

EDMUND RUFFIN ON THE DEFEAT OF THE CONFEDERACY

Edmund Ruffin, a Virginia fire-eater and descendant of the renowned Randolph family, traveled to South Carolina when Virginia failed to meet his expectations by becoming the first state to secede. Ruffin claimed to have fired the first shot against Fort Sumter, which was widely believed for decades (actually he did fire a shot, but not the first. In June 1865, after the surrenders of Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston and the collapse of the Confederate government, he penned the final entry in his diary (below), after which he wrapped himself in the Confederate flag and committed suicide by shooting himself in the head.

I here declare my unmitigated hatred to Yankee rule -- to all political, social and business connection with the Yankees and to the Yankee race. Would that I could impress these sentiments, in their full force, on every living Southerner and bequeath them to every one yet to be born! May such sentiments be held universally in the outraged and down-trodden South, though in silence and stillness, until the now far-distant day shall arrive for just retribution for Yankee usurpation, oppression and atrocious outrages, and for deliverance and vengeance for the now ruined, subjugated and enslaved Southern States! ...And now with my latest writing and utterance, and with what will be near my latest breath, I here repeat and would willingly proclaim my unmitigated hatred to yankee rule-- to all political, social and business connections with Yankees, and the perfidious, malignant and vile Yankee race.