

# WHEN BEAUREGARD FIRED ON SUMTER

## TODAY THE FORTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE CIVIL WAR

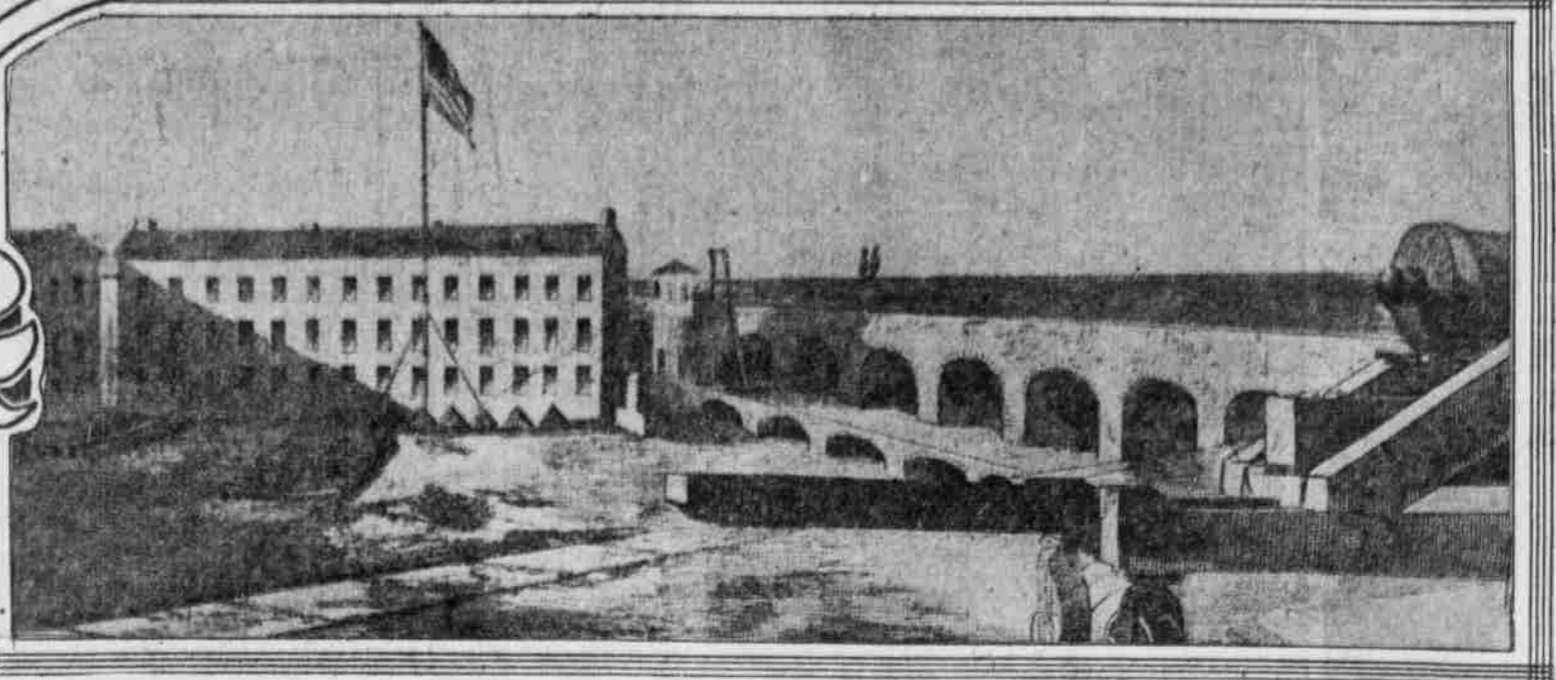
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HARPER'S WEEKLY 1861



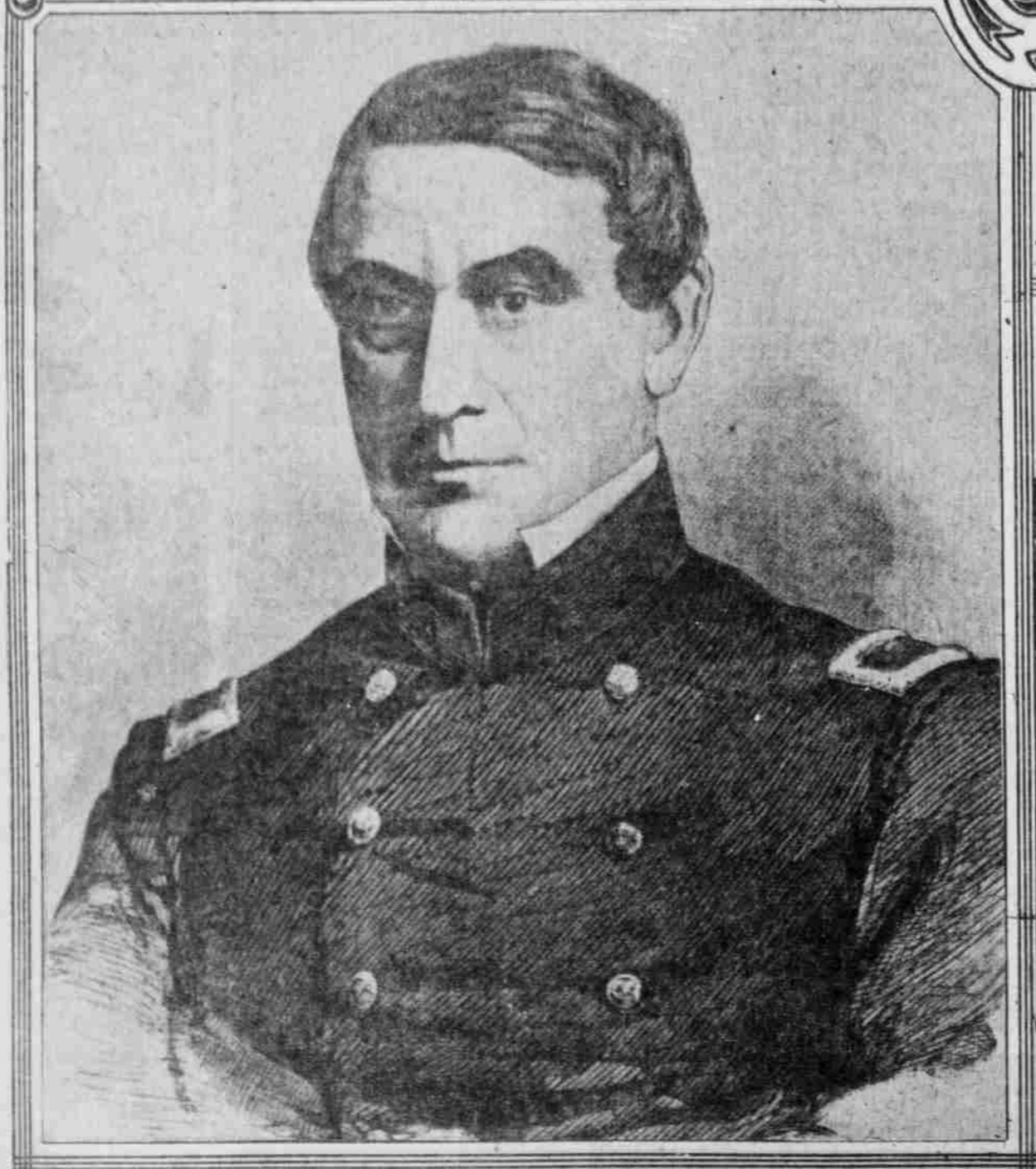
THE HOUSE-TOPS IN CHARLESTON DURING THE BOMBARDMENT OF SUMTER



GENERAL BEAUREGARD



INTERIOR OF FORT SUMTER FROM THE PARAPET



MAJOR ANDERSON, U.S.A. COMMANDING AT FORT SUMTER S.C.



Forty-seven years ago today, millions of the actors and a loss of billions of dollars. The echo of the last stroke of the historic chimas of St. Michael's had scarcely died away, when a group of soldiers gathered around a mortar in Fort Johnson, Charleston harbor, and waited, watch in hand, for the moment when the signal should sound the tocsin of civil war and the death

knell of 50 years of peace. Half an hour later, the thunder of a gun and an 11-inch shell traced its pathway toward Sumter with a long, thin line of fire. Another quickly succeeded,

and the chorus of battle began. The first of these shells was fired by Captain George S. James, the second by Lieutenant Hampton Gibbs. No pen, tongue, or canvas can accurately portray the scenes of that April morning in the City of Charleston, when its inhabitants were startled from their slumbers by the first guns. Lights flashed, as if by magic, from the windows of every house, and in the twinkling of an eye an agitated mass of people, rushing toward the water fronts of the city. Grave citizens, usually distinguished by their dignity, hurried along the streets, dressing while they ran, mutely shouting hurrahs. There were men without coats, women without hats, and children in their nightgowns, all hastening to the same points of view.

The fashionable promenade known as "The Battery" presented a conglomeration of persons in dishevelled, who, at any other time would not have thought of violating the social conventionalities of attire. And there, with pale faces and eyes sharpened by the strange fascination of the scene, the multitude remained hour after hour, peeping into the darkness and watching the progress of the fight by the flashing of the guns.

In a few minutes all the batteries that environed Fort Sumter, had opened fire, or to use the words of General Ripley, the commanding officer on one of the islands, "rang their breakfast bell for Major Anderson," but it was two hours before the latter responded to the call.

Hardly, however, had objects of the low coast become well defined among the shadows of the morning, when, as if wrathful from enforced delay, there suddenly poured from the parapet and casement of Fort Sumter a storm of iron hail. The murmur instantly ran through the city, "Fort Sumter has opened fire," the battle now raged with fury, and the fiery messengers from both sides followed each other with spiteful haste.

Short, sharp spurts of flame told of bursting shells in and around the beleaguered fortress over which floated the only flag of the Stars and Stripes to be found on the soil of South Carolina, while splashes of spray or clouds of crumbled brick marked the ugly force of round shot striking its face.

Dispatches were received hourly by Beauregard, the Commander-in-Chief, and communicated to the people by bulletins. At first the proud Carolinians were inclined to recoil at the

authority of a strange Commander, but there was something in the well-defined physiognomy, the dark eye, firm lip and massive chin of the great Creole that told of hidden power and inspired confidence, and it was not long before the hero of Contreras and Churubusco was enthroned in the hearts of the people.

A curious blending of humanity was to be observed among those who manned the Confederate fortifications. In their shirt sleeves, with heads bare and features smoke-begrimed, working heavy guns, were the gentlemen whom you met only a few days before at the Charleston Club, elegant types of wealth and leisure. Here was a clergyman, and some of his deacons, there a bank president and some of his clerks, and yonder a group of planters who could give you more points on the age and quality of fine wines than on military tactics. Many of these gentlemen never had heard a shot fired before that day, and yet, with a mixture of chivalry and recklessness, would spring to the crest of the earthworks after each fire to watch the effect of their aim and then cheer for Major Anderson as his answering missiles came shrieking back. The acerbated wrath of the companies might have been counted by millions, and the old historic names of the state answered to the roll call "here."

Colonel Thomas Sumter, grandson of "the gamecock of the Revolution," after whom the fort was named in 1822, was a private in the Palmetto Guards. The venerable Edmund Ruffin, of Virginia, 14 years of age, was a private, and was allowed to fire the first shot against Fort Sumter from what is known as the Iron Battery. Fires were kept blazing in Charleston harbor during the night for the purpose of detecting the launches of the distant fleet, if an attempt should be made to relieve the garrison.

The second day was ushered in clear and bright, and the air was laden with the perfume of early Spring flowers. The flags of both of the combatants were flying with stately defiance, and, as the first sunbeams touched their folds, the thundering intonations of the heavy artillery told the listening multitude of the renewed strife.

The garrison of Fort Sumter were on their last rations. Their breakfast that morning consisted of pork and rice, the last of the rice being served at that meal. From Fort Moultrie General Ripley was throwing hot shot, and about 5 o'clock a tall, steadily ascending col-

umn of smoke was observable on the southern portion of Sumter. First, it was thin and pale, but every moment it grew darker, until, shooting out from the base of the black pillar, great yellow tongues of flames could be seen lapping the tops of the barracks and officers' quarters. The first impression was that Major Anderson was signaling the fleet, consisting of eight war vessels and 1250 men, which had been sent to the rescue, but had remained idly at anchor and made no sign of help.

At 10 o'clock the fire reached a magazine of shells and grenades and a terrific explosion ensued that caused many a heart to stand still. For the men in that beleaguered and burning fort had many friends in Charleston who were watching it with the keenest interest. When the explosion occurred a young girl who was present with a party of her schoolmates was seen to throw her arms wildly in the air and exclaim, "Oh, God, my brother." She was the sister of Lieutenant Jeff C. Davis, one of Major Anderson's officers, who afterward became a Union general.

During all this trying period, while the fort was in flames and the air like a blast from the crater, Major Anderson continued to send occasional shots to the different batteries around him, as if determined to show to the world that he "died game." At every flag from the muzzles of his guns the Confederates would send up cheer on cheer for the gallant defender of the fort.

Three times the flag was lowered as a signal of distress to the Federal fleet in the offing, but no response followed, and it was left to Beauregard to tender the merciful assistance for which a call had been made. Captain Stephen D. Lee, Colonel W. Porter Miles and Roger A. Pryor were dispatched upon this errand. At 1 o'clock a shot from Sullivan's Island severed the flagstaff and brought down the Stars and Stripes. They were replaced, however, in about fifteen minutes by Private Hart, of New York, under circumstances of great daring.

At the reappearance of the flag the boat with the aides of Beauregard, who had been sent to offer assistance, turned back, but meanwhile, ex-Senator Wigfall, of Texas, a voluntary aide of Beauregard, accompanied by Private Corbin of the Palmetto Guard, pushed off from Morris Island in a small boat.

(Concluded on Page 11.)