns.<sup>72</sup> The resulting smoke triggered intense cheers by the male spectators at the Battery, but made Mary ill. After the Union troops were evacuated from the fort, Mary noted that Fort Sumter stood as evidence of secession as the Confederacy regained ownership of the Union stronghold.

#### *Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston*

Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston was born on October 10, 1823 to an aristocratic planter family of Halifax County, North Carolina. After she married Charlestonian Patrick Muir Edmonston, the couple resided in eastern North Carolina on a plantation with 88 slaves and land valued at \$20,000.<sup>73</sup> Catherine and Patrick were loyal supporters of secession, while other members of the Devereux family were staunch Union supporters. The resulting tension triggered by contrasting viewpoints provided

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<sup>70</sup> Mary Chesnut. *A Diary From Dixie*. p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> Mary Chesnut. *A Diary From Dixie*. p. 29.

<sup>72</sup> Klein, Maury. *Days of Defiance: Sumter, Secession, and the Coming of the Civil War*. New York: Knopf, 1997. Print. p. 418.

<sup>73</sup> Edmonston, Catherine Ann Devereux, Beth G. Crabtree, and James Welch Patton. *Journal of a Secesh Lady: The Diary of Catherine Anne Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Dept of Cultural Resources, 1979, Print. p. xii.

Catherine with experience on how to peacefully and respectfully dispute opposing ideals, while maintaining her claim that states have the constitutional right to leave a government in which they feel threatened. Such insight, as well as her formal education at Belmont, near Leesburg, Virginia—gave her an advantage in debating with Union sympathizers later on in her career.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, despite her family's pro-Unionism and beliefs that it is the woman's role to maintain the household, Catherine developed into a strongly opinionated woman, questioning, "is this what I have been educated for?"<sup>75</sup> This feminist and righteousness fueled her documentation of the Civil War through her observations of the conflict and personal struggles as a secessionist woman during these historically tumultuous years.

Catherine wrote accounts of the Civil War outlining her secessionist views of the war and her daily life from 1860-1866 in her book titled *Journal of a Secesh Lady*. Some consider this work to be the Southern complement to Mary Boykin Chesnut's *Diary from Dixie*, because Catherine was socially connected to Confederate leaders by means of her husband, as Mary was to Union politicians in a similar manner. Dissimilar to Chesnut's work, *Journal of a Secesh Lady* fails to envelop all realms of Southern society, but particularly focuses on the upper class in which she was raised.<sup>76</sup> Her patriotic, sharp-tongued secessionism was evident in her diary, but did not starve her of a rational mind. Catherine wrote of the oncoming of the Civil War, "I yield *nothing*—no compromise—where my *liberty*, my *honour*, dearer than life, is concerned".<sup>77</sup> As she vocalized fervent

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<sup>74</sup> "Catharine A. D. Edmonston." The Civil War Project. The Civil War Project TCWP, 24 June 2012. Web. 05. Oct. 2016. <<https://thecivilwarproject.com/the-south-2/catherine-a-d-edmonston/>>.

<sup>75</sup> "Catharine A. D. Edmonston." The Civil War Project. The Civil War Project TCWP, 24 June 2012. Web. 05. Oct. 2016. <<https://thecivilwarproject.com/the-south-2/catherine-a-d-edmonston/>>.

<sup>76</sup> "*Journal of a Secesh Lady*": The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866. p. 37.

<sup>77</sup> "*Journal of a Secesh Lady*": The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866. p. 37.

support for South Carolina's secession, her mother vocalized her disapproval of Catherine's "dishonorable and dishonest sentiments" towards those by whom she was raised, emphasizing the unique familial circumstances she encountered.<sup>78</sup> After the capture of Fort Sumter by the Confederates, Catharine predicted that South Carolina was "one pearl lost from the glorious string", emphasizing her belief that war would ensue.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, she shamed Lincoln for carrying on "this dreadful war", and blamed those who supported him during the election and his presidency.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, as citizens first saw news of the war under the "Foreign News" sections in the newspaper, jubilation followed.<sup>81</sup> These sentiments encompassed the intense pride and hostility of, specifically, the Southern planter class originating from the Battle of Fort Sumter and resounding until the end of the war.

When Union Major Anderson repositioned troops from Fort Moultrie and Castle Pickney to Fort Sumter on December 26, 1860, Catherine noted that this action almost turned "profound peace into war".<sup>82</sup> As a result of this scare, the ladies of South Carolina were enthusiastic and earnest to aid in the war, preparing scrap lint, bandages, and gun cartridges for troops.<sup>83</sup> Soon after, Catharine noted that Governor Pickens raised the Palmetto flag to unify the state and symbolically defy Northern opposition.

Catherine was present at Charleston Harbor in January as the Star of the West attempted to resupply Sumter, engaging her in the ferocity against the Union. When she opened the dispatch that read "*BOMBARDMENT OF FORT SUMTER*", she realized this

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<sup>78</sup> "Journal of a Secesh Lady": *The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866*. p. 32.

<sup>79</sup> "Journal of a Secesh Lady": *The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866*. p. 34.

<sup>80</sup> "Journal of a Secesh Lady": *The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866*. p. 37.

<sup>81</sup> "Journal of a Secesh Lady": *The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866*. p. 30.

<sup>82</sup> "Journal of a Secesh Lady": *The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866*. p. 29.

<sup>83</sup> "Journal of a Secesh Lady": *The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866*. p. 30.

preliminary act of war was the official “beginning of the end” referring to the start of physical conflict between the North and South, causing her to break down and cry uncontrollably.<sup>84</sup> A day after Fort Sumter was captured by the Confederates, she mentioned that “Major Anderson is a good officer and is doing his duty”, but she could not “make a hero of him.”<sup>85</sup> At first, Catherine wrote in her diary that she had secretly prayed Buchanan had removed troops from Fort Sumter to reduce the need for war. Later, she recognized that the pro-Unionist party had a valid argument of retaining the Southern states for economic health, but understood that the Confederacy had a right to secession and creation of a better government. Therefore, Catherine found the attack on Fort Sumter justifiable in maintaining the validity of the Confederate states and their respective culture, as did many upper class Southern men and women.

#### *Governor Francis Wilkinson Pickens*

Democrat Francis Wilkinson Pickens was elected Governor of South Carolina on December 1, 1860 and held office until December 1, 1862. Pickens was officially sworn into office on December 14, 1860, and six days later South Carolina seceded from the Union.<sup>86</sup> He was instrumental in determining South Carolina’s role in the first years of the Civil War. On January 9, 1861, he authorized the first military action of the war, ordering South Carolinian cadets positioned on Morris Island to fire upon the Union vessel *Star of the West*.<sup>87</sup> This civilian steamship aimed to deliver provisions to Fort

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<sup>84</sup> Edmondston, Catherine Devereux, Beth G. Crabtree, and James Welch Patton. Journal of a Secesh Lady: The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Dept. of Cultural Resources, 1979. Print. p. 48.

<sup>85</sup> Journal of a Secesh Lady: The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866. p. 48.

<sup>86</sup> “Governor Francis Wilkinson Pickens.” Home. National Governors Association, n.d. Web. 01 Oct. 2016. <<http://www.nga.org/>>.

<sup>87</sup> “Governor Francis Wilkinson Pickens.” 01 Oct. 2016. <<http://www.nga.org/>>.

Sumter, and Citadel cadets knew of this intent. As soon as the unarmed supply vessel passed Morris Island, Pickens ordered soldiers to block the resupply of the fort. Brigadier-General James Chesnut commanded the young men of The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, to fire the cannons. The boat was damaged, representative of the impending tension between the North and the South. This was Pickens' first authorized military action, with many more to come throughout the initiation of the Civil War.

On December 17, 1860, Governor Pickens had written President James Buchanan amiably asking the Union to give the state of South Carolina control of Fort Sumter “with a sincere desire to prevent a collision of force” between Buchanan’s and Pickens’ forces.<sup>88</sup> The Governor requested that 25 men to peacefully take over the fort, ensuring a sense of safety within the community, begging the President to help “prevent the effusion of blood” in future attempts to regain the fort.<sup>89</sup> Buchanan responded on December 18, but his answer did not directly address the situation of Fort Sumter. He recognized that South Carolina was contemplating secession, and offered to send a negotiator named Caleb Cushing to deliberate with Pickens on his behalf.<sup>90</sup> Buchanan believed peaceful secession would cause immediate catastrophe, in addition to threatening his powers as President over the nation, and therefore refused to hand over the fort. As a result, on January 12, 1861, Pickens demanded that Buchanan surrender Fort Sumter because “[he] regard[ed] that possession (of the fort) was not consistent with the dignity or safety of the

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<sup>88</sup> Governor Francis W. Pickens to President James Buchanan. 17 December 1860. S511001. Letters, Telegrams, and Proclamations. Governor Francis W. Pickens Papers. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.

<sup>89</sup> Governor Francis W. Pickens to President James Buchanan. 17 December 1860. S511001. Letters, Telegrams, and Proclamations.

<sup>90</sup> President James Buchanan to Governor Francis W. Pickens. 18 December 1860. S511001. Letters, Telegrams, and Proclamations.

state of South Carolina”, and thus raised tension between Buchanan and the Palmetto state.

Pickens blatantly stated the South’s opposition of encroaching Northern ideals and opinions, emphasizing the two contrasting societies at this time. In his inaugural address to the House of Representatives, he explained that as a result of the 1860 presidential election of Abraham Lincoln and his Vice President Hanibal Hamlin, the South felt endangered under the rule of the Federal Government.<sup>91</sup> This “great *overt act*” of Northerners controlling the fate of the election using the democratic rights of the population to vote for government representatives had driven Southerners to a state of uncomfortability, irritability, and aggravation because they had for years warned the North of the consequences if the South was continually threatened. Thus, under these circumstances Pickens stated that there was “no alternative left but to impose our sovereign power as an independent State, to protect the rights and ancient privileges of the people of South Carolina.”<sup>92</sup> South Carolina hoped to leave the Union in peace under Pickens, allowing the North to develop their respective civilization with their own sense of duty and admiration to the Union. If this was not done in peace, South Carolina was prepared to endure whatever violence or discord necessary to tear away from the Union. With this mentality, Pickens spearheaded the initiation of the Civil War with the goal of protecting the rights and sovereignty of the peoples of South Carolina, while challenging the consuming power of the Union.

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<sup>91</sup> “Gov. Pickens’s Inaugural Message to the State of South Carolina.” *Gov. Pickens’s Inaugural Message to the State of South Carolina*. Trans. Lloyd Benson. The Charleston Courier, n.d. Web. 02 Oct. 2016. <<http://www.civilwarcauses.org/pickens.htm>>.

<sup>92</sup> “Gov. Pickens’s Inaugural Message to the State of South Carolina.” 02 Oct. 2016. <<http://www.civilwarcauses.org/pickens.htm>>.

### *Grimke Sisters & Family*

Sisters Angelina Grimké Weld (1805-1879) and Sarah Moore Grimké (1792-1873) had an unusual perspective of the battle at Fort Sumter compared to most women in the South. Their father was state Supreme Court Judge, John Faucheraud Grimké, owner of two plantations and a plethora of slaves. They relied on slaves as housekeepers, parlor maids, nursemaids, valets, butlers, footmen, cooks, coachmen, stable boys, among other jobs to ensure smooth function of the plantations and the household.<sup>93</sup> John Grimké was a prominent member of Charlestonian politics due to his wealth and a devoted parishioner of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>94</sup> He raised his eleven children to have Southern etiquette and a curious mind. From this basis grew Angelina and Sarah's inquisitive mentalities.

Prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, the two women rejected the luxurious, yet discriminatory, society of Charleston at an early age. Though Sarah—an awkward, plain looking individual—was twelve years older than Angelina, the two developed a mother-to-child-like bond that remained throughout their lives as abolitionists and great orators.<sup>95</sup> As a child, Sarah favored teaching Sunday school to illiterate slave children than to visit family friends who resided in regal mansions up the Ashley River.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, she became irritated because as a teacher she was forced to teach slaves verbally, as slaves in Charleston were forbidden to read. On the other hand, Angelina was the youngest member of the Grimké family, and often the center of attention. She had the ability of

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<sup>93</sup> Berkin, Carol. *Civil War Wives: The Lives and Times of Angelina Grimké Weld, Varina Howell Davis, and Julia Dent Grant*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. Print. p. 8.

<sup>94</sup> "Unveiling of the Grimké Historical Marker". Friends of the Library. College of Charleston, 2015. Web. 04 Sept. 2016. <<http://friends.library.cofc.edu/unveiling-of-the-grimke-historical-marker/>>.

<sup>95</sup> *Civil War Wives: The Lives and Times of Angelina Grimké Weld, Varina Howell Davis, and Julia Dent Grant*. p. 9.

<sup>96</sup> Perry, Mark. *Lift Up Thy Voice: The Grimké Family's Journey from Slaveholders to Civil Rights Leaders*. New York: Viking, 2001. Print. p. 30.

extreme perception, a talent that haunted her throughout her adulthood. When she was young, Angelina witnessed the suffering that occurred on her father's plantation, as well as estates of family friends. She was remarkably disturbed by a young slave boy who walked with difficulty due to the whip-mark scars on his back and legs, a family of slaves who were mistreated and abused, and the crackling screams of pain from the nearby workhouse—where slaves were dragged on a treadmill, and suspended by their arms.<sup>97</sup>

The sisters realized racial prejudice ran rampant throughout the country; therefore, it had to be fought in both the North and the South. In 1821, Sarah moved from her home in Charleston, South Carolina to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Angelina followed suit in 1829. There they joined the Society of Friends and became Quakers, spreading their abolitionist ideals and support for women's rights. These two sisters were unique in the fight against the institution of slavery because they, unlike popular Northern male abolitionists of the time, had a first hand account of the torture and racism associated with slavery on their Charleston plantation. Believing that female slaves were their countrywomen and sisters, Sarah and Angelina criticized the slave-holding South for holding colored men in 'abject ignorance', while scorning the North for their lack of total acceptance of blacks into society.<sup>98</sup> As the war progressed, the Grimké sisters realized that Southerners believed that the captivating grey walls of Fort Sumter were invincible, symbolic of the resilience of Charlestonian and Southern society. Despite their abolitionist opinions, their upbringing allowed a unique understanding of Southern pro-

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<sup>97</sup> "Angelina and Sarah Grimke: Abolitionist Sisters." *History*, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, n.d. Web. 15 Sept. 2016. < <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/slavery-and-anti-slavery/essays/angelina-and-sarah-grimke-abolitionist-sisters>>.

<sup>98</sup> Lerner, Gerda. *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels Against Slavery*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967. Print. p. 162.



slavery perspective, proving powerful in understanding the relationship between Northern and Southern perspectives of Fort Sumter and the Civil War.<sup>99</sup>

After the Union regained control Fort Sumter from the Confederacy near the end of the war, the sisters held mixed feelings laced with anxiety over the long awaited celebration on April 14, 1865.<sup>100</sup> As the American flag was raised and billowed above the dilapidated fort, Sarah and Angelina reflected on how far the abolition movement had come, and could not believe the initiators of the movement—including William Lloyd Garrison, Henry Ward Beecher, and themselves—were invited by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton to stand within Fort Sumter, the symbolic ‘citadel of slavery’ and the catalyst of the Civil War.

### **Northern Perspectives on the Battle at Fort Sumter**

As the South was a primarily plantation-based society dependent on slaves for the production of cash crops, the North was a farm society laced with booming industrial cities—such as New York and Boston—during the 1860s. Discord between the South and North exponentially increased as the South began to threaten secession. The South felt the North belittled and discredited their lifestyle, fueling hostility. Furthermore, the North viewed the Union as the force that held the nation together, and viewed slavery and Southern secession as threats to the authority of the North and their interpretation of the Constitution. Before Confederate troops captured Fort Sumter, Union troops stationed in the Charleston Harbor symbolized the perseverance of the North and their desire for national forces to be present throughout the nation, despite the South’s disaffiliation.

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<sup>99</sup> Civil War Wives: The Lives and Times of Angelina Grimké Weld, Varina Howell Davis, and Julia Dent Grant. p. 8.

<sup>100</sup> The Grinké Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels Against Slavery. p. 356.

When Union soldiers were forced to evacuate, the tables turned, symbolizing the South's fairly rapid obtainment of power once Northern forces were eradicated. Understanding the lives of Northerners who experienced this shift in dominance is crucial in comprehending the changing environment surround Confederate capture of Fort Sumter.

### *Catharine Merrill*

Catharine Merrill, native of Indianapolis, author, and educator, served as a nurse during the Civil War.<sup>101</sup> She was the daughter of Civil War Union General Samuel Merrill, learning her abolitionist ideals from her father. Samuel was a member of the Second Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis and an intimate friend of abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher. The elder Merrill taught school throughout Indiana, stressing the importance of education on his children. Catharine became a teacher in Cleveland, Ohio and Crawfordsville, Indiana, and later an English professor at Northwestern Christian University, now known as Butler University. In 1859-1860, she took her younger siblings to Germany on an educational tour. While in Europe, she wrote a series of travel letters that she sent home, later to be published in the *Indianapolis Journal*.<sup>102</sup> In response, she was sent newspaper clippings. Interestingly, the reverse sides of these clippings detail the echoing sentiments of the secessionist ideals prevalent in South Carolina in other Southern states, such as Louisiana. The *New Orleans Bee* explained that “the secessionists in Charleston are regarded in Louisiana” as “favorable and adverse”,

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<sup>101</sup> “Catharine Merrill.” The Sierra Club. The John Muir Exhibit. 2016 Sierra Club, n.d. Web. 04. Sept. 2016. < [http://vault.sierraclub.org/john\\_muir\\_exhibit/people/catharine\\_merrill.aspx](http://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/people/catharine_merrill.aspx)>.

<sup>102</sup> The Merrill-Drayton papers. Newspaper clippings. Indiana Historical Society. N.d. Read 01 October 2016.

highlighting that not all Southerners agreed on the separation from the Union.<sup>103</sup> Though she was not purposefully sent these clippings regarding Southern sentiments of the secession of South Carolina, Catharine was provided timely information about national disintegration from a Southern perspective.

In addition, Merrill collected sentiments of Northern infantrymen upon her return to the United States in 1860. Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton commissioned her to accumulate a history of Indiana soldiers during the Civil War. On July 7, 1862, Catharine sent letters soliciting Indiana soldiers for their accounts of the war thus far. The resulting book—published in 1864—is named *The Soldier of Indiana in the War for the Union*, and gives a glimpse into the Northern perspectives of the action.<sup>104</sup> In this book, she comments on the exact moment Fort Sumter was bombarded by the Confederates. When the telegraph of the conflict arrived at ten o'clock in the morning of April 12, 1861, “no man living within the limits of America will ever forget that dispatch”, stating simply, “Sumter has fallen”.<sup>105</sup> She described the atmosphere after the notification of the bombardment from Ohio to Indiana, noting that businesses were closed, and there was immense anxiety of the impending instability of the nation. Additionally, middle-aged men appeared “wide-eyed” of the notification, as “a great silence fell upon all” in the

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<sup>103</sup> The Merrill-Drayton papers. Newspaper clippings. Indiana Historical Society. N.d. Read 01 October 2016.

<sup>104</sup> “Catharine Merrill.” The Sierra Club. Web. 04. Sept. 2016.  
<[http://vault.sierraclub.org/john\\_muir\\_exhibit/people/catharine\\_merrill.aspx](http://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/people/catharine_merrill.aspx)>

<sup>105</sup> Merrill, Catharine. “The Soldier of Indiana in the War Against the War for the Union.” *The Soldier of Indiana in the War Against the War for the Union*. Indianapolis: Merrill and Company, n.d. Web. 2 Oct. 2016. <<https://archive.org/details/soldierofindiana01merr>>.

North.<sup>106</sup> Through this book she documented the lives of Hoosier soldiers on and off the battlefield, allowing this era to be engrained forever in history.

*Oliver Hazard Perry Morton*

Oliver Hazard Perry Morton, referred to by some as Indiana's most distinguished governor, headed the state during the turmoil of the Civil War. He was born in Wayne County, Indiana, an hour east of Indianapolis, near the Ohio border. He was raised by his grandparents—and later his two aunts—after his parents died. His high school professor called his academic performance “not so promising”, but saw the dedication Morton had in his schoolwork.<sup>107</sup> He attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio for his undergraduate degree, but failed to graduate, later studying law in Centerville, Indiana. He passed the bar in 1846, and six years later, the governor of Indiana James Whitcomb, serving as a Democrat, appointed him Circuit Judge.

The turning point for Morton's political career was in 1854 when the Democrats in Congress repealed the Missouri Compromise and enacted the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. The Missouri Compromise barred owning slaves north of the 36°30' parallel in 1820; therefore, by repealing the bill, slavery was legalized once again.<sup>108</sup> More specifically, Stephen A. Douglas created the Kansas-Nebraska Act in order to make Kansas a territory of the United States. In order to do so, there needed to be a compelling argument for how the South may benefit from adding additional territory for railroad building purposes. To

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<sup>106</sup>Merrill, Catharine. “The Soldier of Indiana in the War Against the War for the Union.” *The Soldier of Indiana in the War Against the War for the Union*. Indianapolis: Merrill and Company, n.d. Web. 2 Oct. 2016. <<https://archive.org/details/soldierofindiana01merr>>

<sup>107</sup>French, William M. *Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton*. Indianapolis: S.L. Marrow, n.d. Print. p. 30.

<sup>108</sup>“The Kansas-Nebraska Act.” Ushistory.org. Independence Hall Association, n.d. Web. 08 Aug. 2016. <<http://www.ushistory.org/us/31a.asp>>.

do so, he suggested Kansas as a territory that would legalize slavery for the purpose of western expansion.<sup>109</sup> Because the majority of Democrats supported slavery and Morton had always been an opponent of enslavement, he proudly left the Democratic Party and joined the Republican Party as a result of the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He stalwartly believed in the saying “either sacrifice your principles or leave your party”, and he quickly did so.<sup>110</sup>

In 1856—with his feet freshly in the pool of the Republican Party—Morton was nominated for position of Indiana Governor. He did not necessarily give up his Democratic principles, but rather incorporated his morals formed in his Democratic years into a northern Republican mold. Morton was defeated by Democrat Ashbel Willard, possibly because Willard spoke more eloquently and confidently than did his opposition.<sup>111</sup> In 1860, Morton was elected Lieutenant Governor alongside Governor Henry S. Lane, and when Lane left office to serve in the Senate in 1861, Morton became the first Governor of Indiana born in the state. He became a steadfast symbol for Indiana during the Civil War, with an editor of an Indiana newspaper stating, “there was never a cowardly hair on Governor Morton’s head”.<sup>112</sup>

Republicans collected in Indianapolis to celebrate their party beating the opposing and offensive Democratic nominee Stephen A. Douglas. At this celebration, Governor Morton spoke to a crowd of rejoicing political men, who expected a speech about Lincoln and how as the new president, he was well suited to combat the South. Instead, Morton moved to the root of Southern hostility: the yearning to secede due to differing morals

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<sup>109</sup> Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, p. 11.

<sup>111</sup> Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, p. 12.

<sup>112</sup> Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, p. 143.

possessed by the North and South, respectively. In his passionate speech, he commented, “secession or nullification can only be regarded by the General government as an individual action upon individual responsibility”. Referring to Lincoln, he added, “There is but one way in which the President can be absolved from his duty to exert all the power reposed in his hands by the Constitution to enforce the laws of SC, which is by acknowledging her independence”.<sup>113</sup>

His disapproval of secession was obvious as he explained, “no government has the power to dismember itself”, and if a state is to secede, it “must result from inexorable necessity produced by a successful revolution”.<sup>114</sup> If it was found that a state could constitutionally secede—specifically South Carolina—then an act of Congress is necessary to formally pass said action. In the same speech, Morton predicted that if South Carolina was to officially secede, it would have done so “at the point of a bayonet” after the Union’s efforts had failed to convince the state to remain part of the federal government. Despite this dark prognosis, he assured that “the lopping off of South Carolina by the sword of revolution would not disturb the unity of the balance of the nation...but would simply be a diminution...of her resources and population”.<sup>115</sup>

When Fort Sumter was bombarded, he observed a patriotic enthusiasm that thrived across the entire North. A day after the fort was attacked Lincoln issued a proclamation that called for 75,000 troops. From Indiana, he asked for about 6,000 troops, but Morton prepared 40,000 men instead.<sup>116</sup> To train and house these troops, the

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<sup>113</sup> Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, p. 123.

<sup>114</sup> Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, p. 124.

<sup>115</sup> Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, p. 129

<sup>116</sup> Foulke, William Dudley. Life of Oliver P. Morton: Including His Important Speeches. Indianapolis. Bowen-Merrill, 1899. Print. p. 114.

Indianapolis fairgrounds soon became known as Camp Morton.<sup>117</sup> Once the men were called into action, Governor Morton realized that there was no room for argument between the North and the South remained, but war remained a viable option.

### *Abner Doubleday*

Abner Doubleday, a New York native known for his role as a Union general during the Civil War and mythicized inventor of baseball, provides a glimpse into the Northern opinion of the bombardment of Fort Sumter. He also defines the military and societal consequences of the Civil War via his accumulated accounts titled *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860-'61*. Born in 1819, Doubleday was a man of strong opinions and a fervent supporter of the abolition of slaves. Doubleday was stationed at Fort Moultrie in 1859, where he was an avid abolitionist and supporter of the Illinois former Congressman, and soon to be president, Abraham Lincoln. He was second-in-command at Fort Sumter, ordering the first shots as a response to the firings made by the Confederate forces on the fortification.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, he was promoted to brigadier general later in the year, fighting in the Battle at Manassas and the Battle of Antietam. One of Doubleday's most crucial roles in the Battle of Fort Sumter was his assistance in moving Anderson's and his troops from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter in December 1860.<sup>119</sup> After the surrender of Fort Sumter, he moved to New York, and later Washington D.C., where he continued his military career.

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<sup>117</sup> *Life of Oliver P. Morton: Including His Important Speeches*. p.114.

<sup>118</sup> "Abner Doubleday." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 13 July 2016. <<http://www.history.com/topics/American-civil-war/abner-doubleday>>.

<sup>119</sup> "Abner Doubleday". 15 November 2016. <<http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/abner-doubleday>>.

Eleven years after the Battle of Fort Sumter, Doubleday collected his thoughts and wrote *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860-'61*. He did so to “record the facts and incidents connected with the first conflict of the Rebellion...aware that later and more absorbing events have cause the earlier struggles of the war to recede in the distance...”.<sup>120</sup> He noted that Charleston was “far from being a pleasant place” for a man loyal to the Union.<sup>121</sup> Additionally, he noticed cheers and applause were loud when toasts renouncing the United States flag occurred, and “treasonable sentiments” were everywhere in Charleston. In October of 1860, disunionists became aggressive, doubtful that federal President Buchanan had sufficient power against them. Towards the end of the month, Doubleday became obviously unpopular in Charleston due to his anti-slavery attitudes and articles he wrote and sent to be published in the North, partially because he wrote of his disbelief in the institution of slavery.<sup>122</sup>

### *Perry Hall*

Northwestern Christian University graduate, Perry Hall, was a “brilliant young preacher” from Indianapolis who later enlisted “in the military to fight for the Union”.<sup>123</sup> He eventually joined the 79<sup>th</sup> Indiana Volunteer Infantry upon hearing that war with the South was imminent.<sup>124</sup> On April 14, 1861, exciting war news arrived in Indianapolis that grabbed Hall’s attention. Hall spoke of “the news of the investment of Fort Sumpter [sic] by the secessionists” as the Confederates obtained the fort from the Union. He believed

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<sup>120</sup> Doubleday, Abner. *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860-'61*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1876. Print. Introduction.

<sup>121</sup> *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860-'61*. p. 14.

<sup>122</sup> *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860-'61*. p. 25.

<sup>123</sup> Butler University Collegian [Indianapolis] 1897: n. p. Print.

<sup>124</sup> Daniel, Larry J. *Days of Glory: The Army of the Cumberland, 1861-1865*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2004. Print. p. 15.



that this was a day of great humiliation for President Buchanan due to the loss of the last remaining Union stronghold. Hall wrote that Sunday was scarcely observed because Fort Sumter surrendered after several hours of bombardment, despite vigorous resistance.<sup>125</sup> Though Buchanan and the military leaders supported the fort as long as possible, Hall saw Union loss of the garrison as a symbol of war.

The intense excitement of losing the fort to the South reverberated in the city of Indianapolis, reflecting the severity of this event for Hoosiers hundreds of miles away. According to Hall, the military began heavily recruiting in Indianapolis, while talks of war reverberated throughout the city. From April through mid-July of 1861, Hall noted the “predominant military feeling” and “military atmosphere” throughout the city.<sup>126</sup> These sentiments were fueled by the advancement of Federal forces on Manassas in July of 1861, as well as the danger the United States capital faced as troops began to multiply for both the Northern and Southern forces. Furthermore, the Battle of Bull Run—the first major battle of the Civil War—provoked Hall’s sincerity and fear for his nation as he heard word on 22 July 1861 that the federal forces had advanced on Manassas, Virginia. Hall believed that they were in “too great haste”, causing visible worry in his diary entries. He emphasized the gloom and great sadness felt in Indiana and throughout the North after the Union’s eventual defeat by the Confederates at Bull Run.<sup>127</sup>

His diary entries outwardly express his interest in the military when he speaks to soldiers about the “U.S. vessel [that was] fired into by the Secessionists” in Charleston, South Carolina, later commenting this was the effort of the South to destroy the national

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<sup>125</sup> Perry Hall Diary, 14 April 1861, SC670, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN.

<sup>126</sup> Perry Hall Diary, 14 April 1861, SC670, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN.

<sup>127</sup> Perry Hall Diary, 22 July 1861, SC670, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN.

existence of the Union.<sup>128</sup> Hall continued to relate the undeniable military atmosphere in Indianapolis with the overall crisis at Fort Sumter at his Sunday evening worship, denouncing Southern opinion and promoting Unionist ideals.

### **Emotions Stirred**

Taken together, Southern and Northern reaction to secession and the capture of Fort Sumter in 1860 and 1861 were justifiable events that occurred in consequence of both militaries and cultures being threatened. Through analysis of common citizens—of the Union and Confederacy—and their respective positions on the fall of the fort, it is revealed that a majority of both sides wished that the hostility to end there, in hopes of avoiding war and further mortalities. Though both the general public majority of the North and South were against bloodshed, the attack at Fort Sumter brought differing emotions. The South began to question if the capture of the fort was the most effective move they could have made and if they had a military strong enough to fight if the need arose. Contrastingly, the North was excited to come together and fight to regain their lost territory and to demonstrate the power they had against the South.

Specifically, many Southerners—especially plantation owners and their relatives—favored a peaceful secession of South Carolina that guaranteed freedom from the North. After secession, the South was able to develop their own identity freely, while the North focused on maintaining what remained of the Union's coherence and strength. Despite the plea for peace, Southern military and political leaders saw no choice but to exasperate the occurrences at Fort Sumter, by means of war, to maintain their system of slavery and thus their economy and livelihood.

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<sup>128</sup> Perry Hall Diary, 29 December 1861, SC670, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN.

Contrastingly, as the fort was taken from them, Northerners were angered, eager to dismantle the people that so ardently forced Union troops from Fort Sumter. This desire spread throughout Northern states, creating a Union more closely knit than in prior years. Antisecessionists came together to preserve the Union in hopes of defeating secessionists and reclaim the Atlantic garrison equally treasured by the two opposing forces. The emotions fueled by Confederate actions maintained the Union's strength throughout the war, leading to their ultimate recapture of Fort Sumter.

### **Fort Sumter's Symbolism During the Civil War**

Fort Sumter became a symbol for the Civil War because though conflict between pro-slavery and anti-slavery supporters began years before Confederates took control of the stronghold, the action at the fort amplified the animosity that suffocated the nation for the following four years. It represented the Confederate rebellion that was a byproduct of the prior half century long discord between Northerners and Southerners. For Northerners, the loss of Fort Sumter was a blow to the strength of the Union, while for the South it was the key necessary to obtain freedom from the North. After the fort was obtained from Union forces, Southern officials realized the strength of the Southern artillery, solidifying South Carolina's decision to secede and more states to join them.

Prior to the bombardment, Fort Sumter symbolized the incomplete and cluttered federal defense system. Because the fort's construction went unfinished for years due to insufficient funding before Major Robert Anderson moved his troops from Fort Moultrie to Sumter, it did not have extensive meaning to the government or the people of the United States. As conflict arose between the North and South, the fort became a symbol

of struggle and disagreement that ran fervently across state borders and throughout the blood of the nation. The North continued to view the fort as a part of the federal government because it was built by them, despite being located in the South. On the other hand, the South perceived it as a part of the newly formed Confederacy. Fort Sumter was the most important stronghold for the South not for its construction or ability to hold firearms, but rather its location guarding the entrance to the harbor, which could control imports and exports to the Charleston port. Therefore, Fort Sumter symbolized economic opportunity and self-sufficiency for the cotton states. For both the North and the South, it represented dominance and power over one another.

It was essential for the South to maintain control over the fort during the Civil War to confirm their dominance over the North. The Second Battle of Fort Sumter on September 8, 1863 was an unsuccessful attack by the North as Union forces failed to reclaim the fort from the Confederates. This further supported the idea that the Confederacy was a strong force to be reckoned with. At this time the fort consisted of rubble, seemingly insignificant in value, but representing the persistence of the South to push their capabilities to fight against the foreboding morals of Northern opinions, especially anti-slavery attitudes.

With little destruction throughout 1861-1862, the fort maintained its original, uncompleted façade. Dissimilarly, between 1863 and 1865, Confederates endured months of siege by Union soldiers attempting to reclaim control over Fort Sumter to further enforce their power over seceded states. The week of August 17, 1863 saw 6,000 shells, 18 rifled cannons, and 250-pound shells thrown on Fort Sumter by Union forces and the

Confederacy was weakened due to the grandiose destruction inflicted.<sup>129</sup> This plight ultimately reduced the fort to rubble, resulting in pummeled walls, demolished cannons, and non-existent towers. Afterwards, Union General Quincy Adams Gillmore was in awe of the destruction, illustrating the sight of the fort as a “practical demolition”.<sup>130</sup> In July, 1864, Union attempts to obtain the fort escalated, and Union General John G. Foster continued to shell it, but his efforts proved unsuccessful. Confederate General P. G. T. Beauregard ordered the fort to “be held to the last extremity” to ensure it stayed in the hands of the Confederacy.<sup>131</sup> As repeated bombing and shelling pelted Fort Sumter, men were needed to repair any destruction to ensure it may retain its function, following Beauregard’s commands. Approximately 63,200-63,400 slaves worked tirelessly throughout the day and night to repair the fort.<sup>132</sup> Despite this constant repair, the garrison was reduced to a shapeless mound of boulders incapable of inflicting damage.<sup>133</sup> By February 17, 1865, the fort was extensively demolished and the Civil War was nearing its end. Due to the uselessness of the fort and the realization of the inevitable, the Confederates evacuated Fort Sumter.<sup>134</sup> On February 22 with great jubilation of the North and despondent realization from the South, General William T. Sherman and his troops marched across the South Carolina border and captured Charleston in February, 1865 with no friction between Confederate and Union forces.<sup>135</sup> They effectively cut the city

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<sup>129</sup> National Parks Society. Fort Sumter: National Monument of South Carolina. Washington D.C.: National Parks Society, 2002. Web. 16 July 2016.

<sup>130</sup> NPS. Fort Sumter: National Monument of South Carolina. 2002. Web. 16 July 2016.

<sup>131</sup> NPS. Fort Sumter: National Monument of South Carolina. 2002. Web. 16 July 2016.

<sup>132</sup> NPS. Fort Sumter: National Monument of South Carolina. 2002. Web. 16 July 2016.

<sup>133</sup> NPS. Fort Sumter: National Monument of South Carolina. 2002. Web. 16 July 2016.

<sup>134</sup> “Fort Sumter.” Fort Sumter. University of North Carolina School of Education, n.d. Web. 02 Oct. 2016. <<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-civilwar/4637>>.

<sup>135</sup> “Pictures: Fort Sumter: Defiance and Destruction (1862-1865).” *National Geographic*. National Geographic Society, n.d. Web. 17 Oct. 2016 <<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2011/04/pictures/110407-fort-sumter-defiance-and-destruction/>>.

off from the rest of the crippling Confederacy.<sup>136</sup> More importantly, Sherman and his troops recaptured Fort Sumter with ease. The North obtaining the fort emphasized its prevailing importance—despite its ineffectiveness to function and protect as such—and highlights its symbolic representation of strength and power of whoever possessed it. Despite the marred condition of the fort after it returned to Union hands, the fort remained an icon of Northern success that was celebrated extensively after the end of the Civil War.

On March 27, 1865, the War Department sent General Order No. 50 to the Headquarters of the Department of the South in Hilton Head, South Carolina to ensure the celebration of the recapture of Fort Sumter exactly four years after the Confederates tactfully ripped it from Union arms. The first order was that at 12:00 PM on April 14 of that year, Major Anderson was to raise the same flag that he was forced to take down upon the evacuation of Fort Sumter in 1861. The second order was that when Anderson raised the flag, there would be an impressive 100-gun salute from the fort as well as a National salute from all forts in the Charleston Harbor—even rebel forts that fired on Sumter. The third demand was that Major-General William T. Sherman—the general who expelled the Confederate rebels from the fort in February 1865—would direct the ceremony, with Reverend Henry Ward Beecher speaking. The final order stated that all naval forces stationed in the Charleston Harbor were to attend the occasion.<sup>137</sup>

Reverend Henry Ward Beecher's anti-slavery Unionist ideals were represented during his speech at the commemoration of the four-year anniversary of the bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1865. Understanding the life of Henry W.

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<sup>136</sup> "Pictures: Fort Sumter: Defiance and Destruction (1862-1865)." 17 Oct. 2016.

<sup>137</sup> "Fort Sumter." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 10 Aug. 2016. <<http://www.history.com/topics/American-civil-war/abner-doubleday>>.

Beecher underscores the importance of his role in such a momentous celebration in the history of the United States. Son of Lyman Beecher—an orthodox Calvinist—and intellectual mother Roxanna Foote Beecher, Henry was born in Litchfield County, Connecticut.<sup>138</sup> Each day of his childhood contained numerous prayers—found in the forms of liturgy, hymns, and recited prayer—and the family suffered from the poverty associated with ministry work. After the death of his mother, Henry’s family became renown for their ability to debate, creating a fabulously “rhetorical and emotional friskiness” that the Beecher family was known for. Though he was one of eight children, his closest sibling was his abolitionist sister and author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe.<sup>139</sup>

When Henry was twelve, the family moved to the North End of Boston, Massachusetts, with a population of nearly fifty thousand.<sup>140</sup> His father’s Calvinist preaching was idolized by some, mocked and understood as villainous to others. When he was fourteen, his father sent him to boarding school in Amherst, Massachusetts, hoping his son would follow his footsteps as a preacher. It was in his sophomore year in high school that he discovered his natural talent in oration, and he pursued college in the same town. Because they were young children in the 1820s when slavery was a large topic of debate that fueled the production of the Missouri Compromise, many Northerners of Henry’s age matured into “their brother’s keepers, duty bound to emancipate the world from sin”.<sup>141</sup> For this young generation in the North, slavery was not a debate about social construct or economic prosperity, but rather a Biblical calling that demanded

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<sup>138</sup> Applegate, Debby. *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher*. New York: Doubleday, 2006. Print. p. 26.

<sup>139</sup> *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher*. p. 58.

<sup>140</sup> *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher*. p. 58.

<sup>141</sup> *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher*. p. 104.

righteousness out of religious principle for all men in the name of God. This included the two million blacks living in servitude against their will.

Then Beecher took on Cincinnati, Ohio, where he delved into the origins of the ‘peculiar institution of slavery’ at the Lane Theological Seminary.<sup>142</sup> The Constitution notes that slaves count for “three fifths of all other Persons” for allotting representatives for Congress, and citing that if a slaves escapes, he or she must be returned to their owner under federal law.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, the Bible is laced with slavery, being found in the book of Genesis and other books in the Old Testament. These two influential aspects of society seemingly endorsed the institution of slavery, thus making it difficult to convince slaveholders that their enshrined way of life and the backbone of their economy was somehow wrong. As a Presbyterian minister in Cincinnati, Henry quickly learned that that the Ohio city “stands in the North, but faces the South”.<sup>144</sup>

In 1837, Henry Beecher settled west of Cincinnati in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. Here he wrote for the *Political Beacon* newspaper, writing about his dissatisfaction with slavery. This newspaper ran advertisements for his church to collect money for the American Colonization Society (ACS), an organization for which Beecher was a member. The ACS was dedicated to encouraging manumission—the freeing of slaves by their owner—and settlement of blacks in Africa, on the primary premise that freed slaves could never be integrated in American society. Beecher and the ACS were able to “recognize the legal and constitutional existence of slavery in [the Southern] sister states”

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<sup>142</sup> The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher. p. 104.

<sup>143</sup> Spalding, David. “The Heritage Guide to The Constitution.” Guide to the Constitution. n.p. Web. 20 Aug. 2016. < <http://www.heritage.org/constitution#!/articles/1/essays/6/three-fifths-clause>>.

<sup>144</sup> The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher. p. 115.



and they approved colonization of all freed blacks in the African continent.<sup>145</sup> This avid support for eradicating slavery did not come without an emotional and spiritual toll. He found his job in Lawrenceburg as an orator and man of the gospel as challenging, but most of the time rewarding. In 1830s Indianapolis, he found that his colonization ideas were rejected by most. At the time, Indianapolis was only slightly larger than Lawrenceburg; therefore, there was not a great diversity in political and social opinions that were publicized as there are today. He began preaching at the Second Presbyterian Church on New York Street in 1839.<sup>146</sup> Thirty-five years later, Beecher wrote that the Presbyterian Church and Synod in Indianapolis “considered it a heresy to advocate freedom” after they rejected his ideas on how to eliminate slavery.<sup>147</sup>

Beecher knew that in order to settle the problem of slavery and state sovereignty between the North and the South, the Union must “settle this question by our armies, and the opinions of mankind will follow”.<sup>148</sup> His premonition was confirmed when the Confederacy opened fire on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Of this occurrence, he wrote “the national ensign, floating in its pride and power over the battlements of Fort Sumter, was assailed and trailed in surrender”.<sup>149</sup> The replacement of the American flag by the flag of the Confederate States of America symbolized the tumultuous initiation of Northern humiliation stated Beecher. On September 14, 1862, Henry Ward Beecher went to Washington to share his opinions of the state of the Union, and to gain additional

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<sup>145</sup> “American Colonization Society (1816-1964).” *The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed*. n.p. Web. 20 August 2016. < <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/american-colonization-society-1816-1964>>.

<sup>146</sup> “Henry Ward Beecher.” *ISL: Henry Ward Beecher*. Indiana State Library, n.d. Web. 10 Dec. 2016. <<http://www.in.gov/library/finding-aid/4991.htm>>.

<sup>147</sup> Hibben, Paxton. *Henry War Beecher: An American Portrait*. The Press of the Readers Club New York, 1942. Print. p. 80.

<sup>148</sup> Henry War Beecher: An American Portrait, 1942. p. 163.

<sup>149</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times Correspondent. NY Times*. n.d. Web. 06 Oct. 2014. < <http://www.nytimes.com/1865/04/18/news/fort-sumter-restoration-stars-stripes-solemn-impressive-ceremonies-gen-anderson.html?pagewanted=all>>.

insight on how the majority of the nation thought. Here he urged President Abraham Lincoln to hasten emancipation of the slaves, but Lincoln failed to respond. But Lincoln eventually passed the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862 and the South failed to collapse as Beecher had hoped.<sup>150</sup> Beecher was caught off guard and had no immediate plans to solve this societal crisis.

To celebrate the four year anniversary of the capture of Fort Sumter and return to Federal control, Beecher suggested sending a shipload of Christian Sunday school teachers to raise the Union flag over the ruins, putting Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in charge. Stanton could not attend; therefore, issued a formal military order that Beecher orate in his place.<sup>151</sup> Due to his history of using the Gospel to support anti-slavery and Union victory, Henry Ward Beecher was an obvious choice. Those in attendance of the celebration on Friday April 14, 1865 included Beecher and his family, guests of the South Carolina Governor Andrew Gordon McGrath, and William Lloyd Garrison of *The Liberator*, among others.<sup>152</sup> As Beecher and his family arrived in Charleston, they received news of Confederate Army General Robert E. Lee's surrender in Virginia after the Battle of Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865.<sup>153</sup> When news was given, he broke down and sobbed, while some women were noted to have fainted as a result of excitement and relief of this monumental information.<sup>154</sup> Those who traveled with

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<sup>150</sup> "Emancipation Proclamation." Civil War Trust. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 14 November 2016. <<http://www.civilwar.org/150th-anniversary/emancipation-proclamation-150.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>>

<sup>151</sup> Henry Ward Beecher: An American Portrait. Print. p. 169.

<sup>152</sup> "Governor Andrew G. McGrath, and the Box They Buried the State In." Teaching American History in South Carolina. 2009. Web. 14 November 2016. <<http://www.teachingushistory.org/tours/AGMGallery.cfm>>

<sup>153</sup> "Grant & Lee." Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 06 Oct. 2016. <<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/appomattox-courthouse/appomattox-court-house-history/surrender.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>>.

<sup>154</sup> Henry Ward Beecher: An American Portrait. Print. p.170.

Beecher on the three-day *Oceanus* boat ride from New York City observed that Charleston appeared similar to the “ruins of Pompeii”, and the city was dark and solemn.<sup>155</sup> As Beecher gave his speech, the original, torn American flag billowed over his cascade of words, lasting an hour in the heavy Charleston sun.

The *New York Times* correspondence began with addressing the environment surrounding the Charleston Harbor. Beecher noted the multitude of Northern visitors filling the streets, many of which were of the Reverend’s Plymouth Church from Brooklyn, New York. Approximately 3,000 people were in attendance, about 500 of who were women. Of the Navy and Army troops present, there were “large detachments of white and colored troops” alike.<sup>156</sup> In the harbor, “every vessel put on its gayest attire”, with the Union flag waving brilliant in the ocean breeze atop all principle fortifications, “with the exception of Sumter, where was shortly to take place a scene never to be forgotten”.<sup>157</sup> Though the fort stood crumbled and disheveled, the decorated ships and brilliant banners accentuated by wreaths of flowers that enveloped the slightly elevated stage provided the crowd with pride and jubilation.

The ceremony began with the singing of “Victory at Last”, followed by Adjunct General Edward Townsend of the United States Army reading Major Anderson’s dispatch announcing the surrender of Fort Sumter dated April 18, 1861. Then Anderson was called forward to raise in celebration the same flag he was forced to lower four years prior, symbolic of the honorable perseverance of the North. Though the old flag’s crimson stripes were ratted and dangling, the ocean breeze gallantly blew the ensign,

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<sup>155</sup> “When Old Glory Returned to Fort Sumter.” *NY Times*. n.d. 06. Oct. 2016. <[http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/04/16/when-old-glory-returned-to-fort-sumter/?\\_r=0](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/04/16/when-old-glory-returned-to-fort-sumter/?_r=0)>.

<sup>156</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times*. Web. 06 Oct. 2014.

<sup>157</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times*. Web. 06 Oct. 2014.

initiating tears of pride throughout the audience. A 100-gun salute preceded the singing of the Star Spangled Banner. It was time for Beecher to give his long awaited speech. Each orator that came to the stage was welcomed with proper excitement, but “none were received with such loud cheers as Mr. Beecher”.<sup>158</sup>

Beecher spoke of the state of the nation, lacing his eloquent speech with insightful gratitude to those directly involved in the four-year-long battle and comedic excerpts that vivaciously engaged the crowd of spectators. He outlined that the nation that was once great was burdened by the wrath of the tormenting South, yet refused to fall. Both the fort itself and the original flag that was raised by General Anderson before the war—and before Beecher’s speech—were representative of the insult that fueled the Union’s persevering fight against the Southern ‘traitors’. With such a splendid celebration in the center of the fort and the battered flag raised, onlookers celebrated the resolute standing of the Union despite what had happened the past four years. Furthermore, Beecher addressed those who attacked the fort, labeling them as the aristocratic conspirators of the South, and therefore blamed the entirety of the war upon “educated plotting political leaders” of the Confederacy.<sup>159</sup>

Because he was a man of the Lord, Beecher thanked God throughout his speech, citing that the success of the war was a prophecy.<sup>160</sup> He spent a generous amount of time thanking God for sparing the life of Major General Anderson, attributing his survival to the Union’s victory and that “not a State [had been] blotted out from the map”.<sup>161</sup> Additionally, he stated that God demonstrated the result of those who commit treason to

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<sup>158</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times*. Web. 06 Oct. 2014.

<sup>159</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times*. Web. 06 Oct. 2014.

<sup>160</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times*. Web. 06 Oct. 2014.

<sup>161</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times*. Web. 06 Oct. 2014.

the Union so that those of the future would come to detest it. By doing so, the strength of the Union can be preserved throughout time, and would be known as the United States of America.<sup>162</sup>

As he emphasized that the nation would be “neither enslaved or enslaving”, Beecher highlighted that there was to be no geographic or social division following the Civil War, but rather one entity with equal men. He also noted that it was impossible to restore the nation to what it was prior to the Civil War, but a creation of a new, respectful country—comprised of slaves, poor souls, and those of the middle and upper classes—was the ultimate goal of 1865. Energetically concluding his speech, Beecher roared that expunging hatred and welcoming peace upon all realms of the United States with God’s assistance was the most successful method of spreading loyalty and liberty throughout the mending nation.<sup>163</sup>

### **Fort Sumter’s Significance Today**

Currently, more than 150 years after the marring discord within our nation, the Civil War’s powerful repercussions resonate within the hearts and minds of United States citizens, soldiers, and politicians, bearing consequences that continue to linger over our nation in terms of patriotism, consequences of slavery, and state’s rights. Understanding the significance of Fort Sumter throughout the Civil War aids in our understanding of larger conflict faced by the North and the South during the mid-nineteenth century.

Today the Fort Sumter National Monument Museum is located on Sullivan’s Island, South Carolina, across the harbor and approximately a 25-minute ferry ride to the

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<sup>162</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times*. Web. 06 Oct. 2014.

<sup>163</sup> “Fort Sumter: Restoration of Stars and Stripes.” *NY Times*. Web. 06 Oct. 2014.

fort. This humble museum boasts the original, tattered flag removed as the Confederates captured the fort, as well as pictures and quotations documenting the different opinions surrounding the Battle of Fort Sumter. According to historians at the fort and those who designed the museum, Fort Sumter was important because “whoever controlled Sumter controlled access to Charleston—the South’s most important seaport”.<sup>164</sup> During the mid-nineteenth century, seaports regulated the economy and who entered the city; therefore, those who had control over the harbor commanded Charleston. This yearning to control Charleston represented the race for dominance between the North and the South, where superiority was defined by control of Fort Sumter.

Representation of the North in Charleston was critical because of the polarized views of slavery and state sovereignty that separated the nation, thus requiring Union troops to exert their presence to ward off secession as long as possible. Initially, Fort Sumter was a symbol of power over the Charleston Harbor for the North and South alike. Then its significance increased as the South seceded, determined to capture the fort to eradicate the North from their territory. As South Carolina gained control after evacuation General Anderson’s troops, Fort Sumter symbolized Southern victory and strength. In addition, it was representative of—after a tumultuous 50 years—the initiation of a long-awaited sectional clash between the two divergent societies.

The Battle of Fort Sumter was equally important to the North as it was to the South. The regaining of the fort signified control over the South and its ideals, thus making it a prime target of both the Union and Confederacy. As the Union gained control of the fort in 1865 as the Civil War was coming to a close, the Fort symbolized

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<sup>164</sup> *Fort Sumter National Monument* (n.d.): 1-42. National Parks Services. Fort Sumter Museum. Web. 06 Oct. 2016. <[https://www.nps.gov/fosu/learn/historyculture/upload/fosu\\_exhibit\\_text.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/fosu/learn/historyculture/upload/fosu_exhibit_text.pdf)>.

bloodshed, undeniable rigor, commitment to the Union, and control over the nation. In sending Beecher to Charleston in 1865 to address the hoisting of the Stars and Stripes over Fort Sumter was representative of Northern victory. Though symbolic of the Northern military defeat over the South, his speech also proved intellectual authority over the Confederacy. This intellectual supremacy allowed the North to solidify their government and militia after the four years of battle, representing the strength and courage exhibited by the country's finest men to protect the legacy of the Union. Fort Sumter symbolized the commitment of the North and South in maintaining their ideals and morals at any expense, and continues to serve as a reminder of the historical tension that is continuously prevalent in today's society.

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