

# Big Red

## *A Timeless Symbol of Duty, Honor, and Courage*

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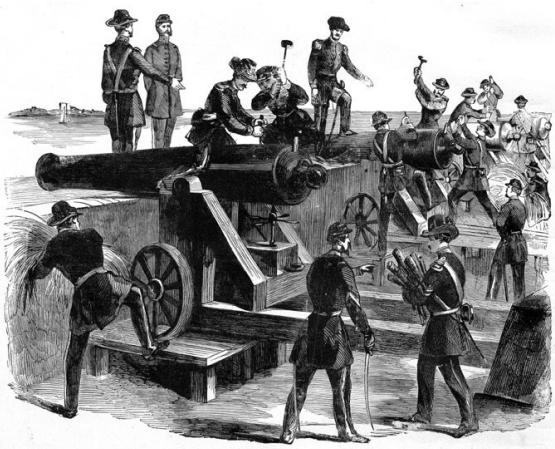
Member, Citadel Historical Council

Class of 1983



*The Star of the West Mural in The Citadel Library depicts the firing on the Star of the West on Jan 9, 1861 with the red SC flag “Big Red” proudly flying over the cadet artillery battery.*

Since 1842, The Citadel has prepared its cadets to understand the meaning of duty, honor and courage, and during war time, to take their place as leaders in the best tradition of the Citizen-Soldier. Even before The Citadel's first class graduated in 1846, cadets, faculty, and staff prepared South Carolina's famous Palmetto Regiment for the Mexican War. The Palmetto Regiment's flag, presented to the regiment at The Citadel, bearing the famous palmetto tree symbol, was the first U.S. flag to fly over Mexico City on Sept 13, 1847. The palmetto tree symbolizes the qualities of duty, honor, and courage shown by South Carolinians dating back to the Revolutionary War, when its soldiers withstood and repulsed a fierce British naval attack on Fort Sullivan (now called Ft Moultrie), on June 28, 1776. This symbol worn by Revolutionary War soldiers became a permanent reminder of the courage and determination of South



*The Guns of Ft Moultrie are spiked (destroyed) before leaving for Ft Sumter on Dec 26 1860.*

Carolina, on Jan 28, 1861, when the state formally adopted a standard design for its flag in the form of a white palmetto tree and crescent on a field of deep blue.<sup>1</sup>

The red palmetto flag that flies proudly over The Citadel today, affectionately known as “Big Red,” symbolizes the ideals of duty, honor, and courage of members of The Citadel’s Long Gray Line. Big Red boldly flies over the skies of Iraq and Afghanistan and wherever alumni are in “harm’s way” and is traditionally presented to alumni who have returned with injuries.

The Citadel Alumni Association, through its History Council is researching the discovery of a Civil War era palmetto flag we have reason to believe may be the original red palmetto flag flown by Cadets on Morris Island, Jan 9, 1861. This flag is currently in the archives of the State Historical Society of Iowa Civil War Battle Flags collection.

### Origins of Big Red

Big Red first appeared in January of 1861, when a small contingent of some 50 cadets deployed to Morris Island, South Carolina, to defend Charleston Harbor against federal forces.<sup>2</sup> When cadets first arrived on Morris Island, they were presented with a red palmetto flag by the ladies of the Vincent family who owned most of Morris Island.<sup>3</sup> A report in the Charleston Daily Courier dated January 28, 1861, says that the flag displayed a white palmetto tree on what was described as a “blood red” field.<sup>4</sup>



*Maj Ellison Capers, Citadel class of 1857, and Col Pettigrew are dispatched by Gov. Pickens and arrive at Fort Sumter to meet with Maj Anderson on Dec 27, 1860.*

Capt. Foster’s report, the cadets departed Morris Island to return to The Citadel in Feb 1861. References to the flag disappeared almost entirely. This may be due in large part to the fact that most of The Citadel’s records were removed to The Arsenal in Columbia when federal troops approached Charleston at the end of the war. The Arsenal was burned and nearly all documents and records stored there were destroyed.

The flag flown by Citadel Cadets on Jan 9, 1861, was observed by several eye witnesses on board the *Star of the West* as it approached the cadet’s Morris Island battery, including a reporter who had stowed away on board the *Star of the West*, the commander of U.S. Army troops aboard the ship, and the ship’s captain.<sup>5</sup> The flag was last described in official reports on Jan 21, 1861, by Captain J.G. Foster, USA, in his report of South Carolina artillery positions around Fort Sumter. Soon after

## Prelude to Conflict

Leading Civil War historians such as William Freehling and Maury Klein, consider the *Star of the West* incident to be one of the pivotal events leading to the outbreak of Civil War.<sup>6</sup> The 1860 Democratic National Convention, held in Charleston, SC, led to a split in the party and the election of Republican President-Elect Abraham Lincoln in Nov 1860.<sup>7</sup> South Carolina's decision to leave the Union in December of 1860 left it in a precarious position militarily. With the exception of Citadel alumni, South Carolina forces were largely untrained militia. They were lightly armed and on the coast with little defense against naval forces. Once again, The Citadel faculty, staff, and cadets were called upon to serve much like they did during the Mexican War in 1846. After South Carolina seceded from the Union, aware that precipitous overt action might cause other states to join South Carolina, most of President Buchanan's southern cabinet members urged him to be cautious and not take any action that would cause other southern states to join South Carolina.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps because of this, Buchanan's actions both before South Carolina's secession and afterwards, appeared indecisive and provided confusing messages to both sides.

Maj Robert Anderson, commander of U.S. Army forces in Charleston, was in an impossible military situation. His small garrison at Ft. Moultrie could not withstand attack from land. Further, Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, designed to be manned by some 600 troops, was at the time unmanned except for laborers working to complete its fortifications. In response to his repeated requests for reinforcements, Anderson received only ambiguous responses and warnings against causing unnecessary antagonism. On December 9, 1860, Assistant Adjutant-General, Major D. C. Buell, met with Anderson in Charleston and personally conveyed instructions from U.S. Secretary of War John B. Floyd to Anderson, refusing his request for reinforcements, and reiterating Anderson should not antagonize the situation. However, Buell's message also left an opening for Anderson. It required him to defend the forts in Charleston, and if he had tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act:

***“...you are to hold possession of the forts in this harbor, and, if attacked, you are to defend yourself to the last extremity. The smallness of your force will not permit you, perhaps, to occupy more than one of the three forts; ... you may then put your command into either of them which you may deem most proper...”<sup>9</sup>***

Once South Carolina seceded from the Union on Dec 20, 1860, tensions escalated quickly. Anderson's small garrison of U.S. Army forces consisted of approximately 73 men mostly stationed at Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island near Charleston. Moultrie was a Revolutionary era fort built to defend Charleston from the sea, not land attack. The town of Moultrieville located just outside of the army post soon swarmed with South Carolina Militiamen, and Anderson became alarmed at the growing hostility of the population. On December 26, 1860, Anderson deftly moved his small force under the cover of darkness into the relative safety of Fort Sumter. Ft. Sumter was still under construction, but the workers were off for the Christmas holidays. He gave Capt Abner

Doubleday the order to destroy any artillery pieces and armament left behind at Fort Moultrie so it could not be used against them. Abandoned, Fort Moultrie was left with a trail of smoke and fires when it was recovered by South Carolina forces on Dec 27, 1860. As a military tactic, Anderson's move was logical, carried out with skill and precision, and according to Anderson, in keeping with the orders he had received verbally from D. C. Buell.<sup>10</sup>

Anderson's move was not only a turning point in the political conflict, but considered by South Carolina to be a provocation that threatened even more aggressive "coercive" federal action to force the state back into the Union.<sup>11</sup> South Carolina's new governor Francis W. Pickens was outraged and reacted quickly without consulting his legislature. He ordered the state militia to take control of Fort Moultrie and Castle Pinckney which was accomplished on December 27.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, U.S. Attorney General Black, a northern hardliner, convinced President Buchanan that any further concessions to South Carolina would draw the wrath of northerners of every political view. The dye was thus cast for the Union – there would be no further compromise. "Lame Duck" President Buchanan confided to a friend that "If I were to withdraw Anderson from Sumter now, I can travel back to my home at Wheatland by the light of my own burning effigies."<sup>13</sup>

Governor Pickens dispatched a military envoy to speak with Major Anderson at Fort Sumter on Dec 27, 1860. The two officers dispatched to speak with Major Anderson were Colonel Johnson Pettigrew and Major Ellison Capers, class of 1857, of the First South Carolina Rifles. Major Anderson informed the envoys that he would not relinquish command of Fort Sumter. Governor Pickens, fearing attempts would be made to reinforce Anderson or worse recapture Moultrie and Pinckney, ordered State militia to Morris Island. Major Peter F. Stevens, class of 1849, who was then Superintendent of The Citadel, was ordered to erect an artillery battery on the island that could command the ship channel into Charleston's harbor, and be out of reach of Fort Sumter's guns. Stevens recalled cadets from their holiday furlough and on January 1, 1861, a detachment of Citadel Cadets schooled in artillery was detailed to construct and man a sand battery on the northern end of Morris Island.<sup>14</sup>

The Citadel Cadets arrived at Morris Island with their orders to prevent any U.S. flagged ships from entering Charleston harbor to re-supply Fort Sumter. The site selected on Morris Island by Lt Nathaniel Armstrong, class of 1851, of The Citadel faculty, provided a strategic position for the cadet artillery to defend Charleston harbor and prevent unauthorized entry or reinforcement of Fort Sumter. The Cadets, supported by the Charleston Zouave Cadets, set about digging gun emplacements for their 24 pound siege guns from the Academy.<sup>15</sup> These guns were set "en barbette" behind sand dunes thus establishing a masked battery.<sup>16</sup> The battery was completed



*Maj Peter F. Stevens, class of 1849, served as Superintendent (President) of The Citadel during the firing on the Star of the West, commanded a regiment in the Confederate Army, and served as an Episcopal Bishop.*

within a few days and the Cadets settled into routine duty, housed in a nearby abandoned small pox hospital<sup>17</sup>

In Washington, Buchanan had finally given General Winfield Scott the order to reinforce Major Anderson. Scott's original plan to reinforce Anderson was ambitious. It called for a United States war ship, the U.S.S. Brooklyn, under Captain Farragut, USN, to take three hundred veteran soldiers on board from Fort Monroe, Virginia, and to sail into Charleston Harbor to reinforce Fort Sumter. After this was accomplished, the federal force would then proceed into Charleston to recover possession of federal property that had been seized.<sup>18</sup> However, almost immediately Scott had second thoughts about sending a war ship into Charleston's shallow harbor. Scott proposed instead a covert mission, using a civilian merchant vessel to be loaded with supplies, arms and two hundred and fifty troops.<sup>19</sup> He ordered his assistant adjutant to charter the *Star of the West*, a merchant steamer that traveled regularly between New York and New Orleans for the mission. This was a fatal error, as the steamer was unfit to contend with shore batteries. General Scott most likely thought that if this vessel could slip in, and land its cargo unawares, he would have secured the harbor of Charleston without increasing the war fever in the South.<sup>20</sup> Scott definitely intended the mission to be secret based on the orders he issued.<sup>21</sup> However, by early January, the *Star of the West*'s mission was no longer a secret. Secretary of the Interior Thomas of Mississippi and Senator Wigfall of Texas, learning of the attempt to reinforce Fort Sumter, alerted South Carolina officials,<sup>22</sup>

and rumors of the steamship's mission circulated in the New York press a few days after it had sailed.<sup>23</sup> In Charleston fear gripped the City as news circulated that a United States naval vessel was on its way,<sup>24</sup> causing the City's militia forces to be put on high alert.<sup>25</sup> On January 5, General Scott learned the *Star of the West*'s mission had been compromised and attempted to recall the ship. He sent the USS Brooklyn to intercept it if possible, and also issued telegraph message, but both arrived too late as the steamer had already sailed for Charleston.<sup>26</sup>



Citadel Cadet Battery, Morris Island, January 9, 1861

*This illustration by the Company of Military Historians shows the Cadets flying "Big Red" at the Star of the West Battery at Morris Island on Jan 9, 1861.*

The *Star of the West* arrived off Charleston harbor around midnight of January 8, and waited undetected until near daylight. The steamship's captain was Captain John McGowan, a seasoned veteran of the U.S. Revenue Marine, as the U.S. Coast Guard was then known.<sup>27</sup> McGowan's intention was to sneak into the harbor at first light, in the hopes of being mistaken for a coastal trader. Success depended upon secrecy, but his mission was one of the worst-kept secrets of the deepening national crisis. Ample warning

and enthusiastic cadet gun crews doomed the venture to failure.<sup>28</sup> As the *Star of the West* moved into the harbor channel on the morning of January 9, the South Carolina steamship General Clinch on guard duty, challenged her with signals, and when she did not respond, the Clinch steamed up the channel firing flare rockets to warn troops on the surrounding islands of her approach.<sup>29</sup>

On the morning of Jan 9, 1861, the “red palmetto flag” flew proudly in a brisk wind and cold rain over the cadet’s battery on Morris Island. The General Clinch’s flares appeared in the sky, and Cadet William S. Simkins, class of 1861, spotted a large ship approaching flying a U.S. flag. Immediately, he sounded the alarm. As the ship came within range Major Stevens is reported to have paused briefly, perhaps understanding the significance of the moment.<sup>30</sup> Or perhaps Stevens recalled a sermon that had been given to cadets two months before in which the Rev. John Bachman had admonished the cadets:

*“Young men ...we are linked together for peace or war; for plenty or want, for glory or shame. I have not a shadow of doubt of your courage; I would place my life in your hands in the midst of a host of enemies. But any act of rashness on our part would place us in the wrong. Act not without authority. Remember courage consists in obedience and prudence, as well as loyalty and firmness...”<sup>31</sup>*

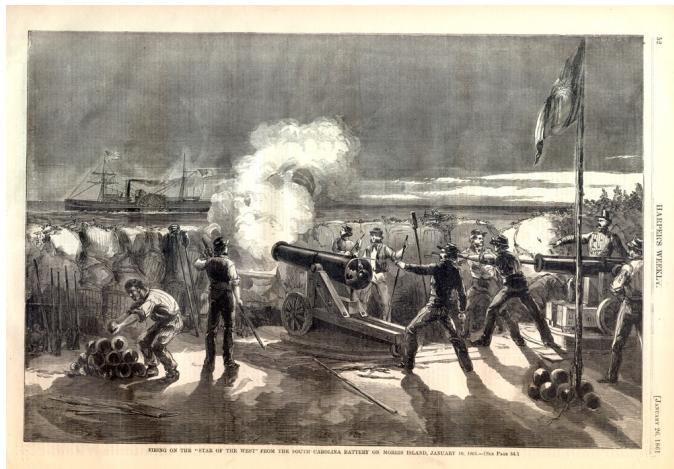
Stevens then gave Cadet Captain John M. Whilden<sup>32</sup>, commanding the battery, the order to fire. Cadet George E. Haysworth<sup>33</sup> pulled the lanyard on the No. 1, cannon sending the first shot across the bow of the *Star of the West* as a warning shot. When the steamer failed to turn, Cadet Samuel Pickens<sup>34</sup> fired a shot that struck the ship but did little damage. Cadet Thomas Ferguson<sup>35</sup> fired a shot striking the ship and another that fell just astern.<sup>36</sup> Altogether, the Cadet battery on Morris Island fired 17 rounds at the *Star of the West*, with three rounds recorded as striking the ship.<sup>37</sup>

At Fort Sumter, Major Anderson had guns readied to open fire within minutes of being alerted to the first shot of the Morris Island battery, but chose not to reply to the guns on Morris Island or Fort Moultrie.<sup>38</sup> There is no definitive answer why Anderson chose not to respond that morning. However, there is convincing evidence that the combination of his previous instructions to avoid confrontation if at all possible and his failure to receive prior notice of the *Star*’s mission, allowed Anderson to choose to avoid the confrontation. Although Anderson and others at Fort Sumter had seen news reporting that an attempt would be made to reinforce the federal garrison, the officers thought this report was false.<sup>39</sup> General Scott had sent instructions for Anderson to return fire should South



*A photo of the Civil War era “Big Red” captured at the Battle of Ft Blakeley shows the crescent facing inward like many SC flags made prior to Jan 28, 1861 when the current state flag was adopted.*

Carolina use force to attempt to stop U.S. ships from reaching Fort Sumter, but these instructions had not reached Anderson when the *Star* made its attempt to enter Charleston Harbor.<sup>40</sup>



A contemporary drawing of the *Star of the West* Battery in Harper's Weekly (dated 26 Jan 1861) states that a “red palmetto flag” was flying when the ship was fired upon.

throughout the south as a direct challenge to the legitimacy of a state’s sovereignty, including its right to secede from the Union, and played into the hands of ardent secessionists.<sup>42</sup> Within three days of the *Star*’s entry into Charleston’s harbor, Mississippi, Florida and Alabama had joined South Carolina in seceding from the Union, and by the end of February, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas joined the rebellion.

### The Original “Red Palmetto Flag” – Has it been found?

The Flag of The Citadel Corps of Cadets carries eight battle streamers and one service streamer for the Corps participation as a unit in military engagements during the Civil War. During the war, twelve members of the Corps of Cadets died as a result of wounds or illness suffered in the field.<sup>43</sup> The Citadel suffered dearly during and after the war, and nearly ceased to exist. The Arsenal Academy in Columbia (college for 4<sup>th</sup> class cadets) was virtually destroyed by fire as Gen Sherman’s army marched through Columbia, and The Citadel was captured and occupied by the U.S. Army from 1865 to 1882. Alumni led by Governor Johnson Hagood, class of 1847, only 175 strong, convinced the state to reopen The Citadel as a college after its recovery from the federal government in 1882. “Big Red” as a symbol of the courage shown by members of the Corps of Cadets, remained all-but forgotten as a footnote in the written record until nearly 100 years later.

During the administration of Gen Mark Clark, President of The Citadel, studies were conducted in preparation for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Star of the West* incident in 1961. Historians completed in-depth research that led to the creation of the *Star of the*

Immediately after the incident, Anderson sent Governor Pickens a stern note demanding an explanation for the firing on the *Star of the West*, and threatened to close the harbor by force unless Pickens apologized. Pickens replied by claiming South Carolina’s batteries had acted in self defense, alluding to the fact that the *Star*’s arrival into the harbor with soldiers on board had been an act of aggression on Charleston.<sup>41</sup> The incident enflamed passions in both the North and the South. Buchanan’s act to reinforce Sumter was interpreted

West Mural in the Daniel Library which clearly depicts cadets firing at the Star of the West with the “red palmetto flag” flying over the battery. The flag became increasingly popular with cadets during the nationally televised Centennial Reenactment of the *Star of the West* on Jan 9, 1961. It was adopted by the Touchdown Cannon Crew that fired the cannon during football games. By the late 1980s the flag became affectionately known as “Big Red” and was adopted as the official “spirit” flag of the Corps of Cadets. Lt Gen “Bud” Watts, class of 1958, President of The Citadel and the Board of Visitors recognized and approved “Big Red” as the official spirit flag of the Corps on Friday, Oct 18, 1992. Big Red, now an official flag of the Corps, symbolizes the qualities of duty, honor, and courage, and proudly flies over the parade ground and is seen at all major sporting events.

In early 2007 a Civil War era “red palmetto flag” was “discovered” by Citadel Alumni in a museum of the State Historical Society of Iowa. During a visit to Iowa, Brig Gen Hugh Tant, class of 1971, was the first alumnus to personally see “Big Red,” 142 years after its capture. The discovery of the red palmetto flag in the Historical Society’s Confederate flag collection has created considerable excitement that this long lost battle flag of the *Star of the West* Battery may have been found. The flag is listed as “unidentified” by the Society’s museum, and other than the notes from the Civil War veteran who donated it to the Society, its origin is unknown.<sup>44</sup> What is striking about the design of this flag is not only its similarity to the descriptions by eye witnesses to the *Star of the West* incident, but its incorporation of features typical of the early pre-Civil War flags produced by the Hugh Vincent company in late 1860 and early 1861. The red SC flag in the Iowa State Museum is in pristine condition. Given its heirloom condition, it is obvious that it was well cared for and had a special significance to the men in Culpepper’s Artillery. The Citadel Corps Flag, presented by the Washington Light Infantry in 1857, is also in good condition and was unfurled only twice during the war. It is reasonable to conclude that Citadel Alumni in Culpepper’s Artillery would treat the *Star of the West* flag with the same dignity and respect. While some early South Carolina secession flags had red fields, and others had palmetto trees as their symbolic centerpiece, a thorough search of Civil War and period South Carolina flags has turned up no reference to a red palmetto flag similar to the one described by eye witnesses to the *Star of the West* incident, or the flag in the Iowa museum.

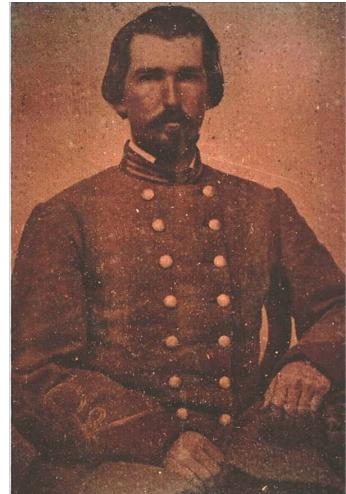
The red palmetto flag flown by cadets on Morris Island is known to have come from the Vincent family. Hugh Vincent was a ship’s chandler in Charleston. His company is reported to have contracted to supply large flags for South Carolina forts and ships shortly after the state seceded from the Union. These flags include palmetto flags that flew over Fort Johnson, and a flag for Ft. Moultrie, which was the first flag that flew over Fort Sumter when it was surrendered by Major Anderson.<sup>45</sup> It can be immediately noticed that the red palmetto flag in the Historical Society’s collection has several features similar to those produced by the Vincent Company. It is quite large – measuring 9’ by 7’, typical of those flown as garrison flags or ships flags. It is well made of strong cloth that has survived in good condition for nearly 150 years. Perhaps the most interesting feature of flags made by Vincent during the secession period and before South Carolina adopted a uniform flag design, was the use of a downward pointing crescent. There is a palmetto flag in the Charleston Civil War Museum with a white field on which

resides two green palmetto trees and a downward pointing crescent in the upper left quadrant. This flag is reported to have been made by Hugh Vincent's Company shortly after South Carolina's secession from the Union. The red palmetto flag in the Iowa museum's collection likewise has a downward pointing crescent in the upper left quadrant. Other secession flags displayed in Charleston during this early period also display the downward pointing crescent and it is suspected these were also produced by the Hugh Vincent Company.

If the red palmetto flag in the Historical Society of Iowa's museum is in fact the original Big Red, how did the flag end up there? There are few clues, but one very important connection to The Citadel. The flag in the Iowa museum is marked "unidentified red SC palmetto flag." It was reportedly captured in April 1865 during the Battle of Fort Blakeley in Mobile, Alabama by members of the 20<sup>th</sup> Iowa Infantry. The flag was donated to the museum by Private Willard Baker, a soldier from the 20<sup>th</sup> Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Company C, who donated it to the Historical Society in 1919.

Pvt Baker's personal notes mention the red palmetto flag in his possession was captured near Mobile. As a member of the 20<sup>th</sup> Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Baker would have been in Mobile in April 1865. In April of 1865, The 20<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Infantry took part in the battle of Fort Blakeley, just outside of Mobile, Alabama. Fort Blakeley was captured by Union forces on April 9, 1865. Because the red palmetto flag in the Iowa museum's collection is clearly from South Carolina, researchers have looked carefully for the presence of a South Carolina military unit or naval vessel that could have been in the Mobile area at or about the time the 20<sup>th</sup> Iowa Volunteer Infantry was there. In April 1865, nearly all of the soldiers defending Fort Blakeley, consisted of regiments from Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The only South Carolina military organization that has been identified is "Culpepper's Battery," or Company C of the S.C. 3<sup>rd</sup> Palmetto Battalion, Light Artillery. Most of the men of this Battery were killed or taken prisoner at Fort Blakeley.

There are many connections between this South Carolina artillery unit and the Citadel Academy. Culpepper's Battery was formed in the summer of 1861 by Captain James F. Culpepper of Darlington, SC. Capt. Culpepper was a graduate of the Citadel Academy Class of 1854. Many of his officers were either Citadel Academy graduates or former Cadets. Culpepper was assigned to the Palmetto Guard and stationed on Morris Island during the bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. The commander of the batteries on Morris Island during the Ft Sumter engagement was Maj Stevens, Superintendent of The Citadel. Capt Culpepper began recruiting men for his "Palmetto Artillery" during his time on Morris



*Capt James Furman Culpepper, Citadel class of 1854, commanded the Palmetto Artillery and was captured by U. S. Army troops in 1865. A physician, he graduated from the Medical College of SC (now called the Medical Univ. of SC).*

Island. Among the Citadel Alumni he recruited were: 1st Lt. Joshua L Moses, who often commanded the battery, was killed while trying to surrender. He is credited with saving the lives of his men. Other officers and enlisted members were 2d Lt. Perry Moses, Horace Moses and David Moses. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Joshua Moses was killed in front of Fort Blakeley on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1865, attempting to stop Union forces from shooting his men after the fall of the Fort. Another Moses, brother, Isaac Harby Moses, class of 1862, was a member of the Star of the West Battery in Jan 1861, although not at Blakeley when it fell. The unit Executive Officer was 1Lt James L.S. Dove, class of 1861. Lt. Dove was a cadet during the *Star of the West* engagement.



*A photo of the Moses brothers taken in 1861 shows Cadet Isaac H. Moses, class of 1862 (seated on left), Cadet Perry I. Moses, class of 1865 (seated on right), and Joshua L. Moses, class of 1860 (standing).*

It is known that when Fort Blakeley was captured on April 9, the order of battle placed Culpepper's Battery at the fort's Redoubt No. 9. The 20<sup>th</sup> Iowa Volunteer Infantry is reported to have attacked and overrun Redoubt No. 4. For this reason, some have questioned if the 20<sup>th</sup> Iowa would have been in position to capture a flag from Culpepper's Battery. However, there is evidence in the record that during April 9<sup>th</sup> Confederate units were split up to address gaps in the Fort's defenses. There is information that places a portion of Culpepper's Battery closer to Redoubt No. 4. Still other information indicates that some of Culpepper's men were captured in front of Fort Blakeley prior to April 9, when they were attempting to lay down land mines. And still other information places Lt. Joshua Moses in front of Fort Blakeley as it was being captured by Union forces. Further, there is evidence that when the 20<sup>th</sup> Iowa Volunteer Infantry breeched Redoubt No. 4; they continued to pursue retreating Confederates to the river. The direction of their movement would have been on a path to intercept Confederates retreating from Redoubt No. 9.

There is of course, no doubt that the striking red palmetto flag in the Iowa Historical Society's museum collection is a red South Carolina palmetto flag from the Civil War era. Since Culpepper's "Palmetto Artillery" was the only SC unit involved in the battle where the flag was captured, then there is virtually no doubt that the flag was captured from that unit. Is it the same flag that flew over the Citadel's Star of the West Battery on January 9, 1861? Yes, it is possible, but establishing absolute certainty regarding such an old artifact will be difficult if not an impossible task. We can however develop reasonable assumptions and conclusions. Our research to date has been sufficient to convince the Alumni Association's Historical Council that this is quite possibly the original Big Red. In discussions with the State Historical Society of Iowa, its curators

also believe there is reasonable basis for such a conclusion, and have agreed to loan the flag to The Citadel for further academic study, and to display it in a suitable location on campus.

The Citadel Alumni Association needs your help to bring Big Red back home. The 148 year old flag needs a special display case to keep it safe and to secure it from environmental effects. This cost of bringing Big Red back home is nearly \$20,000. We are hoping that additional funding for research can come from academic and other sources, and that we can engage with Cadets and academic resources on campus to further this study. A special fund raiser has been established. Together we will bring Big Red back home to South Carolina and The Citadel, where it will be a timeless symbol of duty, honor and courage shown by members of The Citadel's Long Gray Line.

<sup>1</sup> [Http://www.scstatehouse.net/studentpage/flag.htm](http://www.scstatehouse.net/studentpage/flag.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Gary R. Baker, Cadets in Gray, (Palmetto Book works, 1989), p. 12

<sup>3</sup> Baker, p.20,

<sup>4</sup> The Charleston Daily Courier, January 28, 1861, Monday, No. 18,775, Vol. LIX, “A Well Guarded Flag.” “The flag which waives over the Morris island battery and the gallant Citadel Cadets of Major Stevens Command on the memorable 9th of January ... was a blood red field on which was displayed a white palmetto of remarkably successful execution...”

<sup>5</sup> Harpers Weekly, January 26, 1861, edition includes a dramatic illustration of the cadet battery firing on the Star of the West, and shows a flag with a large palmetto tree at its center. This edition also includes the eye witness account of a reporter from the New York Evening Post who had stowed away on the *Star of the West* as well as the account of John McGowan, Captain of the *Star of the West*, both of whom reported seeing a “red palmetto flag” as the ship approached the Morris Island battery.

<sup>6</sup> Klein, p 204, Freehling, p. 488-489.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Edwin Howe, The Democratic National Committee, 1830-1876, University of Wisconsin, 1919, p.21-22

<sup>8</sup> Klein, pp 98-99.

<sup>9</sup> Klein, pp 148-149.

<sup>10</sup> Freehling, pp 477-488.

<sup>11</sup> Klein, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup> Freehling, p 478.

<sup>13</sup> Klein, p. 176.

<sup>14</sup> Baker, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> In Gary Baker’s book, Cadets in Gray, Baker states that the Cadets brought four cannon to the island, but in a foot note refers to a report the Cadets emplaced two 24 pounders, supplemented later with a third. Baker at pp 12 – 13. And, Baker quotes Edmund Ruffin who would later be credited with firing the first shots at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, as seeing three 24 pounders at the Cadet’s sand battery, shortly after the firing on the Star of the West. Baker, p27. In Thomas’ book, The History of the S.C. Military Academy, he states the Cadets brought four 24 pound siege guns to the island. Thomas, p. 107. See also the January 21, 1861, official report of Captain J.G. Foster on S.C. artillery positions.

<sup>16</sup> Baker, pp 11 - 12

<sup>17</sup> Baker, p 13

<sup>18</sup> Abner Doubleday, *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie*, Brevet Major-General U.S.A., original publishers: Harper & Brothers, 1876, Chapter VII.

<sup>19</sup> Doubleday, Chapter VII

<sup>20</sup> Doubleday, Chapter VII

<sup>21</sup> O.R., Ser. 1., Vol. 1., pp. 131-132

<sup>22</sup> American Civil War, Preludes of the American Civil War, [www.geocities.com/meister\\_z/CVLWARUS.htm](http://www.geocities.com/meister_z/CVLWARUS.htm)

<sup>23</sup> See for example the January 8, 1861 edition of the New York Herald reporting on the Star of the West departing New York, Governor’s Island, loaded with supplies and troops.

<sup>24</sup> Doubleday, Chapter VII.

<sup>25</sup> Baker, p 16

<sup>26</sup> Baker, p16

<sup>27</sup> Truman Strobridge, The U.S. Coast Guard and the Civil War, [http://www.uscg.mil/history/Civil\\_War\\_Strobridge.html](http://www.uscg.mil/history/Civil_War_Strobridge.html)

<sup>28</sup> Strobridge

<sup>29</sup> Baker, p17.

<sup>30</sup> Baker, pp 20-21.

<sup>31</sup> Baker, pp. 20-21.

<sup>32</sup> John Marshall Whilden, (1839 -1862) Citadel Class of 1861, attained the rank of Major in the 23<sup>rd</sup> S.C. Regiment. Known as “The Boy Major” he was mortally wounded at Second Manassas. Baker, p 19.

<sup>33</sup> George Edward Haysworth (1841- 1887) Citadel Class of 1861, served as a Lt. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment S.C. Artillery. He survived the war and became a school teacher, then lawyer and judge. Baker, p 18 - 19

<sup>34</sup> Samuel Bonneau Pickens (1839 – 1892) Citadel Class of 1862, attained the rank of Colonel in the 12<sup>th</sup> Alabama Regiment. He survived the war and became an agent for the Charleston Railroad. Baker, p19.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas B. Ferguson (1841 – 1922) Citadel Class of 1861, attained the rank of Major in Walker’s Division of Johnston’s Army. Although seriously wounded in Mississippi, he recovered to command the First Military District. He survived the war and became a U.S. Diplomat. Baker, p19.

<sup>36</sup> Baker, p 21

<sup>37</sup> C. Michael Harrington, Civil War @ Charleston website, <http://www.awod.com/gallery/probono/cwchas/johnfoot.html#14>

<sup>38</sup> The rationale for Anderson doing nothing to aid the *Star of the West* that morning was in part his understanding of his standing orders not to precipitate armed conflict. Anderson's knew that if he opened fire, this would have terminated all hopes for securing the one objective he had consistently sought since coming to Charleston. As a Southerner with a strong desire for a peaceful settlement of the crisis, Anderson believed his restraint was both in compliance with orders and correct. Abner Doubleday, the senior officer in Anderson's command, commented many years later in his memoirs, on Anderson's state of mind during those fateful weeks in early 1861. "I have already stated the reasons for his inaction," the New York artilleryman declared. "In amplifying his instructions not to provoke a collision into instructions not to fight at all, I have no doubt he thought he was rendering a real service to the country. He knew the first shot fired by us would light the flames of a civil war that would convulse the world, and tried to put off the evil day as long as possible." Abner Doubleday, *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie*, Brevet Major-General U.S.A., original publishers: Harper & Brothers, 1876, Chapter VII. p 136.

<sup>39</sup> Doubleday, Chapter VII

<sup>40</sup> The instructions to Anderson stated in relevant part: "Should a fire, likely to prove injurious, be opened upon any vessel bringing re-enforcements or supplies, or upon tow-boats within the reach of your guns, they may be employed to silence such fire." O.R. Series 1 / Vol. 1, p. 132. Everything in Anderson's background suggests that he would have obeyed these explicit instructions to defend any ship that attempted to reinforce his garrison. Some believe that had the dispatches from Washington reached Anderson before the *Star of the West* attempted to enter Charleston Harbor on January 9, Anderson would have returned the fire of the South Carolina batteries, and the Civil War would have started on this date.

<sup>41</sup> Baker, pp 24-25.

<sup>42</sup> William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, Vol. II, Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-1861, (Oxford University Press 2007), pp 486-489, 502.

<sup>43</sup> Baker, p. 187.

<sup>44</sup> The description of the flag by the Iowa Historical Society is as follows: C. Cat. # 41. Palmetto Flag: red wool bunting with palmetto tree in center in white cotton, white cotton crescent moon. Captured at Mobile, Alabama by the 20th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Co. C.

<sup>45</sup> Hugh E. Vincent of Charleston, S.C., was a prominent local businessman who operated as a ship's chandler. He sold materials to the CS Ordnance Bureau as well as the Navy and other departments. He was contracted to make large flags for the various forts around the city after the state's secession in late 1860. These include a state flag for Ft. Morris, and CS flags for Ft. Moultrie. The first Confederate flag hoisted over captured Ft. Sumter is thought to have been made by Vincent. He also made numerous signal flags and 16 flags in November, 1861, that may have been for units of the area. Some of the flags Vincent made were for warships, and this included foreign banners that warships carried at sea for salutes. A March, 1861 newspaper article stated his firm, "has been busily occupied in furnishing flags for ships, forts and companies."

<http://www.confederateflags.org/FOTCflagmakers1.htm>, Written and compiled by Greg Biggs.