

## Chapter 301 – The Supply Ship *Star Of The West* Is Fired Upon At Charleston Harbor



**Dates:**  
January 1-9, 1860

**Sections:**

- Buchanan Reacts To South Carolina's Condemnation Of His Refusal To Abandon Sumter
- Holt And Scott Convince Buchanan To Reinforce Sumter And Washington City

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 1-2, 1861

### Buchanan Reacts To South Carolina's Condemnation Of His Refusal To Abandon Sumter



Joseph Holt (1897-1894)

Hearing Buchanan's reply, the three South Carolina commissioners – James Orr (ex-Speaker of the U.S. House), ex-Senator Robert Barnwell, and ex-Governor, James H. Adams – draft a highly accusatory letter that is delivered on New Year's Day.

*Major Anderson waged war....No other words will describe his action...You have resolved to hold by force what you have obtained through our misplaced confidence, and by refusing to disavow the action of Anderson, have converted his violation of orders into a legitimate act of your executive authority...By your course you have probably rendered civil war inevitable.*

On January 2, the President resorts to a traditional diplomatic snub by sending a note to the three envoys saying that he refuses to accept their reply.

By that time, however, they are already on their way back to South Carolina.

Buchanan then convenes another cabinet meeting to settle on next steps.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 3-5, 1861

### Holt And Scott Convince Buchanan To Reinforce Sumter And Washington City



Charles P. Stone (1824-1887)

The meeting leads to a dramatic turn of events that will impact the course of the conflict over the next four months.

With Buchanan's approval, the new Secretary of War, Joseph Holt, reaches out to General Winfield Scott to determine how best to deliver needed aid to Ft. Sumter and also protect the capital.

Scott is ahead of Holt on both tasks.

Holt learns that the old General has just assigned Charles P. Stone, a Captain under Scott during the 1847 assault on Mexico City, to the position of Inspector General for DC, accountable for assessing current defenses in the city and strengthening them. Stone quickly expresses concern about the forces in Maryland, and Scott responds by adding more loyal troops and artillery to Ft. Washington, south of the city.

At the same time, the Virginian Scott writes directly to Lincoln assuring him of his loyalty to the Union.

Scott has also readied the sloop *Brooklyn* with 200 troops and ninety days of provisions to sail from Fort Monroe at the southern tip of the Virginia peninsula once approval is given.

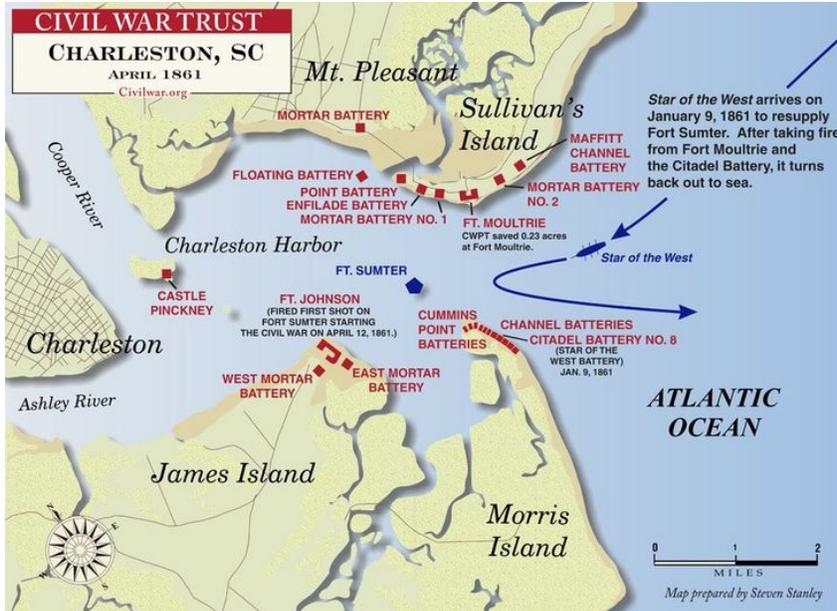
But upon further discussions with Holt, Scott settles on an alternative, a lighter and faster merchant side-wheeler, the *Star of the West*.

On the night of January 5, 1861, the *Star* slips out of New York harbor under a tight cloak of secrecy.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 9, 1861

## South Carolina Fires On The *Star Of The West* Supply Ship



Map Showing The Path Of The *Star Of The West* Trying To Re-supply Ft. Sumter

Ironically the administration attempts to recall *Star*, but the order goes out too late. The result is that the vessel arrives at 1:30am on January 9, 1861, outside the mouth of Charleston harbor. The lone light visible to Captain John McGowan, comes from Ft. Sumter, and *Star* drops anchor to its west and waits for sunrise to proceed.

Around 6:20am McGowan ups anchor and heads toward Sumter, flying the Stars & Stripes.

This move is met by cannon fire from a South Carolina battery at Cummings Point on the tip of Morris Island. One shot bounces off the *Star's* rudder and another strikes her toward the bow and just above the waterline.

Following instructions, the captain runs up a separate flag intended to signal Major Anderson of the attack. The *Star* then tacks back westward barely out of range of six guns, which fire at them from Ft. Moultrie.

The dual barrage has come without any warning and without any defensive response from Ft. Sumter.

But the officers at Sumter are unaware that a supply ship is coming and are at first confused by the fact that it is a merchant vessel, not a military sloop armed to defend itself.

Once the gunfire registers, Major Anderson beats the long roll and the garrison springs to its assigned duties. There is, however, little to be done against Morris Island, since none of Sumter's four guns pointed that way could reach the shore.

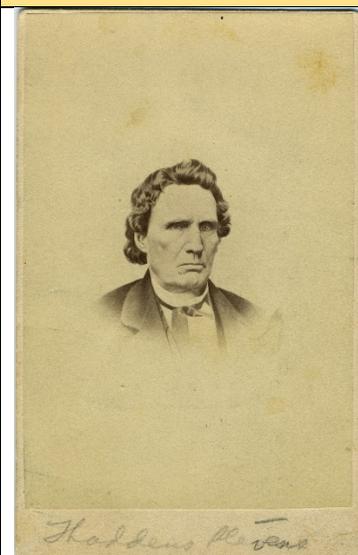
This is not the case with Ft. Moultrie, which is well within range of two 42-pounder pointed its way.

While Anderson ponders whether he has the latitude to fire until Sumter itself is attacked, the *Star of the West* moves out of the channel to safety.

Coverage in the *Charleston Mercury* applauds to outcome:

*The first gun of the new struggle for independence has been fired, and federal power has received its first repulse.*

## Chapter 302 – Three More Southern States Secede As Leaders Call For Calm



**Dates:**  
January 9-20, 1860

- Sections:**
- The Rush Toward Warfare In Charleston Is Paused As Three More States Secede
  - Jefferson Davis And Henry Seward Call For Calm
  - Davis And Others Attempt To Stall Fighting At Ft. Sumter

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 9-11, 1861

### The Rush Toward Warfare In Charleston Is Paused As Three More States Secede

Still without orders from Washington, Anderson decides to send Lt. Norman Hall ashore with a message denouncing the attack on the *Star*, and stating that he intends to turn his guns on any future ship trying to enter the harbor.

Governor Pickens replies that the “first act of positive hostility” was the move from Moultrie to Sumter, and thus the repulse of the supply ship was fully justified.

As this exchange continues, the decision is thrown into relief by events on a broader stage – namely the secession of three other Southern states: Mississippi, Florida and Alabama.

#### Secession Timing: First Four

Dates	States
December 20, 1860	South Carolina
January 9, 1861	Mississippi
January 10, 1861	Florida
January 11, 1861	Alabama

This means that South Carolina is no longer acting in isolation against the federal government, but now becomes a part of the broader confederation long sought after by the original state “fire-eaters.”

The message that now comes to Governor Pickens both from within his inner circle and from the other “seceders” is that the South is ill prepared to fight a potential civil war and needs to buy time to prepare.

Even within Charleston harbor his military advisors tell him that a bloody siege will be needed to reduce Sumter, and that the return fire from Anderson's troops will do severe damage to the other city defenses.

Still Pickens decides to make one more attempt to capture the fort with rhetoric. On January 11, 1861, his envoys arrive with a letter demanding his surrender. Anderson reads it and replies on the spot:

*I cannot do what belongs to the Government to do. The demand must be made upon them and I appeal to you as a Christian, as a man, and as a fellow country-man, to do all you can to prevent an appeal to arms.*

He then makes a suggestion that will profoundly affect the national struggle, proposing to...

*Send an officer, with a messenger from the Governor, to Washington (and) will do anything that is possible and honorable to prevent an appeal to arms.*

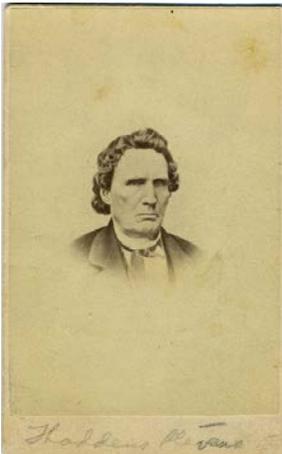
Governor Pickens is delighted by this outcome, and Lt. Norman Hall and Isaac W. Hayne, the South Carolina Attorney General, depart for DC that same day.

The effect of Anderson's action will be a "pause" in the conflict, which gives both sides the opportunity to contemplate their next moves.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 10-12, 1861

### **Jefferson Davis And Henry Seward Call For Calm**



Thaddeus Stevens (1792-1868)

One man already thinking ahead is Jefferson Davis of Mississippi. His state votes to secede on January 9, and he anticipates that Florida and Alabama will follow, which they do over the next two days.

If the trend continues, Davis envisions an independent Southern confederation forming up, along the lines of that proposed thirty years ago by John C. Calhoun. He is, however, uncertain about the likely response by the existing federal government. Will it allow a peaceful exit or attempt to stop it by force? If the latter, the seceding states will need time to organize a command structure and prepare to defend itself.

For Davis, this means that the conflict in Charleston harbor must be kept in check long enough for the new coalition to develop its strategies in unison.

On January 10, 1861, he tells his Senate colleagues that he will be withdrawing on January 21 to serve his home state – and pleads with them to allow Mississippi and other Southern states to leave peacefully.

Two days later, on January 12, another voice at the center of the turmoil is heard in the upper chamber.

It belongs to Senator Henry Seward of New York, assumed by all to be headed into Lincoln's cabinet, and by many to emerge as the real power behind the presidency.

Seward warns the packed assembly of the perils that would follow Disunion. It would mean...

*Perpetual civil war...(and) not only arrest, but also extinguish, the greatness of this country.*

That said, his audience awaits word from the incoming administration on how the crisis will be averted. But Seward has little to offer. He is willing to support iron clad protections maintaining slavery in states where it already exists, and offers up the notion of routing transatlantic railroads along both southern and northern routes to help bind the nation together around commerce.

Beyond that, his plea is for “calm” – a call not dissimilar from that issued by Jefferson Davis before him.

Those most distressed by Seward’s remarks are the Northern abolitionists, or “ultras.” In addition to second term Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, who despises Seward as a “compromiser,” the acerbic Pennsylvanian, Thaddeus Stevens, has this to say:

*I listened to every word, and by the living God, I have heard nothing.*

An exasperated Seward tells his wife at the time:

*I am the only hopeful, calm, conciliatory person here.*

For those, particularly in the military, who see a much greater and more immediate threat from the South the question is whether either Seward or Lincoln really grasp the danger. This uncertainty will continue as the transition of power draws nearer.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 13-20, 1861

### **Davis And Others Attempt To Stall Fighting At Ft. Sumter**

On January 13, the two messengers from Charleston – Lt. Norman Hall and A.G. Isaac Hayne – arrive in Washington.

Hayne brings with him another blistering letter from Governor Pickens demanding that Buchanan turn Ft. Sumter over to South Carolina.

This kind of ultimatum is precisely what the other seceding states most wish to avoid, and ten Senators, led by Clement Clay of Alabama and Jefferson Davis, harangue Pickens and Hayne to withhold the note.

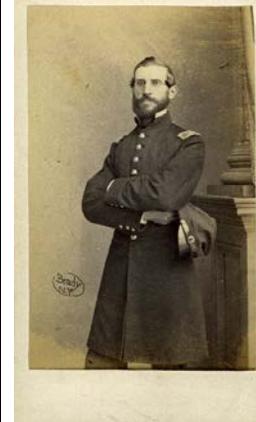
Pickens is not pleased, but Hayne ends up holding delivery of the letter for the next two weeks.

This reprise is welcomed by Buchanan, but it doesn’t end the turmoil swirling around him

On January 15, his reluctant Treasury Secretary, Philip Thomas, resigns after less than five weeks on the job. His replacement is John Dix, an ex-army officer and ex-Senator, currently serving as postmaster of New York City.

On January 19, a fifth domino falls, as the state of Georgia secedes. This is a particular blow to the President, given his closeness to his former Treasury head, Howell Cobb.

## Chapter 303 – Florida Threatens To Seize Ft. Pickens



**Dates:**  
January 10-14, 1860

**Sections:**  
• Tensions Mount At Ft. Pickens In Pensacola Florida

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 10-14, 1861

### Tensions Mount At Ft. Pickens In Pensacola Florida



Adam Slemmer (1828-1868)

Florida's vote to secede on January 11, 1861 prompts its Governor, Madison Perry, to ramp up his threats to take-over federal property, most notably Ft. Pickens, located on a small island south of the city of Pensacola, in the far western end of the panhandle.

The fort is in sorry shape, with only a token garrison under the command of 32 year old Lt. Adam Slemmer.

Slemmer hears rumors of impending hostilities as early as January 7, and begins to organize his defenses.

On January 12, militia troops arrive in Pensacola and take over the naval shipyard there, along with some 36 marines.

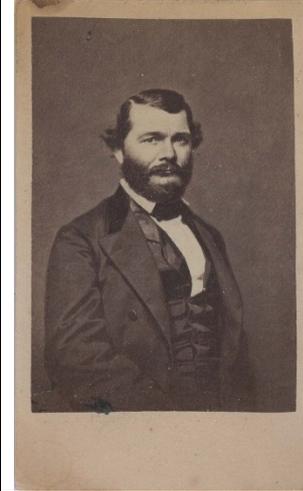
Like Major Anderson at Ft. Sumter, Lt. Slemmer is left on his own to decide what to do next.

A demand to surrender the fort comes on January 15, and the next day Slemmer signals his refusal and prepares for a fight.

What saves him at the moment is the call for restraint Governor Perry receives from the new CSA government.

*We think no assault should be made. The possession of the fort is not worth one drop of blood to us. Measures pending unite us in this opinion. Bloodshed now may be fatal to our cause.*

## Chapter 304 – Elder Political Statesmen Continue Push For Peace



**Dates:**  
January 21-24, 1860

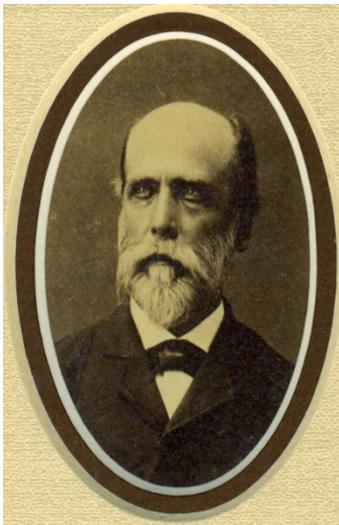
**Sections:**

- The Exit Of Southerners From The Senate Picks Up Speed
- The Politicians Continue Their Quest To Save The Union

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 21, 1861

### The Exit Of Southerners From The Senate Picks Up Speed



Alfred Iverson (1798-1873)

As Southern states secede from the Union, so too do their representatives in Congress.

These departures have relatively little effect in the House, already dominated by Northerners. But in the Senate they will quickly begin to swing the balance of voting power to the Northern Republicans.

On January 21, the roster of exiting Southern Senators reaches nine – as Mississippi's Jefferson Davis and Florida's David Yulee and Stephen Mallory withdraw.

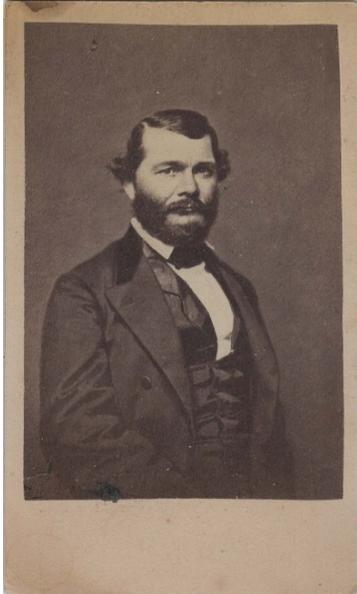
When Georgia's Alfred Iverson withdraws a week later, he offers a stern warning to the North:

*In whatever shape you attack us, we will fight you. You may whip us but we will not stay whipped.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 21-24, 1861

### The Politicians Continue Their Quest To Save The Union



Beriah Magoffin (1815-1875)

Despite the dwindling odds, several long-time Washington politicians continue their efforts to save the Union.

To most it appears certain that the seven states across the Lower South – from South Carolina through Texas -- will secede.

But that still leaves eight other Slave States yet to decide, including Virginia, seemingly a bellwether for the Upper South. If a plan can be worked out to retain this group, perhaps it will prompt the others to consider a peaceful return.

Various political warriors take up this cause.

One is Kentucky Governor Beriah Magoffin, a southern sympathizer, who eventually supports the “neutrality status” favored by the state assembly when the war breaks out. Magoffin tries to rally support for a constitutional amendment to repeal any state laws opposing enforcement of the fugitive slave act.

When this fails, Magoffin lines up behind his fellow Kentuckian, John J. Crittenden, who continues to believe that a national referendum will show that the public prefers his plan to Disunion and the prospect of civil war.

On January 21, 1861, Crittenden’s surrogate in the House, Indiana’s William English, puts the legislation up for a vote. The resounding 92-60 rejection is another blow for all bills – including the prior Henry Davis Winter plan -- that hinge on extending the old 36’30” demarcation line to the west coast. Even the tenacious Tom Corwin of Ohio begins to despair:

*If the States are no more harmonious in their feelings and opinions than these...representative men, then appalling as the idea is, we must dissolve & a long & bloody civil war must follow. I cannot comprehend the madness of the times....God alone I fear can help us.*

This leaves another septuagenarian, ex-President John Tyler of Virginia, to try his hand at a solution.

The controversial Tyler has been out of politics for fifteen years, after becoming the nation’s first “accidental President” upon the death in 1841 of William Henry Harrison. While elected as a Whig, Tyler’s policy actions in office favor the Democrats, and by 1842 he is regarded as a turncoat. Neither party will run him for re-election in 1844, and he heads home to plantation life along the James River.

On January 24, however, he is back in Washington, calling upon Buchanan and urging him to support a Peace Conference he is arranging for February 4 to consider a “Virginia Plan” to save the Union.

The President ultimately agrees to go along with Tyler’s proposal.

## Chapter 305 – Kansas Finally Becomes A State



**Dates:**  
January 29, 1860

**Sections:**

- The Wyandotte Constitution Becomes Law

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 29, 1860

### The Wyandotte Constitution Becomes Law



The end of January 1861 brings closure to the “Bloody Kansas” conflict that plagues Buchanan during all four years of his presidency.

It begins on the day of his inauguration, March 4, 1857, when the Territorial Governor John Geary hands in his resignation after resisting attempts by the Missouri “border ruffians” to impose their pro-slavery will on the free-state majority of actual Kansas residents.

In accepting Geary’s departure, Buchanan becomes the symbol of a politician willing to abandon the principle of free elections to decide government policies in favor of surrendering to the dictates of the Southern Slave Power to stay in office.

Finally Waving The Flag

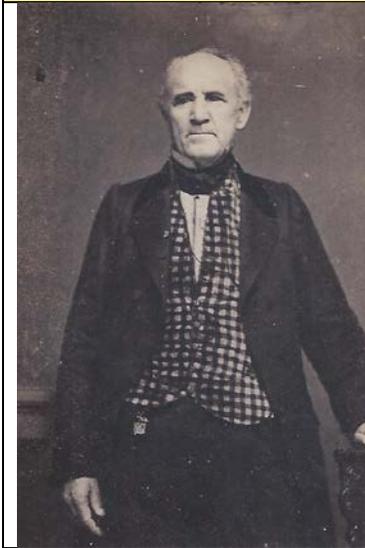
As such, he stands as the sponsor of the corrupt Lecompton Constitution and of expanding the institution of slavery across the west and further into Mexico, Cuba and central America.

These are taints he can never overcome, and that will drive him from the White House with a reputation for ignominy and incompetence.

How ironic than, on January 29, 1861, that after four years of resistance, he signs a bill admitting Kansas as the 34<sup>th</sup> entry into the (collapsing) Union under the Free State Wyandotte Constitution.

The Wyandotte document is the fourth and final declaration from the Kansans. Like its three predecessors, the topic of excluding all blacks from the state is considered, but rejected in the end. The final vote comes in at 10,421 in favor and 5,530 opposed.

## Chapter 306 – Tensions Rise In Charleston And The Secession Count Rises To Seven States



**Dates:**  
February 1, 1860

**Sections:**

- One Chapter Closes And Another Re-Opens
- John Dix Puts Down Another "Threat To The Flag Texas Becomes The Seventh State To Secede

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 28-31, 1861

### One Chapter Closes And Another Re-Opens

Two days after Kansas is admitted, Buchanan's current crisis intensifies as the messenger from South Carolina, Isaac Hayne, finally hands him the delayed letter from Governor Francis Pickens regarding the situation in Charleston harbor.

In it, Pickens demands that Major Anderson abandons Ft. Sumter, and offers to buy it from the United States government!

Buchanan is taken aback by the proposal and intends to tell Hayne that Presidents have no authority to sell property. But before he can do that, both "messengers" – AG. Hayne and Lt. Hall – have departed for Charleston.

But this latest exchange signals the end of the momentary pause created by Major Anderson.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: January 29, 1861

**John Dix Puts Down Another "Threat To The Flag**



John Dix (1798-1879)

On top of that, another potential military flashpoint surfaces at the end of January.

This one involves John Dix, who is only two weeks into his new job as Buchanan’s Treasury Secretary.

On January 29, 1860 Dix receives a telegraph message saying that secessionist forces are threatening a U.S. revenue ship around the port of New Orleans – and that the captain seems to be putting up little resistance.

Dix responds with the fighting zeal that marked his earlier years in the army.

He sends an unequivocal order to a still-thought-to-be loyal lieutenant aboard the cutter:

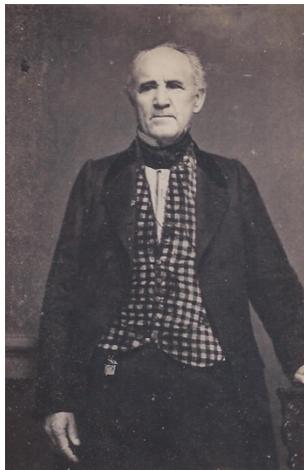
*If anyone attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot.*

This quote is quickly picked up by the nation’s 3,000 newspapers, making Dix an overnight hero across the North. Like “Old Bob” Anderson at Sumter, Dix is ready to stand tall in support of the flag.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 1, 1861

**Texas Becomes The Seventh State To Secede**



Sam Houston (1793-1863)

Preparations for warfare in Charleston harbor continue unabated following the January 9 attack on the *Star of the West*.

Governor Pickens is told that any attempt to storm Ft. Sumter would involve heavy casualties for his South Carolina units. Thus the better option: ring the fort and starve out its occupants in siege mode.

If firepower becomes necessary, the battery on Cummings Point, only 1350 yards south of the fort, will be called upon to lead the way.

Inside Sumter, Major Anderson continues to reconfigure his artillery in order to fire at an enemy to his back and sides rather than out to sea.

He will eventually manage to re-rig a total of 51 cannons in this fashion. Included among them are three massive 10” Columbiads, each weighting 15,000 lbs., each capable of hurling a 128 lb. shell over 4,800 yards. After assessing how best to deploy these ship killers, Anderson converts them into faux mortars aimed at his nearby adversaries.

**Distances From Ft. Sumter To Batteries At:**

	<b>Cummings Point</b>	<b>Ft. Moultrie</b>	<b>Ft. Johnson</b>	<b>Castle Pinckney</b>
<b>Yards</b>	1,350	1,800	2,300	4,500

On February 1, 1861, Anderson pauses to take care of one more duty. He requests, and is granted, access to a boat that carries the 42 women and children at his fort back to safety in Charleston.

That same day, another departure takes place, as Texas becomes the seventh state to secede. The move is strongly opposed by Senator Sam Houston, but it passes by a resounding 168-8 margin.

**Secession Timing**

<b>1860</b>	<b>States</b>
December 20	South Carolina
<b>1861</b>	
January 9	Mississippi
January 10	Florida
January 11	Alabama
January 19	Georgia
January 26	Louisiana
February 1	Texas

## Chapter 307 – The Confederate States Of America Are Organized In Montgomery



**Dates:**  
February 3-9, 1860

- Sections:**
- Virginia Opens Its State Convention To Discuss Secession
  - The Confederate States Of America Are Founded At Montgomery
  - Jefferson Davis Is Chosen As The CSA President

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 3, 1861

### Virginia Opens Its State Convention To Discuss Secession



Alexander Stephens (1812-1883)

Virginia opens a convention to discuss secession in Richmond, two day after Texas exits.

The state's history cries out for it to remain loyal, given its role in founding the Union, fighting for it under George Washington, and then begetting four of its first five presidents.

“Staying in” is the majority feeling among the delegates on February 3, 1861. It is also the preference of Governor John Letcher, who replaces the fiery abolitionist, Henry Wise, on January 1, 1860, and of John Janney, president of the convention and a founder of the Constitutional Union Party.

Still Wise has his pro-secession supporters, perhaps a third of those present, who are convinced that the Black Republicans intend to abolish slavery altogether once Lincoln takes power.

What complicates matters, however, is that those who are viscerally pro-Union, are divided as to the level of their commitment.

Some, like Congressman John Carlile, are unequivocal in condemning secession.

*It is the result sir, of mature deliberation, concocted in treason, for the express purpose of breaking up constitutional liberty in this country... The plot was one that was conceived in perjury at Washington, and carried out by falsehood throughout the country, attended by*

*coercion, intimidation, insult and a reign of terror, which was equally concerted throughout Virginia, as well as in the other Southern States.*

(Carlisle will ultimately lead a break-away movement in June 1861 that becomes the pro-Union state of West Virginia.)

Other Virginians, the “Conditional Unionists,” adopt more of a “wait and see” attitude -- their key litmus test being whether or not Lincoln withholds the use of force in South Carolina.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 4-9, 1861

### **The Confederate States Of America Are Founded At Montgomery**



Jefferson Davis (1808-1889)

Nowhere is the sense of urgency about what to do next greater than among the seven states that have left the Union as of February 1, 1861.

It is the 60 year old fire-eater from South Carolina, Robert B. Rhett, who anticipates the need for a Southern Convention, and he diligently organizes one to begin on February 4 in Montgomery, Alabama.

On that day 37 delegates from the seceded states begin to pour in to the Senate Chamber of the Alabama legislature. They see their task much like that of the founding fathers: first to assert their independence; second to write a Constitution and form up a new government enabling them to act in lockstep.

Those gathered consider themselves conservative by nature, disinclined to embrace the hot-heated stances prevalent in South Carolina. They choose Howell Cobb, who resigned as Buchanan’s Treasury Secretary back on December 8, as president of the convention. They then look to another Georgian, the 5’ tall, 95 lb. dynamo and friend of Lincoln, Alexander Stephens, to orchestrate the proceedings. Strident men like Rhett and Lawrence Keitt are present, but they are held in check by others, including Jefferson Davis who tracks events from his home in Mississippi.

All meetings are held in secret, and action follows swiftly. By the fourth day, February 7, the delegates pass a Constitution, largely the work of the German born Christopher Gustavus Memminger, who will go on to serve as Treasury Secretary in the new government he helps codify. The work itself mirrors the 1787 US document, on the grounds that it served the nation well until the Black Republicans decided to violate it.

Still there are a few alterations, chief among them an explicit guarantee of slavery in Article I, Section IX:

*No...law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves shall be passed.*

Other articles try to harness federal power: the President is limited to one six year term, and the loosely defined duty to act on behalf of “the general welfare” of the nation is omitted. Time will tell that these limits on central authority will often plague efforts to get members to act in unison.

On February 9, a name is chosen for the new government – the Confederate States of America.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 11-18, 1860

### **Jefferson Davis Is Chosen As The CSA President**

The next order of business lies in selecting the CSA’s top officers, each for one six year term.

Initial interest here focuses on two influential Georgian moderates – 49 year old Senator Robert Toombs and 44 year old Howell Cobb, recently resigned from Buchanan’s cabinet. But Toombs is sometimes prone to drunkenness and Cobb’s often abrasive temperament rules him out.

The answer instead is Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, who insists that he would prefer a position as head of the CSA army.

Davis too arrives with his own full share of critics. Sam Houston calls him “as ambitious as Lucifer and as cold as a lizard.” Howell Cobb’s brother, Thomas, says: “he is not great in any sense of the term...the power of will has made him all he is.”

But Davis is blessed with the military background and “command presence” that the delegates feel may well be needed if Lincoln challenges the new government with force.

In the end, he becomes the only nominee put forward, and wins by acclamation. His response is characteristically dour, a tone that will be repeated throughout his tenure:

*Upon my weary heart was showered smiles, plaudits, and flowers, but beyond them I saw troubles and thorns innumerable.*

The Vice-Presidential slot goes to a third prominent Georgian, Alexander Stephens. He will find Davis overbearing and will quarrel with him almost continuously over the next four years.

Stephens is sworn in on February 11, with Davis’ formal inauguration delayed until February 18, when he finally reaches Montgomery from Mississippi.

In his acceptance speech, Davis calls upon other Southern states to join the cause; insists that the break is permanent; hopes that war with the North can be avoided while mentioning it five times; and seeks recognition from the UK and France to insure a continuing flow of cotton across the Atlantic.

With this, America’s struggle no longer becomes a matter of South Carolina and Sumter, but of how to react to a formal new power, the CSA, residing on domestic soil.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Sidebar: Initial CSA Cabinet**

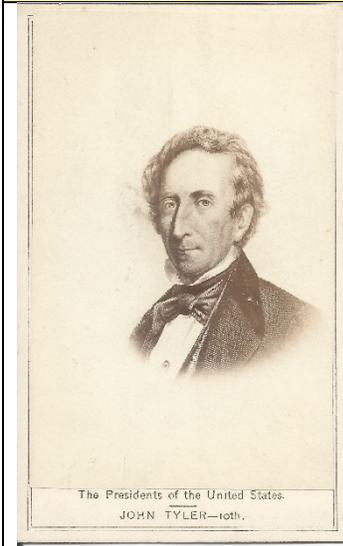
Within a month of his election, Davis will organize his initial cabinet, choosing one member from each of the six states beyond Mississippi that have seceded. Harmony seldom reigns for long within this circle, given Davis' stern and autocratic manner. Both his State and War Secretaries will be gone in less than seven months, and his Vice-President, Stephens, will become a constant critic over the life of the confederacy.

**Jefferson Davis' Opening Cabinet**

<b>Position</b>	<b>(Total *)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Home State</b>	<b>Age</b>
Vice-President	(1)	Alexander Stephens	Georgia	49
Secretary of State	(4)	Robert Toombs	Georgia	49
Secretary of Treasury	(3)	Christopher Memminger	South Carolina	58
Secretary of War	(5)	Leroy Pope Walker	Alabama	44
Attorney General	(4)	Judah P. Benjamin	Louisiana	49
Secretary of Navy	(1)	Stephen Mallory	Florida	49
Postmaster General	(1)	John Reagan	Texas	42

\* Total # who will serve in the position over the course of the CSA government.

## Chapter 308 – Ex-President John Tyler’s National Peace Conference Open In Washington



**Dates:**  
February 4, 1860

**Sections:**

- The “Old Gentlemen’s Convention” Hopes To Focus On Saving The Upper South States

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 4, 1861

### The “Old Gentlemen’s Convention” Hopes To Focus On Saving The Upper South States



February 4, 1861 marks not only the opening session for the new Confederate States of America, but also for ex-President John Tyler’s Peace Conference in the capital, which Buchanan approved two weeks ago.

All told, the event draws 131 men to the prestigious Willard Hotel, some four blocks east of the White House. The assembly is nothing if not prestigious, with a list of “former” elites including: 50 congressmen, 14 senators, 19 governors, 12 supreme court justices, 6 cabinet members and, of course, one former U.S. President, John Tyler. Fourteen Free states are represented along with seven Slave states.

Critics of the affair immediately christen it the “Old Gentlemen’s Convention,” with 74 attendees being fifty years or older, and 19 into their seventies.

John Tyler (1790-1862)

Interest in the event traces to the promise of hearing, via Tyler himself, what the state of Virginia is thinking in regard to possible secession – with the assumption being that its decision will dictate the outcomes across all eight of the Upper South slave states still in the Union: Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas and Virginia itself.

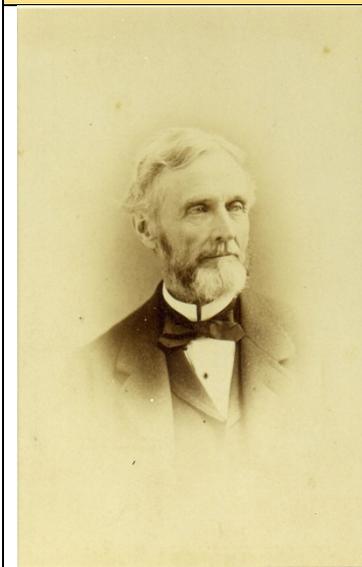
Republicans initially plan to boycott the conference, but then decide they must appear in order to counter any possible stampede toward secession that might materialize. Thus the Northern attendees include party members such as Salmon Chase, William Fessenden, David Wilmot, Stephen Logan and others.

Ironically, as Tyler offers his opening remarks in DC, a granddaughter of his participates in the CSA proceedings in Montgomery. But Tyler claims that his purpose is not to bury the Union but to save it:

*The country is in danger (and) one must take the place assigned him in the great work of reconciliation and adjustment....You have before you, gentlemen, a task...to snatch from ruin a great and glorious Confederation, to preserve the Government, and to renew and invigorate the Constitution.*

Predictably a 21 man sub-committee (one per state present) is formed under the leadership of Kentucky's James Guthrie and the search begins again for a fresh solution.

## Chapter 309 – CSA President Jefferson Davis Stalls For Time On Ft. Sumter



**Dates:**  
February 11, 1860

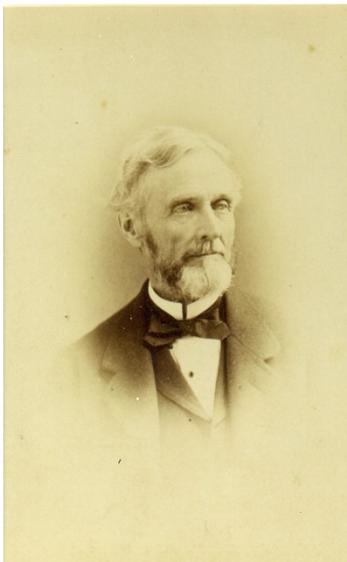
**Sections:**

- Governor Pickens Hands The Sumter Dilemma Over To The New Confederation

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 11, 1861

### Governor Pickens Hands The Sumter Dilemma Over To The New Confederation



With his “messenger,” Isaac Hayne, back from the latest rebuff in Washington, pressure builds on Governor Pickens to launch an attack on Sumter.

All of Charleston is eager to strike, spurred on by the South Carolina fire-eaters, the likes of Edmund Ruffin, Lawrence Keitt, R.B. Rhett and William Porcher Miles.

But then pleas to the contrary pour into Pickens’ office from outside the state – from Georgia’s Robert Toombs, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, and even Virginian, John Tyler.

The Governor now feels like he is caught in the middle and looks for a way to squirm out.

Jefferson Finis Davis (1808-1889)

On Tuesday, February 12, he tries to force the issue by notifying Howell Cobb that:

*I hope to be ready by Friday night, and I think I am prepared to take the fort or to silence it.*

This tactic has the effect he now wants, as Cobb replies that the decision on what to do about Ft. Sumter now rests with President Davis and his new Confederate States of America cabinet.

In the end, the once bellicose Pickens seems relieved by yet another delay in the action.

On February 19 he assures John Tyler that he has called off any attack on Sumter.

## Chapter 310 – Lincoln Delivers Confusing Messages En Route To Washington



**Dates:**  
February 11-23, 1860

**Sections:**

- Lincoln Heads To Washington For The Inauguration
- Lincoln's Messages Along The Way Are Variable
- Lincoln Slips Into Washington Unscathed But Mocked

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 11, 1861

### Lincoln Heads To Washington For The Inauguration



Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

As Jefferson Davis assumes office, Abraham Lincoln prepares to do so.

Before leaving Illinois for Washington, he has two farewells to deliver. One is for his 72 year old step-mother, Sarah (Sally) Lincoln, living in Charleston, Illinois. He visits her on January 30 and tries to soothe her fear after she warns they will never meet because his enemies will kill him first.

Back home on February 6, he holds a reception for his Springfield neighbors, and on February 11 he says good-bye to them before boarding a train with Mary heading east.

*To this place and the kindness of the people, I owe everything. Here I have lived for a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young man to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Trusting in Him, who can go with me...I bid you an affectionate farewell.*

With that he begins a grueling twelve day journey to Washington, DC, which will include a total of 84 different stop-overs.

**Lincoln's Twelve Day Whistle Stop Journey To Washington**

<b>Feb.</b>	<b>Starts In</b>	<b>Ends In</b>	<b># Stops</b>
11	Springfield. IL	Indianapolis, IN	9
12	Indianapolis	Cincinnati, OH	5
13	Cincinnati	Columbus, OH	8
14	Columbus	Pittsburg, Pa.	12
15	Pittsburg	Cleveland, OH	6
16	Cleveland	Buffalo, NY	13
17	Day of rest	Buffalo, NY	--
18	Buffalo	Albany, NY	10
19	Albany	New York City, NY	8
20	Stays put	New York City, NY	--
21	New York City	Philadelphia, Pa	9
22	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa	3
23	Philadelphia	Washington, DC	1

Before he heads out he learns some hopeful and some ominous news.

On February 9, the state of Tennessee votes against holding a secession convention – and they will be joined nine days later by Maryland and Arkansas. Perhaps the Upper South will stay in after all.

But then comes word via Henry Seward's son, Fred, that a plot to assassinate the President has been discovered in Baltimore, which is to be his last scheduled stop before arriving in DC. Detective Alan Pinkerton confirms the same news, and, along with Ward Lamon, Lincoln's bodyguard, a plan for a safe passage through Maryland begins to take shape.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dates: February 11-23, 1861

**Lincoln's Messages Along The Way Are Variable**

Once under way, both the nation and the press are eager to hear what the new President will do once he takes office. The focus of their questions shift away from what they know he intends to do – stop the spread of slavery – to what remains uncertain, how he will deal with the seceding states.

Is he really willing to plunge the nation into a civil war to prevent more black slaves from residing in the west? This is what men like John Crittenden and Thomas Corwin are confronting in Congress. So what will he do once in the White House?

At his first stop in Indianapolis, he is met by Republican Governor Oliver Morton and a 34 gun salute. His promise to hold Sumter and take back the other Charleston forts draws cheers from a crowd estimated at 20,000.

In Cincinnati, he speaks to the German Industrial Association and urges them to support the Union.

A massive turn-out of perhaps 60,000 line his route through Columbus, Ohio on February 13. But many are puzzled by his words.

*When we look out, there is nothing that really hurts anybody...As I traveled in the rain through your crowded streets, I (thought)... the Union can be in no danger...and will be preserved.*

As with Seward's recent comments, the apparent naiveté is striking. It is as if Lincoln fails to understand the devastating impact his refusal to expand slavery will have on the one-dimensional economy of the South. Without slavery in the west, there will be no new plantations to grow cotton and no new owners eager to buy excess field hands bred in the east.

Two days later, in Cleveland, he repeats these same misinformed sentiments:

*The crisis, as it is called, is altogether artificial...It has no foundation in facts....Let it alone and it will go down of itself.*

Arriving in Buffalo on February 16, he is greeted by ex-President Millard Fillmore and enjoys his first real rest stop. On Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> he accompanies Fillmore to a nearby Unitarian Church. He is joined by newspaperman Horace Greeley on his departure to New York.

On February 19 at Dunkirk, New York, Lincoln grasps a flagstaff and asks the crowd for support him in whatever struggles lie ahead.

*Standing as I do, with my hand upon this staff, and under the folds of the American flag, I ask you to stand by me as long as I stand by it.*

In New York city some 250,000 people line his procession route to the Astor House, where he stays overnight before meeting with another influential editor, William Cullen Bryant.

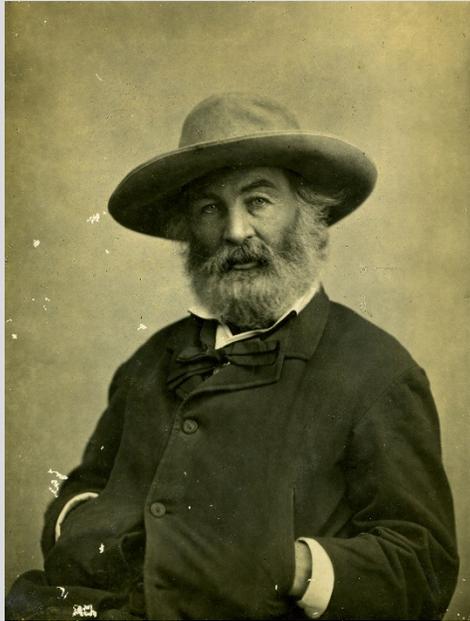
On February 20, he addresses a large crowd in the city, again not talking about slavery, but about saving the Union.

*There is nothing that can ever bring me willingly to consent to the destruction of the Union.*

The next night he is in Philadelphia, and listening to detective Pinkerton and Ward Lamon describe their scheme to slip through the presumed assassins in Baltimore.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Sidebar: The Poet Walt Whitman Recalls Seeing Lincoln For The First Time**



Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

The sighting occurs as the President-elect arrives in New York City on February 19, 1861.

*I shall not easily forget the first time I ever saw Abraham Lincoln... From the top of an omnibus (driven up on side, close by, and blocked by the curbstone and the crowds) I had, I say, a capital view of it all and especially of Mr. Lincoln: his looks and gait; his perfect composure and coolness; his unusual and uncouth height; his dress of complete black, stovepipe hat pushed back on his head; dark-brown complexion; seamed and wrinkled yet canny-looking face; black, bush head of hair; disproportionately long neck; and his hands held behind, as he stood observing the people."*

-- Walt Whitman

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 23, 1861

**Lincoln Slips Into Washington Unscathed But Mocked**



Allan Pinkerton (1819-1884) Seated On left

Lincoln's final move in his journey to DC proves effective although personally embarrassing.

On February 22, he travels to the Pennsylvania state capital of Harrisburg, meets with Republican Governor Andrew Curtin, and addresses the state legislature before retiring to his hotel.

Once there, he exchanges his familiar stovetop hat and overcoat for a brown felt cap and a different cloak, and slips back to the train station for a secret return trip to Philadelphia. Before leaving, Pinkerton cuts the telegraph lines in Harrisburg to conceal his departure.

In Philadelphia he boards an overnight sleeper on the Wilmington & Baltimore line headed to Washington. Pinkerton offers Lincoln a revolver and a Bowie knife for the trip, but the President-elect declines.

At 3:30am, the train pulls into Baltimore, where Lincoln's car is switched by horses to the B&O line depot for a 4:15am departure to DC. All of this proceeds without incident, and Lincoln is met in the capital at 6:15am on February 23 by his Illinois friend, Elihu Washburne, who accompanies him to the Willard Hotel.

The ruse becomes apparent as the train from Philadelphia arrives that same day in Baltimore around 11:30am, with the Mayor waiting to greet the Lincolns. When the assembled crowd learns that only Mary Lincoln and her three sons are on board, many react with "oaths, obscenities...and disgusting gesticulations" according to observers.

Once the scheme becomes clear to the press, they respond with cartoons showing a fearful new President sneaking into Washington in a disguise "like a thief in the night."

## Chapter 311 – Tyler’s Peace Conference Is Another Failure



**Dates:**  
February 25, 1860

**Sections:**  
• Tyler’s Peace Conference Fizzles Out In The End

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 25, 1861

### Tyler’s Peace Conference Fizzles Out In The End



Washington City, Site Of Tyler’s Peace Conference

Lincoln’s arrival at the Willard Hotel causes a stir among the delegates to Tyler’s Peace Conference, just coming to an end.

As with their many predecessors, the “old gentlemen” have failed to arrive at any breakthroughs despite three weeks of steady debate.

In the end, on February 25, the outcome becomes nothing more than a rehash of the key components in the “Crittenden Compromise,” centered around extending the 36’30” Missouri Compromise line and its sanctions across the remaining western territories – an approach continuously rejected by the Republicans in Congress.

James Guthrie, head of the Committee of 21, along with many other Southerners are left in despair over the outcome.

A steady stream of them call upon Lincoln once he arrives. Included here are Kentuckians Guthrie, John Crittenden and ex-Governor, Charles Morehead; John Bell of Tennessee, who ran against Lincoln in the election; the staunch Unionist, Alexander Doniphan of Missouri; and a host of Virginians.

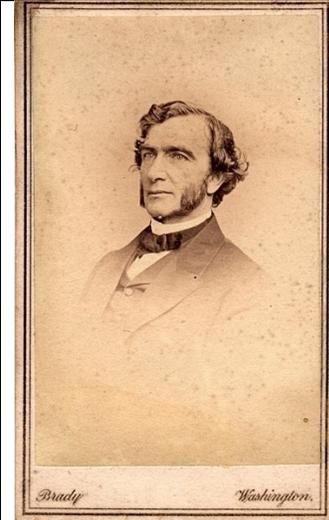
All plead with Lincoln to understand the impact of the Republican's refusal to expand slavery on the South and to assure him that the secessionists are not bluffing. There is nothing "artificial" about the crisis and it will not "go down of its own" if left alone.

Whether these words alter his thinking about the crisis is unknown, but one incident suggests they may have. It involves his meeting with the venerable Virginia statesman, William Cabell Rives, a fellow Whig, whose long career includes time in the House and Senate and as Minister to France under Taylor. When Rives tells Lincoln that Virginia will secede if force is used against South Carolina, the President-elect reportedly offers an urgent response.

*Mr. Rives, Mr. Rives, if Virginia will stay in, I will withdraw the troops from Fort Sumter.*

With only a week left until he is sworn in, avoiding the prospect of bloodshed is very much on Lincoln's mind as he crafts his Inaugural Address.

## Chapter 312 – The Morrill Tariff And The “Corwin Amendment” Gain Last Second Approval



**Dates:**  
February 26 – March 4, 1860

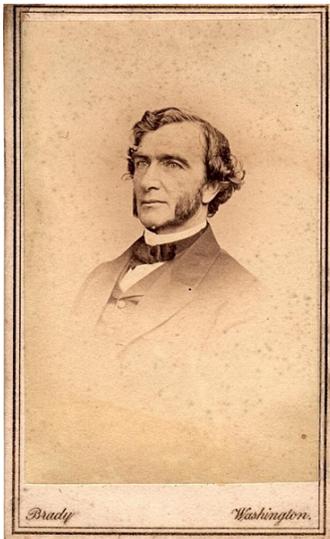
**Sections:**

- Congress Concludes By Passing The Morrill Tariff And The Corwin Amendment

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: February 26 to March 4, 1861

### Congress Concludes By Passing The Morrill Tariff And The Corwin Amendment



Justin Morrill (1810-1898)

As usual, legislators scramble to complete left-over bills before the 36<sup>th</sup> Congress ends its second and final session on Monday, March 4.

With many Southerners already having withdrawn, the path is open for the Northern Republicans to pass several pieces of legislation.

On February 26, they vote to create the Territory of Colorado without reference one way or the other to slavery. On March 2 they add the Dakota and Nevada Territories the same way.

On the same day, they pass the Morrill Tariff, a sop to manufacturing interests in the state of Pennsylvania which has previously been blocked by Southerners in the Senate. The bill calls for a dramatic 70% jump in duties on foreign imports, from the 21% level in effect since 1857 to a new 36% rate. It passes this time by 25-14 in the depleted Senate, with 24 Republican votes and one from Democratic Senator William Bigler of the Keystone state.

While Southerners hope the Morrill Tariff will provoke Britain and France into formally recognizing the CSA government, its embrace of slavery will ultimately block such a move.

The final piece of business plays out in the Senate where John Crittenden and Stephen Douglas unite behind trying to pass the “Corwin Amendment,” named after the Ohio congressman, and aimed at assuring worried Southerners that slavery will never be abolished in states where it currently exists.

After a flurry of bickering the body agrees to an unusual Sunday session, which begins with one more emotional plea from Crittenden, witnessed by Lincoln who secretly enters the gallery:

*We see the danger, we acknowledge our duty; and yet, with all this before us, we are acknowledging before the world that we can do nothing.*

Incredibly the debate continues until 4:00am on Monday, inauguration day, when the senators, many in a drunken state, finally decide to vote. After three substitutes are turned back, Corwin's bill finally passes with the 2/3rds majority required, and eight Republican supporters.

**Final Voting On The "Corwin Amendment" In The Senate: March 4, 1861**

<b>By Senator:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Yea &amp; Nays</b>
George Pugh (OH)	Substitute Crittenden bill for Corwin bill	14-25
Kinsley Bingham (MI)	The Constitution needs no more amendments	13-25
Robert Johnson (Ark)	Substitute Peace Conference bill for Corwin	3-34
John Crittenden (Ky)	The Corwin bill	24-12

To become law, the "Corwin Amendment" would be required to go to the states for ratification, a step that never occurs. But as a symbolic gesture it seems to be the single concrete accomplishment by the Congress to reduce the odds of warfare.

It is also consistent with what Lincoln has said all along: he has neither the right, nor the intention, to abolish slavery in the old South.

## Sidebar: The Departure Of The Southern Senators



Robert Toombs (1810-1885)

In all, twenty-five U.S. Senators will exit their seats, all Southerners except for Jesse Bright of Indiana, a so-called Copperhead Democrat opposed to possible warfare. Bright has been three times President Pro Tempore of the chamber, and is expelled on February 5, 1861, for officially acknowledging Jefferson Davis as President of the Confederacy and for accusations that he helped direct arms to the Southern cause. No other senator has been expelled since Bright, as on 2108.

Senator	State	Exit Date	How
James Chestnut	SC	Nov 10, '60	Withdrew ***
James Hammond	SC	Nov 11, '60	Withdrew *
John Breckinridge	Ky	Dec 4, '60	Expelled
Waldo Johnson	MO	Jan 10	Expelled
Trustan Polk	MO	Jan 10	Expelled
Albert Brown	Miss	Jan 12, '61	Withdrew **
Jefferson Davis	Miss	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew **
David Yulee	Fla	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew **
Stephen Mallory	Fla	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew **
Alfred Iverson	Ga	Jan 28, '61	Withdrew *
Robert Toombs	Ga	Feb 4, '61	Withdrew **
Judah Benjamin	La	Feb 4, '61	Withdrew **
John Slidell	La	Feb 4, '61	Withdrew *
Jesse Bright	Ind	Feb 5, '61	Expelled
Ben Fitzpatrick (D)	Ala	Mar 3, 1861	Term expires *
Alfred Nicholson	Tenn	Mar 3, '61	Withdrew ***
John Hemphill	Tex	Mar 4	Did not appear ***
Thomas Bragg	NC	Mar 8	Withdrew ***
Thomas Clingman	NC	Mar 11	Withdrew ***
Clement Clay (D)	Ala	Mar 14, 1861	Did not appear**
Louis Wigfall	Tex	Mar 23	Withdrew ***
James Mason	Va	Mar 28	Withdrew*
Robert Hunter	Va	Mar 28	Withdrew*
William Sebastian	Ark	July 11, '61	Expelled
Charles Mitchel	Ark	July 11, '61	Expelled

\* Term expires on Mar 3, 1861 \*\* Seat declared vacant on Mar 14, '61

\*\*\* Expelled July 11, 1861

## Chapter 313 – Lincoln Is Sworn In And Delivers His Inaugural Address



**Dates:**  
March 4, 1861

**Sections:**

- James Buchanan's Final Day In Office
- Abraham Lincoln Delivers His Inaugural Address

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 4, 1861

### James Buchanan's Final Day In Office

Few men are as relieved by abandoning the White House as James Buchanan.

His political survival strategy has been transparent for months: namely to postpone open warfare in Charleston harbor until those he deems responsible for the sectional conflict – Lincoln and the Black Republicans – are left in charge.

In this sense he has succeeded, albeit not by his own making.

Instead the outcome rests in large part with Major Robert Anderson, operating with the flimsiest of direction from Washington, but preparing a formidable defense at Sumter and refusing to be drawn into an exchange back on January 9, 1861, when shots are fired at the *Star of the West*.

As luck would have it, Buchanan is also helped by the sudden formation of the Confederate States of America during that same week. This removes the burden for action from the volatile Governor Pickens in Charleston and hands it to Jefferson Davis in Montgomery. His experienced military mind recognizes the need for the South to avoid all fighting until it has its militias and armaments and command and control structures in place.

Thus Buchanan can claim that a civil war has been avoided on his watch.

But he is quite certain that the reprieve will be short-lived. On inauguration day, March 4, he is in the capitol building signing documents when Secretary of War arrives with a message from Major Anderson saying that his supplies are running out and requesting 20,000 troops to subdue the local militias.

With that news in hand, James Buchanan enters his carriage to pick up Lincoln and head to the swearing in ceremonies. His purported words to his successor ring true:

*If you are as happy entering the White House as I shall feel returning to Wheatland (his home), you are a happy man indeed.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 4, 1861

### **Abraham Lincoln Delivers His Inaugural Address**



Lincoln Delivering His First Inaugural Address

According to custom at the time, Lincoln offers his inaugural address to a crowd of some 30,000 prior to being sworn in. He is introduced by his close friend, Edward Baker, who lends his name to the president's deceased son, "Eddie," and who will himself die in combat early in the war.

Before speaking Lincoln dons his steel-rimmed spectacles and gratefully hands his stovepipe hat off to a gracious Stephen Douglas as he moves to the podium.

In characteristic fashion, he goes right to the central issue most on the minds of his audience. The South, he says, has no cause to feel endangered by a Republican administration.

*Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession of a Republican Administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection.*

To demonstrate this he offer a series of assurances:

*I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so....*

*The right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which...our political fabric depend(s)...*

*We denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.*

*Persons held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall...be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.*

After vowing to fairly uphold the laws of the Constitution, he declares the Union of the states is perpetual and functions like a contract which cannot be broken by any one party absent the consent of the rest.

*I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments.*

*If the United States be...an association of States in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it--break it, so to speak--but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?*

In turn, he will consider any act of violence by a State against the authority of the Union qualifies as illegal insurrection and will oppose it.

It follows from these views...that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore...shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States,

The opposition need not involve bloodshed or invasion, as long as federal property remains in its hands and all duties on imports are properly collected.

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere

Lincoln asks why the current crisis exists.

That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events and are glad of any pretext to do it I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union may I not speak?

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it?

He asserts that it is not because any laws in the Constitution are being broken.

Is it true, then, that any right plainly written in the Constitution has been denied? I think not.

However, the words of the Constitution cannot be definitive on all issues, and, when that is the case, the government must rely on “majority rules” in order to function.

No foresight can anticipate nor any document of reasonable length contain express provisions for all possible questions. ...May Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. Must Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease.

If the principle of majority rule breaks down it leads to secession and anarchy, which only feeds on itself as other minorities find reasons to rebel.

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy...For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it?

The present conflict is over an instance of majority rules, in this case with one side arguing against the morality and extension of slavery, the other holding the opposite position.

One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute.

Lincoln continues to reject *Dred Scott* as the answer, and sees no perfect solution to the dispute. But he is certain it will only get worse if a futile attempt is made to divide one nation in two. He says that separation is possible in marriage, but not within nations where the two sides must continue “face to face” and find ways to settle future issues affecting both.

This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured, and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before....Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them.

Despite his personal objection to slavery, he offers a concession to the South, promising to support the “Corwin Amendment” should it ever get ratified (indeed a very long shot).

I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution--which amendment, however, I have not seen--has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service...I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The peroration comes as a series of pleas to his fellow citizens in the South. He asks first for time to think calmly about the whole subject.

*My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time.*

He asks that patriotism and Christian values inform their decisions.

*Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.*

He directly mentions the “issue of civil war” and assures Southerners that “the Government will not assail you.”

*In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it.*

While “loath to close,” his ending is a poetic appeal to the shared good will of his fellow Americans that he hopes will yet insure peace.

*I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.*

The speech is brief, lasting roughly a half hour, and it is marked by subdued reactions from the audience. After it is over, 83 year old Chief Justice Roger Taney, whose *Dred Scott* ruling he has again questioned, administers the oath of office to the new President.

*I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Sidebar: Washington DC At Lincoln's Inauguration**

Washington City on March 4, 1861, is a metaphor for a nation whose destiny suddenly feels uncompleted and once again fearful of collapse, this time from within its own borders.

As first world capitals go, it remains a physically primitive city. Most streets are left unpaved and turn into mud-holes whenever rain strikes. Sanitation systems are lacking and raw sewage is dumped daily into the Potomac River, polluting the drinking water. Buildings are constructed largely from wood, not bricks, and efforts at architectural grandeur are frustrating. The Capitol building lacks its dome topped by Lady Liberty; scaffolding mars the Treasury; the red brick Smithsonian is an isolated eyesore along the swampy mall; and the glorious obelisk to honor George Washington is still chopped off at the waist, owing to a lack of construction funds.

The city population stands at just over 61,000 people in 1860, the 14<sup>th</sup> largest city in the nation, but still tiny relative to the prior capitals in New York (813,000) and Philadelphia (565,000). Its residents are a nomadic lot, packing it during the winter-centric congressional sessions and emptying out during the unbearably hot summers.

In its cultural beliefs and practices it is a decidedly Southern city, right down to the buying and selling slaves within sight of the principal government offices.

On March 4, 1860 it is also an occupied city.

Old General Winfield Scott sees to that outcome by importing armed troops to monitor the parade routes and the Capitol. He is already preparing for a civil war to come, but fully intends to keep the palpable fear and anger in the city under control for an orderly transfer of power.

## Chapter 314 – The South Regards The Speech As A Declaration Of War

	<p><b>Dates:</b> March 1861</p>	<p><b>Sections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern Hostility Continues To Grow</li> <li>• Lincoln And Seward Still Underestimate The Threat</li> </ul>
---	-------------------------------------	---

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 1861

### Southern Hostility Continues To Grow



Two Flags Instead Of One

Despite Lincoln’s closing plea – “we must not be enemies” – Southern reactions to his inaugural speech are uniformly negative.

The *Alexandria Sentinel* says “the inaugural address is a declaration of war;” the *Athens Herald* claims “Mr. Lincoln’s inaugural, analyzed, fully means nothing but force, war, and bloodshed;” the *Atlanta Confederacy* adds “the future is ominous...we are dealing first with men who hate us bitterly.”

While a Northern observer, Senator Stephen Douglas, finds ambiguity in the address – “I hardly know what he means...every point...is susceptible of a double construction” – the *Charleston News* hears “smooth and oily words... deeply impregnated with the intolerance of a partisan.”

There is little disagreement that the new President has properly identified the crux of the sectional conflict in a single sentence:

*One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute.*

But the rest of the speech, according to the critics, simply boils down to legalistic mumbo-jumbo contrived to prove that “majority rule” means the North can impose its will on the South, no matter how ruinous the effects are on its economic future.

This is the same argument that has played out in America since the 1787 Constitutional Convention – the North’s failure to recognize the extent to which the South’s wealth depends upon the extension of slavery. In Philadelphia, this message is delivered by South Carolinians like Charles C. Pinckney, Edward Rutledge and Rawlins Lowndes:

*Without negroes this state is one of the most contemptible in the Union. Negroes are our wealth, our only natural resource. Yet behold how our kind friends in the North are determined soon to tie up our hands and drain us of what we have.*

It is repeated in 1832 by John C. Calhoun, George McDuffie and Robert B. Rhett when the South tries in vain to “nullify” the Tariff of Abominations, “imposed” on them by the principle of “majority rules,” in order to protect Northern manufactures.

It comes around again in 1846 with the Wilmot Proviso and Salmon Chase’s Free Soil Party, intent on banning slavery in the western land won in the Mexican War in part by the sacrifices of Southern soldiers.

Then a decade later in “Bloody Kansas,” the opening battle in what, by March 1861, looks like the end of the Union and the start of a civil war.

From the beginning the sectional fight has centered on the long-term survival of the South’s one dimensional economy, hinging as it does on sales of its raw cotton and bred slaves

As James Henry Hammond declares in his landmark 1858 speech to the senate, “Cotton is King” across the South. The facts bear this out. Between 1850 and 1860, cotton production almost doubles – the result of new plantations opening on lands along the Mississippi Valley.

**U.S. Cotton Production**

	<b>1850</b>	<b>1855</b>	<b>1860</b>
Lbs. (millions)	933.5	1,173.7	1,712.0
Growth Index	100	126	183

But of even greater import to the future of Southern wealth is the increased demand for and value of field hands being created by these western plantations.

**Value Of Southern Slaves**

<b>Year</b>	<b># Slaves (000)</b>	<b>Ave. Price/ Slave</b>	<b>Total Value (000)</b>
1850	3,204	\$377	\$1,207,908
1855	3,559	600	2,135,400
1860	3,954	778	3,076,212

In 1860 the market value of those enslaved in the South reaches \$3 Billion, more than the combined worth of all the manufacturing and railroad assets in the nation.

If Lincoln and the Republicans have their way with “majority rules” and ban the expansion of slavery in the west, it will sound the death knell for growth of the entire Southern economy.

The planter and political leaders in the South recognize this fact, but does the new President? If so, why does he, along with Henry Seward, insist on calling the crisis “artificial” and “nothing that really hurts anybody” – views he has just expressed on his whistle stop journey to Washington?

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 1861

### **Lincoln And Seward Still Underestimate The Threat**

The fact is that neither Lincoln nor Seward fully comprehend in March 1861 the economic impact their slavery ban will have on the South.

They both tend to regard the early secession movement as a temporary anomaly, sparked by yet another small band of “ultras” in South Carolina who fomented the “nullification” movement.

As such, they are both convinced early-on that this too shall pass, that if they exhibit restraint and patience toward the secessionists, the anger will subside, calmer heads will prevail, and the Union will be restored.

They perceive the dispute in moral terms – the right vs. wrong of human bondage.

For the South, however, the paramount issue is what it has always been -- the impact of the ban on its prospects for future wealth.

Stop the continued expansion of plantations requiring slaves and you stop the growth engine for the entire South. This threat is not just emotional in nature and it is not passing.

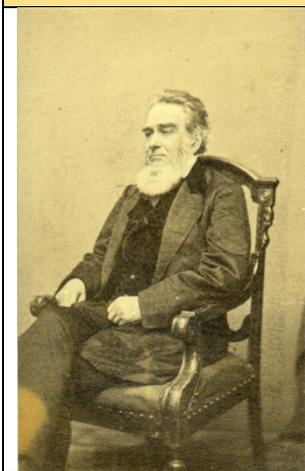
The Republicans as a whole believe the South is “bluffing” once again to have its way in the political arena.

But they are wrong.

This time the threat is truly existential, and, as in Kansas, the South means to fight it out.

While Lincoln will recognize this reality ahead of Seward, he enters the White House still clinging to the hope that the “better angels” will somehow prevail in time.

## Chapter 315 – Lincoln Names His Cabinet



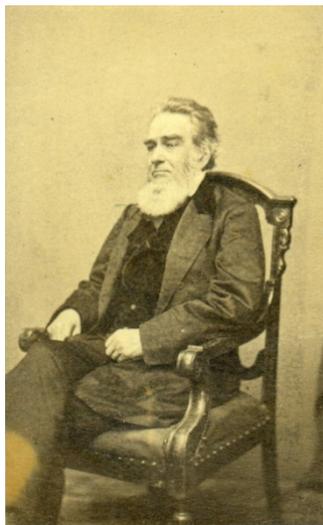
**Dates:**  
March 5, 1860

**Sections:**  
• Lincoln Announces His Cabinet

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 5, 1861

### Lincoln Announces His Cabinet



Edward Bates (1793-1869)

It is not until the day after his swearing-in that Lincoln finalizes his cabinet.

The task has been difficult, given his wish to engage men known for holding very different opinions on matters of state, and expressing them with vigor. The result of these characteristics is a history of personal animosity between several of his choices. Henry Seward and Salmon Chase are sworn enemies – Chase finding Seward too soft on ending slavery and Seward regarding Chase as a radical abolitionist who will provoke the South into a civil war. Both men tell Lincoln that he must make a choice, one or the other.

None of the candidates seem to respect Simon Cameron, who is convinced he is owed a top job because of the president's victory in Pennsylvania.

Seward, Chase, Cameron and a fourth choice, Edward Bates, have also competed against Lincoln at the 1860 Republican nominating convention. But instead of animosity, he holds them all in high stead, as evident in comments to Thurlow Weed:

*Their long experience in public affairs and their eminent fitness (give them) higher claims than his own for the place he was to occupy.*

Like Cameron, Edward Bates is formerly a member of the controversial Know-Nothing (American) Party. He hails from the critical border state of Missouri, was once a slave-holder, and becomes the first man west of the Mississippi to hold a cabinet post.

Montgomery Blair is another border state representative and the son of Francis P. Blair, Sr., member of Jackson's "kitchen cabinet," and solid Democrat before his role in founding the Republican Party. Of all the cabinet members, the younger Blair will be the only one with military credentials, having graduated from West Point and serving in the Second Seminole War.

Gideon Welles of Connecticut is a former Free Soiler, and chosen to capture the opinions in the New England region. Caleb Smith is from the swing state of Indiana, and, like Seward and Lincoln, is an old-time Whigs.

From the beginning, Lincoln wants Seward for the State Department, but he initially refuses to serve with Chase. When Lincoln hints that he may default to the esteemed New Jersey native, William Dayton, Seward comes on board. Cameron demands the Treasury job; Lincoln gives it to Chase; Cameron settles for the War Department. Chase is perpetually certain that he deserves more than offered, and is the last hold-out before his acceptance.

In the end, Lincoln has assembled the diverse and outspoken cabinet he desires.

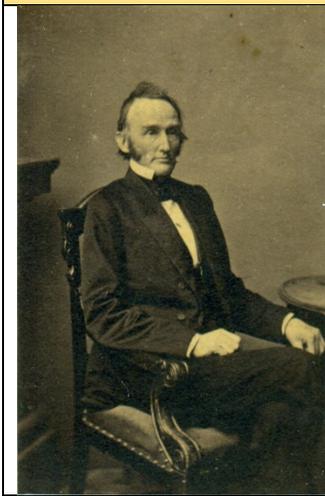
Along the way, he has also exhibited the political savvy and firm backbone that will prove so essential to his presidency.

#### Abraham Lincoln's Opening Cabinet

<b>Position</b>	<b>(Total *)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Home State</b>	<b>Prior Party</b>	<b>Age</b>
Vice-President	(1)	Hannibal Hamlin	Maine	Democrat	51
Secretary of State	(1)	Henry Seward	New York	Whig	59
Secretary of Treasury	(2)	Salmon P. Chase	Ohio	Free Soil	53
Secretary of War	(2)	Simon Cameron	Pennsylvania	Know Nothing	61
Attorney General	(2)	Edward Bates	Missouri	Know Nothing	67
Secretary of Navy	(1)	Gideon Welles	Maine	Free Soil	58
Postmaster General	(2)	Montgomery Blair	Maryland	Democrat	47
Secretary of Interior	(2)	Caleb Smith	Indiana	Whig	52

\* Total # who will serve in the position over the course of Lincoln's first term.

## Chapter 316 – The New Cabinet Focuses First On A Ft. Sumter Strategy



**Dates:**  
March 7-14, 1860

**Sections:**

- Lincoln's Military Men Rule Out Reinforcing Ft. Sumter
- Lincoln Queries His Cabinet

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 7-9, 1861

### **Lincoln's Military Men Rule Out Reinforcing Ft. Sumter**

After fending off a steady stream of “patronage seeker,” the new president plows into discovering the latest news and thinking about Ft. Sumter.

On March 7 he discusses the situation with Lt. General Scott, in command of the Army, Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, and Rear Admiral Silas Stringham, who begins his service at age eleven in 1809.

All three tell him that the enemy firepower already concentrated in Charleston harbor make it impossible to reinforce Major Anderson.

Two days Lincoln returns to the matter, asking for Scott's beliefs on three questions:

1. How long can Anderson hold out? Scott says a month for sure and maybe more.
2. If a decision was made to try to reinforce the fort, are the resources available? The answer is “no.”
3. If not, what would be required and how long would that take?

This third question has been discussed during Buchanan's time, and Anderson himself has been asked then for his opinion. While no one knows for sure, what Lincoln hears seems to be the latest consensus, and it is sobering.

Scott explains the formidable forces arrayed against Sumter and says that a fleet of warships will be needed, along with 5,000 regular army troops and another 20,000 volunteers – and that it will take about six months to prepare for such an assault!

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 14, 1861

## Lincoln Queries His Cabinet



Montgomery Blair (1813-1883)

Lincoln is not happy with Scott's assessment and decides to put a question on the table to discuss with his full cabinet on March 14, 1861.

*Assuming it to be possible to now provision Ft. Sumter under all the circumstances, is it wise to attempt it?*

Secretary of State Henry Seward leaps to asserting his opposition to any such action.

*The people of the other slave states, divided and balancing between sympathy with the seceding states and loyalty to the Union, have been intensely excited, but at the present moment indicate a disposition to adhere to the Union if nothing extraordinary shall occur...to produce popular exasperation....I would not initiate a war to regain a useless and unnecessary position...I would not provoke war in any way now.*

This is what Seward has been saying all along to Lincoln and to anyone else he encounters. It is the rosy-colored glasses version of the situation. The South will soon return to its senses and come back to the Union if only the administration shows patience, avoids all forms of forceful coercion, and gives them time to reconsider the costs of their actions.

Other members of the cabinet *want* to believe Seward's outlook, and end up agreeing with what he says in this meeting.

The only exception being the West Point graduate, Montgomery Blair, who mirrors the opinion Lincoln has heard three days earlier from his father, who storms into his office, recounts Andrew Jackson's threats against the "nullifiers," and says that abandoning Sumter would be an act of treason.

Blair argues that the duty of the government lies in defending federal property, and that any show of weakness on Ft. Sumter will only embolden the South to try to occupy more outposts, especially Ft. Pickens in Florida.

## Chapter 317 – Lincoln Sends Messengers To Charleston To Assess The Situation



**Dates:**  
March 21-28

**Sections:**

- Lincoln Sends Two Men To Charleston To Test The Waters For Himself
- Seward Continues To Leak The Word That Sumter Will Be Evacuated
- Lincoln's Failure To Act Draws Scathing Criticism

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 21, 1861

### Lincoln Sends Two Men To Charleston To Test The Waters For Himself



Ward Lamon (1828-1893)

Lincoln is still not sure what to do next, and on March 21, 1861, he decides to gather more first-hand information about conditions in and around Ft. Sumter.

He calls for help on a long-term lawyer friend from Illinois, Stephen Hurlbut, a native of Charleston, to go there, look around, talk to the citizens and report back on his findings.

Hurlbut will be joined on the visit by the trusted bodyguard, Ward Lamon, who is tasked with reaching Governor Pickens, telling him that he is an emissary from Washington, and securing a meeting with Major Anderson to learn about conditions at the fort.

The two men depart on what will be a three day journey south.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 23, 1861

### Seward Continues To Leak The Word That Sumter Will Be Evacuated



Edward Stoeckl (1804-1892)

While Lincoln seeks more information on Ft. Sumter, his Secretary of State is busily telling all comers that the fort will soon be evacuated.

He says this on March 15 to Associate Supreme Court Justice Joseph Campbell of Alabama.

He repeats it eight days later to the Russian Minister Baron de Stoeckl at a state dinner.

Word of the apparent “decision” filters south and shifts the thinking there from “if to when.”

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 24-28, 1861

### Lincoln’s Failure To Act Draws Scathing Criticism



Charles F. Adams (1807-1886)

As more days slip by without a public decision, the pressure on Lincoln mounts from all sides, especially from Northerners siding with Seward.

Congressman Charles Francis Adams offer this criticism of the president on March 28:

*The impression which I have received is that the course of the President is drifting the country into war, by want of decision. For my part I see nothing but incompetency in the head. The man is not equal to the hour.*

Alarms are also heard among the party faithful:

*If Ft. Sumter is evacuated, the new administration is done forever (and) the Republican Party is done.*

These views are by no means unexpected or new to Lincoln.

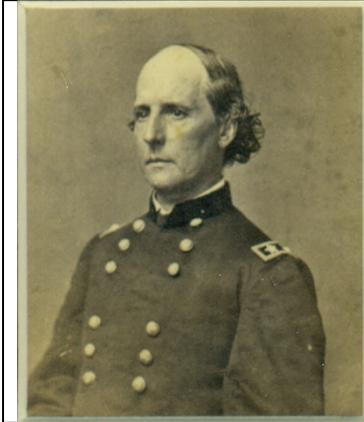
From his one term in the House from 1847-49, up through his two losses to Stephen Douglass for a Senate seat, most Washington politicians and pundits have discounted his capacity to ever succeed in the Oval office, much less now during a national crisis.

The hope among his many critics is that the “better man,” Henry Seward, will seize the reins and act as de facto executive over the next four years.

Lincoln is well aware of the skepticism that surrounds him.

He knows that he must act soon, and he does so on the same day as Adams attacks him.

## Chapter 318 – Lincoln Decides To Reinforce Both Ft. Sumter And Ft. Pickens



**Dates:**  
March 28-29, 1860

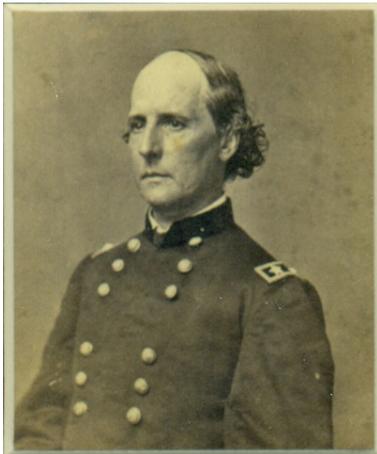
**Sections:**

- The Reports From Charleston Tip The Balance For Lincoln On Sumter
- The Cabinet Joins Lincoln In The Decision To Reinforce The Forts

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 28, 1861

### The Reports From Charleston Tip The Balance For Lincoln On Sumter



Stephen Hurlbut (1815-1882)

Stephen Hurlbut and Ward Lamon have spent two days visiting Charleston before writing up their report and getting it to Lincoln on March 28.

In walking around the city, Hurlbut is struck by the total absence of the Stars & Stripes flying on ships in port. Instead they all bear the Palmetto insignia of South Carolina or the new seven star flag of the CSA.

Hurlbut visits three times with seventy-one year old James Petigru, a former Attorney General for South Carolina, who has known him as a young boy. Petigru says that he is the last remaining Unionist in the city and that nothing will change that fact. The only question left is whether the South will be allowed to go in peace or whether a civil war will follow.

Hurlbut hears this same story from his other political and business contacts and sums it up in writing.

*Separate Nationality is a fixed fact...no attachment (remains) to the Union.*

Furthermore, any attempt to reinforce Sumter – even with provisions alone -- will lead to war, with attacks on Ft. Pickens and other federal facilities to follow.

Meanwhile, Lamon reaches Governor Pickens under the guise that he is an agent of the government looking for the means to evacuate the fort. Pickens allows him to visit Ft. Sumter, and he holds a ninety minute meeting with Major Anderson, who ends up believing that a peaceful exit is coming shortly.

After absorbing the news from Charleston, Lincoln again summons Scott for his reactions. Sounding altogether too much like his confidante Seward, the General recommends that both Sumter and Pickens be surrendered on the hope that the gestures will restore both states to the Union.

Upon hearing Scott's proposal, the President later recalls being in "cold shock," and he is sharp in his criticism of his army chief, even wondering if he should continue to trust him going forward.

In an evening meeting Lincoln shares Scott's proposal with the cabinet. Montgomery Blair again speaks out against any show of weakness, directing his remarks at Seward, whom he sees as the real voice behind Scott. While others begin to show signs of wavering around continued inaction, the meeting breaks up without decisions, save for one man in the room.

That is Lincoln, who finds thirty-nine year old Lt. Gustavus Fox, Gideon Welles right hand man at the Navy Department, and orders him to pull together a detailed plan to reinforce both Ft. Sumter and Ft. Pickens.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 29, 1861

### **The Cabinet Joins Lincoln In The Decision To Reinforce The Forts**

The President reconvenes the cabinet meeting, minus Simon Cameron, at noon on Good Friday, March 29.

A shift in mood is immediately apparent, away from Seward and toward Blair...and Lincoln.

Like Blair, the Navy, says Gideon Welles, is in favor of reinforcing both forts, and he goes even further:

*Armed resistance to a peaceful attempt to send provisions to one of our own forts will justify the government in using all the power at its command to reinforce the garrison....*

Chase favors defending Ft. Pickens, delivering provisions to Sumter initially, and following up with reinforcements if the supply ship is met by force.

Bates is firm about supporting Ft. Pickens, but remains uncertain about what to do at Sumter, although agreeing that a decision "to either evacuate or relieve it" must be made.

Smith mirrors Bates on both counts, while saying he does not know if Sumter can be reinforced.

Seward continues to argue that any expedition to Sumter will trigger a war and should be avoided. But he also feels the groundswell in the room, and agrees that preparations should be made to fight in Florida.

What Lincoln hears in all of this is reinforcement for what he has now come at long last to believe.

The rebellion is not "artificial" as he thought. The South is not bluffing this time. Restraint and patience and the "mystic chords of memory" will not restore their place in the Union.

What lies ahead appears to be a civil war, and it is time for the North to begin to prepare for it.

He responds by sending an order to Navy Secretary Welles and War Secretary Cameron to send an expedition to Ft. Sumter, to arrive as early as April 6.

## Chapter 319 – Organizational Confusion Mars Planning For The Expeditions



**Dates:**  
March 31 – April 1, 1860

**Sections:**

- Plans To Reinforce The Forts Begin To Take Shape
- Equipping The Expeditions Becomes Contentious

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 31, 1861

### Plans To Reinforce The Forts Begin To Take Shape



Montgomery Meigs (1816-1892)

After the cabinet adjourns on March 29, Seward takes Lincoln to meet with the army's engineering genius, Captain Montgomery Meigs, already well known in DC for his construction work on the capitol building and the Rock Creek Aquaduct.

By sheer luck, Meigs has recently toured the Florida forts, after being banished south for criticizing Buchanan's War Secretary, John Floyd about mismanaged contracts.

Lincoln is encouraged by the talk with Meigs, who is assigned to work with Erasmus Keyes, Scott's military secretary, to develop detailed plans for securing Ft. Pickens.

They are still working on the morning of March 31, when Seward tells them to finish up, show their work to Scott, and update Lincoln by 3pm.

Time runs out before they can reach Scott, so they head to the White House and tell the President that reinforcing Ft. Pickens would be possible, given proper planning and the choice of a bold naval commander.

Lincoln is supportive, but sends them back to Scott for his approval. Once there, they earn the General's wrath for violating the chain of command.

But this incident is only the beginning of the comedy of errors that will mark the efforts to organize the naval expeditions to both Ft. Sumter and Ft. Pickens.

Lincoln signals the pressure to act quickly, while not sure whether to prioritize Sumter or Pickens.

Seward wants to give up on Sumter and make a stand at Pickens.

Both insert themselves into the chain of command, with often contradictory orders that confuse and frustrate the military planners.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: April 1, 1861

### Equipping The Expeditions Becomes Contentious



A Warship At Anchor

Monday, April 1, 1861 finds two sets of planners working under intense time pressure to outfit their expeditions to save the federal forts.

The Sumter task force is led by naval Lt. Gustavus Fox, under the direction of General Winfield Scott.

The Ft. Pickens effort belongs to army Captain Montgomery Meigs and Major Erastus Keyes, but is befuddled from the start by its command structure. Thus Seward convinces Lincoln that the Navy Department is riddled with Southern sympathizers and that success in Florida requires total secrecy, even so far as keeping Secretary Gideon Welles in the dark. This approach yields one blow up after another as the effort progresses.

The first order for both planners is to identify the ships that will carry the men and supplies and landing crafts to their targeted destinations.

Meigs jumps to one crucial ship in particular for Florida, the sidewheel steam frigate *USS Powhatan* currently being refitted at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, under its acting head, Captain Andrew Foote.

Ship	Propulsion	Tons	Cannons	Stationed At
<i>Powhatan</i>	Steamer	2,415	10-9", 1-11", 5-12#	New York

He gets the go-ahead from Scott, Seward and Lincoln on *Powhatan* and, along with Keyes, lines up two commanders for their move on Ft. Pickens: naval Captain David Dixon Porter, and army Colonel Harvey Brown. They also enlist another navy man, Rear Admiral Silas Stringham, to oversee the strategy.

Since the Ft. Pickens venture remains a secret, Lt. Fox remains unaware as he scurries ahead on his Sumter efforts.

## Chapter 320 – Davis’ Envoys To Washington Remain Confused By Back Channel Messages



**Dates:**  
April 1, 1860

**Sections:**  
• Diplomatic Negotiations Drift Along

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: April 1, 1861

### Diplomatic Negotiations Drift Along



Martin Crawford (1820-1883)

Uncertainty about Lincoln’s actual plans for the forts, especially Sumter, continues to plague all Southerners, from Charleston to Montgomery, and even to the delegates at the Virginia convention in Richmond.

Three “southern commissioners” led by Martin Crawford, an ex-US Congressman from Georgia, remain in DC to keep up to date on the latest. Their “back channel” source for most information is Associate Supreme Court Justice John Campbell of Alabama who is in constant contact with Henry Seward – whom they believe “speaks for Lincoln.”

Seward has assured Campbell that Sumter will be evacuated, but that was two weeks ago, on March 15. So the Judge now contacts the Secretary for an update. The message this time is less comforting.

Seward tells Campbell that Lincoln’s “ears are open to everyone” at the moment – but that it seems unlikely he will try to reinforce Sumter, and certainly not without signaling Governor Pickens in advance.

Hearing this news, CSA President Jefferson Davis asks his cabinet for their thoughts.

Attorney General Judah Benjamin declares that war is inevitable, while Secretary of State Robert Toombs argues that Lincoln will evacuate Sumter in the end.

Davis still wants to believe Seward and Toombs and opts for no change in policy yet. He orders Crawford and the others to remain in Washington with their eyes and ears open.