**Battle of Ft. Sumter – April 1861**

When South Carolina seceded from the Union in December of 1860, United States Maj. Robert Anderson and his force of 85 soldiers were positioned at a fort near the mouth of Charleston Harbor. On December 26, fearing for the safety of his men, Anderson moved his command to Fort Sumter, a stronger fortification in the middle of the harbor. Anderson’s position soon became perilous. Just after the inauguration of President Abraham Lincoln on March 4, 1861, Anderson reported that he had only a six week supply of food left in the fort and Confederate patience for a foreign force in its territory was wearing thin.

On Thursday, April 11, 1861, Confederate Brig. Gen. Beauregard sent aides to Maj. Anderson to demand the fort’s surrender. Anderson refused. The next morning, at 4:30 a.m., Confederate batteries opened fire on Fort Sumter and continued for 34 hours. The firing continued all day, although much less rapidly since the Union fired aimed to conserve ammunition. "The crashing of the shot, the bursting of the shells, the falling of the walls, and the roar of the flames, made a pandemonium of the fort," wrote an observer. On Saturday, April 13, Anderson surrendered the fort.

Following the battle, there was widespread support from both North and South for further military action. Lincoln's immediate call for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the rebellion resulted in an additional four southern slave states also declaring their secession and joining the Confederacy. The Civil War had begun.