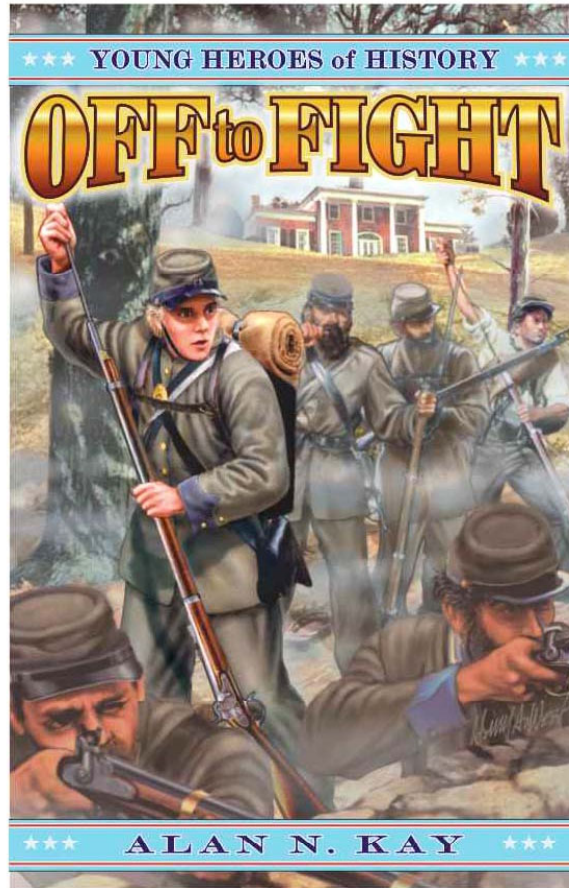


# Lesson Plans for



## *Off to Fight* *Book Three:* *Young Heroes of History*

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# Lesson Plans: Off to Fight

## Organization and purpose of these Lesson Plans

The purpose of these plans is to provide the teacher with background information to the book as well as ideas for pre-teaching and extension activities. Included is also a set of questions for each **Chapter** and a resources page with web sites and books listed. We will begin with a brief education behind the ideas in the book, recommendations for teaching with it, specific questions and finally ideas for further research.

## How does *Off to Fight* tie into Books One and Two of the Young Heroes of History Series?

First of all, let us remember **that all of the Young Heroes of History books are designed to be used either as stand alone books or as part of a ten volume family saga.** It is not necessary to purchase other books if a teacher only wants to focus on the issues in *Off to Fight*.

In Book One, *Send 'Em South*, we are introduced to David and George Adams. They are two young Irish boys who live in Boston at a time when the Irish were severely mistreated and abused by the people of Boston. Fortunately for David, his father married a relatively wealthy Abolitionist woman. This allowed the family to move out of the slums. The entire Irish family, including George and his father, were allowed to rent a house from David's grandfather even though he openly dislikes the Irish.

Years later, David's parents have left him in Boston to move to the dangerous Kansas territory. As avid abolitionists, they hope to help make the newly forming state slave free. While they are gone, David and George discover Lisa, a fugitive slave girl trying to escape the slave catchers who have come to find her. Although George does not really want to help, David brings him along in his attempt to help Lisa remain free. By the end of the book, David has apparently failed and Lisa is returned to the plantation in Georgia.

In Book Two, *On the Trail of John Brown's Body* we see the two cousins, David and George desperately trying to remain best friends despite the split that is going on in their family and in the country over the slavery issue. Unfortunately for them both, David's father and grandfather are deeply involved in a secret plot with the mysterious John Brown. When David unwittingly steals money from his grandfather and runs away to Kansas, he sets in motion a series of events that will imperil the entire family.

David's grandfather sends George after David. Then he hires a mysterious stranger to follow them. Throughout George's travels and even in Kansas, this stranger becomes a constant threat. Once in Kansas, the boys experience first hand the danger and violence of "Bleeding Kansas." To make matters worse David's mother is ill and his father keeps disappearing for days at a time. The only time things seem normal is when David, George, their new friend Charles and their fathers play a friendly game of baseball.

When the mystery finally begins to make itself known, things only get worse. David's father is involved with John Brown and has gone off to Harper's Ferry to end slavery forever! Only George and David can stop him but they don't know whether they should! George ends up kidnapped by Brown's men and it looks like he might even die when Brown attacks the town and makes George and other citizens his hostages!

## ***What is Off to Fight about?***

*Off to Fight* is about growing up and belonging. George Adams, a 13 year old Irish Bostonian has moved to Virginia. He and his father have made the state their home after the John Brown raid made them fear and despise the extremes of the abolitionist movement.

George's priorities however are simply to be a 13 year old boy, have fun and hang out with the guys. He finds that the only way he can make friends in Richmond, Virginia is to join a gang. Things go well for George and his new found friends until the state of Virginia secedes from the Union and calls for volunteers.

Hoping to join his older friends, George joins up as a drummer boy and is eventually promoted. Unfortunately, war is not the fun adventure George thought it would be. When the Federals attack Fredericksburg and destroy the town George sees firsthand the devastation of war.

A young girl living in Fredericksburg becomes victim to the Union bombardment as her house is destroyed and her parents killed. Hiding in the woods, trying to survive, Allison is discovered by George and eventually learns to trust him. The only problem is that George is a soldier and he must go off to fight and leave Allison all alone!

## ***What are the Objectives of Off to Fight?***

- To provide background information on the Civil War as part of the everyday descriptions.
- To introduce major characters and places such as Richmond and Fredericksburg, Virginia; Colonel Robert E. Lee, and Abraham Lincoln and portray them as they appeared to the people of the times.
- To portray the horror of war as seen through the eyes of civilians.
- To portray the Southern view of the war as seen through its soldiers and civilians.
- To portray the time period through the eyes of the people who lived it.
- To portray the events in a non-biased way in order to allow the reader to evaluate and judge.
- To describe the issues of the times in contemporary terms.
- To include the everyday concerns of people of the time period in order to put the larger issues into perspective.
- To portray the individuals as people similar to ourselves that the reader can relate to.
- To instill an appreciation of history.
- To provide the reader with questions and issues for debate and discussion.

## ***What are the Critical Issues presented in Off to Fight?***

Most people, teenagers especially, view war as a battle between armies. While most of us today recognize the death and carnage that war brings, we still find it hard to learn and understand how the people in the countryside are effected. This is certainly true of the South during the Civil War. In reading this book, students will see what happens to the town of Fredericksburg and its inhabitants through the eyes of a young girl.

The main issue that can be discussed in classrooms is the issue of who are the legitimate targets in a war. Is it alright to attack towns? Are there innocent civilians in a war? Who can and cannot be considered an enemy in a war? What truly does war mean? All of these complex decisions can be discussed even at younger levels.

## Who is the target audience for *Off to Fight*?

The quick answer to this question is middle level readers, usually around the age of 11-15. However, understanding the uniqueness of individuals, there are of course many ways to adapt the reading level for different needs. The book is appropriate for younger readers who read above level or have an interest in the civil war or history. Finally, it can also be used with younger learners in a group reading where an adult is present. The book may also be used by older students and indeed has been used in grades as high as 11.

## What are the important vocabulary and concepts that a reader should be aware of?

The answer to this question of course depends on to what degree the teacher wants to cover material. A basic understanding of the causes of the war is a good starting point. Expanding this to discuss how the war progressed and definition of secession is the next logical area to discuss. At minimum, students should be aware of the following:

Secession: The act of leaving a group. In this case, the declarations of Independence that the Southern States declare when leaving the United States of America.

The Confederacy: The term used to describe the group of states that secede and form a new government based upon a confederation style as seen in the original Articles of Confederation.

Union: Term used to apply to the Northern government; the United States of America.

Abolitionism: The idea and active desire to end slavery.

The Election of 1860: The Presidential election that brought Abraham Lincoln into office and caused 7 Southern States to instantly secede.

## Suggested pre-activities:

**\*\*Special Note: Much of the information needed to cover these topics can be found on the various web sites listed at the end of these plans.**

Discuss the history of slavery and its conditions.

Study the rights of slave owners in the South

Examine the expansion of Slavery by looking at the various compromises: 3/5; Missouri; 1850.

Review and/or debate the Dred Scott case.

Examine the Geography of the United States at the time. Identify Southern and Northern states as well as the territories.

Review the election of 1860. What states voted for Lincoln?

Read the reasons for secession given by Southern States in their declarations of Independence.

Review the early battles of the war such as Bull Run, the Peninsula Campaign and Antietam.

Discuss the advantages that each side had in the war; The North: more men, a navy, industry, railroads. The South: more experienced Generals, the home front, defensive.

## Specific Questions for *Off to Fight*:

These questions are designed to be used by many levels of students. They are broken down in to simple recall and understanding, in-depth and critical thinking questions, and extension/discussion questions. Feel free to use whatever questions meet the needs of the age group you are using.

### CHAPTER 1

#### Recall:

1. What was the name of George's gang?
2. What did George have to do to join the gang?
3. What gang's territory were they going to visit?
4. Why did George want to get ice cream?
5. What did the young boy from the candy store do when he left?
6. What money did George use to pay for the candy?

#### Critical Thinking:

1. Why did George feel the need to join a gang?
2. Why didn't George want to tell the boys he grew up in Boston?

#### Discussion:

1. Why do boys join gangs? What is good about them? What is bad?

#### Research:

1. What kind of candy and ice cream did they have in the United States in the 1800's?

### CHAPTER 2

#### Recall:

1. Who is Sallie?
2. What was George's punishment?
3. What is the Convention doing?
4. List the different opinions the boys have about Lincoln and the North.

#### Understanding:

1. Why does Bobby want to egg the Convention?
2. Why did Kevin help the gang get away?

### CHAPTER 3

#### Recall :

1. What does George think of his step-mother?
2. Who are Martha and Jerry?
3. What is the reaction of the Richmond citizens to the fall of Fort Sumter?
4. What did George say that hurt his father so?

#### Critical Thinking:

1. Why won't Sean go to war?

#### In Depth:

1. What does Sean mean when he says that they must do what is best for Virginia and not follow others?

## CHAPTER 4

### Recall:

1. How did the Richmond citizens react to the call for secession?
2. How old do you need to be to sign up? How will the boys do it then?
3. Why is Jason signing up?

### In Depth:

1. What reasons might boys and men in Virginia have for going off to war?

## CHAPTER 5

### Recall:

1. Who is John Webb?
2. Who is Charles Webb?
3. What is Sallie's reaction to George's decision to sign up?

### Critical Thinking:

1. Why doesn't Charles Webb set his family free?
2. What reason does George give to John for Virginia's secession?
3. Why does John think the country is at war? Explain in detail what he means.

### Research:

1. Investigate the life of Free Blacks in the south. What kind of restrictions were put on them?

## CHAPTER 6

### Recall:

1. Who sent George the package?
2. What was in it?
3. What does Sallie say is happening to Richmond?
4. How will George share the food with his friends?
5. Who will be George's new division commander?

### EXTENSION:

1. Write a letter to a soldier at the front. Include a list of what you might send them.

## CHAPTER 7

### Recall:

1. What made Peter join the army?
2. Finish the phrase, "Rich man's war, \_\_\_\_\_."
3. What prank did the boys pull on the sergeant?

### Critical Thinking:

1. Why are all of George's friends in his company?
2. If Peter didn't want to fight, how could he have avoided it?
3. What does the phrase in #2 "RECALL" mean?

## **RESEARCH / EXTENSION:**

Using the internet:

1. Find out what regiments and/or companies in your home town were involved in the war. What were the men's names? What happened to them?

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Recall:**

1. Where does Allison live?
2. What army or armies are nearby?
3. What is happening to the town?
4. What happened to Allison's mother?

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **Recall:**

1. Where did Allison's daddy go?
2. What happened to him?
3. What were the Union soldiers doing in the town?

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **Recall:**

1. Where was George and the army camping?
2. Where were the Federals camping before the battle began?
3. Describe what happened to the Federals trying to attack George?

### **Critical Thinking:**

1. Why did the Federal's shoot cannons at the city?
2. Why was the position at Marye's Heights so good?

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **Recall:**

1. What is bothering George about his role in the battle?
2. Who was Sgt. Richard Kirkland?

### **Critical Thinking:**

1. Why do you think Kirkland did what he did?
2. Who did George and his friends help?

### **Discussion:**

1. Is George a murderer? Are soldiers in general murderers? Defend your answer.
2. How should enemy wounded be treated? Explain.

## CHAPTER 12

### Recall:

1. What was the Emancipation Proclamation?
2. Who was attacking who in the snowball fight?
3. What happened to Eric?
4. How did George try to save him?
5. What did he find in the woods?

### Critical Thinking:

1. Why do George's friends claim the Emancipation Proclamation is useless?

## CHAPTER 13

### Recall:

1. What happened to Allison's ear?
2. What else is wrong with her?
3. Who is chosen to look after Allison and why?

### Critical Thinking:

1. Why do you think Allison isn't talking?

## CHAPTER 14

### Recall:

1. Where is George taking Allison?
2. How does George cheer her up?
3. Describe the place George takes Allison.

### EXTENSION:

1. Research refugees from other wars or conduct a news search on the many refugees around the world today.

## CHAPTER 15

### Recall:

1. What news did George miss?
2. How did George describe the refugee station to Eric?
3. Who surprises George and Eric?
4. What does George plan to do with her?

## CHAPTER 16

### Recall:

1. How did they get to Richmond and why was it so difficult?
2. How had Richmond changed?
3. What is wrong with Allison?

## CHAPTER 17

### Recall:

1. Why is John there?



## CHAPTER 18

### Recall:

1. What is the real reason John has spent time at George's house?
2. Why was the Emancipation Proclamation important to John?
3. Why does George have to leave?
4. Who does he ask to take care of Allison?
5. What did Allison suddenly do?

## CHAPTER 19

### Recall:

1. How has George changed?
2. What do you think he has learned?

### Summary:

1. What did George learn about himself and about warfare?
2. Is Allison an innocent victim in this war? Why or why not?
3. What kind of a soldier do you expect George to be now?
4. How do you think the south will continue its fight against the North? For example do you think they will continue and play the defensive, waiting for the North to strike or will they go out on their own? What are the advantages and disadvantages to the different options.

## Suggested Post Activities:

\*Define war. Discuss the different aspects of it.

\*Lecture and/or conduct research on other wars that saw large numbers of civilian deaths. Trace how war targets changed from the professional wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the all out wars of today. (It is even possible to make an analogy to the atomic bomb dropping on Hiroshima.)

\*Debate whether civilians are legitimate targets in war.

\*Research the origins of the civil war. Debate whether it could have been avoided.

\*Research the battle of Fredericksburg. Why was it fought and what implications did it have?

\*Use the enclosed primary source document *The Diary of Horatio Nelson Taft* to analyze how Northern attitudes towards the start of war evolved. As a diary entry is a great tool to see how the day by day attitudes changed.

## **For more ideas or background information, consult the following web-sites:**

United States Civil War Center  
<http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/cwc/civlink.htm>

\*\*Journals of the Confederate Congress. Primary source giving the reasons for secession and organization for the new Confederate Government.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwcc.html>

Home Page of the National Park Service at the Battle of Fredericksburg  
<http://www.nps.gov/frsp/fburg.htm>

Literature of the Civil War Lesson Plans  
<http://7-12educators.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.yale.edu%2Fynhti%2Fcurriculum%2Funits%2F1997%2F2%2F97.02.02.x.html>

Lesson Plans on the Civil War itself  
<http://7-12educators.miningco.com/cs/historycwlessons/index.htm>

Lessons plans and info on slavery and black history  
<http://7-12educators.miningco.com/cs/slavery/index.htm>

Remembering Slavery Voices and text of slaves  
<http://www.uncg.edu/~jpbrewer/remember/>

American Civil War Timeline  
<http://www.americancivilwar.com/tl/timeline.html>

Fredericksburg Order of Battle, Army of Northern Virginia  
<http://civilwarhome.com/anvfredericksburg.htm>, 9/13/99.

The Longstreet Chronicles  
[http://www.chickasaw.com/~rainbow/m\\_sdoc31.htm](http://www.chickasaw.com/~rainbow/m_sdoc31.htm), 12/6/99.

Marye's Heights  
<http://www.civilwar.org/maryes.htm>: The Civil War Trust, 1999.

Richmond's History  
<http://saturn.vcu.edu/~mebell/richmond/index.html>, 10/28/99.

Longstreet, Lieut. General James. *Battle of Fredericksburg Virginia. Report of Lieut. Gen. James Longstreet*,  
<Http://www.civilwarhome.com/longfredericksburg.htm>, 9/13/99.

## **Or, consult these sources used in the research of *Off to Fight***

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- Stevens, Joseph E. *1863 The Rebirth of a Nation* New York: Bantam Books, 1999.
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- Wallace, Lee A. *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations 1861-1865* Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, 1986.

## Primary Source Document: The Diary of Horatio Nelson Taft

The Diary of Horatio Nelson Taft is housed in the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress. Mrs. Willoughby Davis, a Taft descendant, donated the diary's three volumes as a gift to the Library in 2000. The diary documents Taft's life in Washington, D. C., where he worked as an examiner in the U.S. Patent Office. It is especially significant because of his connection to the Abraham Lincoln family and because of his descriptions of daily life in Washington during the Civil War. Its contents provide details about Taft's family life and various events in Washington, including descriptions of the arrival and quartering of regiments, hospitals, and the daily news reports (sometimes inaccurate) of battles.

Below is a selection of his entries chosen by the author. They are designed to be used to help the student understand how the early days of the war began and to provide a Northern perspective. Special attention should be paid to how the attitudes towards the development of war change over time. The full diary can be found at

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/tafhtml/tafthome.html>

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1861.

Another wet misty day. Splashy sidewalks and muddy crossings. Letter from Frank today through Chas dated Fort Kearney, N.T., attached to the U.S. Army acting as comdt clerk, well & healthy. The "**Secession** fever" seems to me to be rather subsiding. The "**Secession**" Clerks in the Census Bureau were notified today that they could resign, otherwise they would be dismissed. The same thing should be done in all the Departments of the Govt. Went to the Assemblys church tonight to hear Mr. Collins Lecture on Japan, but the Lecture was on So. America. It was not uninteresting. There was also a Lecture at the "Smithsonian" on the Polarization of light, but it is too far off and the walking was too bad for wife.

### THURSDAY 17 January

There has been no startling News today, but the right of **Secession** is contested by all northern men who with the president consider it Revolution. I have not hesitated to call it Treason. I was at Willards this evening. People generally are less excited than they were a week ago, and since the Cabinet has been purged of Secessionists and the President has taken a stand for the Union and the Constitution we all feel much better. It is now thought that "**secession**" will be at a discount soon even in the South. Became acquainted with Mr Fitman (Sigma), Mr Cluskey &c.

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1861.

The fact there exists an extensive conspiracy to break up the Government, one of long standing, is growing more apparent every day. The **Secession** of Virginia and Maryland is a part of the program and the securing of this City accomplishes the desired end. Nothing but concessions on the part of the north will prevent the **secession** of those States. If no compromise is made, then nothing but a large force will ensure the Inauguration of Mr Lincoln on the 4th March. The next month must settle a great question for this country.

### TUESDAY 29 January 1861

There are indications today that the Republicans are "coming down" from the Chicago Platform and that something like the Crittenden proposition will be accepted by them. **Secession** seems to be now a fixed fact and we have to look Disunion in the face, while a subversion of the Government is threatened. This City is still considered in danger. There is a thousand U.S. Soldiers now quartered here. An armed guard now tramps through the Halls of the Patent Office every night and the other Public Buildings are guarded in the same way. Warm & pleasant today.

## **TUESDAY 5 February**

The Unionists carried the State Virginia yesterday by a large majority and everyone has felt better today. I think the Secession Movement has reached its climax and a re-action will now take place, but perhaps the wish is Father to the thought. The Chief Engineer of U.S. Navy was with me an hour or two today in the office, had long conversation upon Steam and Steam Engines. He is a knowing man. Bot H N Jr suit of clothes tonight. Was in at Willards and saw numerous friends and almost innumerable strangers. Weather pleasant.

## **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1861.**

This has been a peculiar day as regards the weather. Sunshine and rain alternating all day with high wind and threatening Cloud occasionally. No particular news. The Peace convention will not I fear amount to much in the end. As it regards the question of Slavery, I think, it & Congress may agree upon terms of settlement. But as regards what the south Claims viz the right of Secession the north will never agree with the south. Hon M Butterfield M.C. from NY, wife & daughter, Doct Everitt, wife & Brother, spent the evening with us. All very pleasant. Bed 11 1/2 o'clock.

## **TUESDAY 12 March**

Fine day and quite warm tonight. The streets are quite dry. The City is quite full of strangers yet mostly office seekers I suppose. Not many removals have as yet been made in any of the Deptts. It is understood that Fort Sumpter is to be evacuated. It may be policy to do so if it is not a matter of Necessity. Went with C R to Georgetown after dinner. Visited the Aqueduct Bridge, the High Resivoir, and the Oak Hill Cemetery. Went with Julia this evening to the National to see one of her friends and from there to Willards to meet Bro. C. R. & all came home.

## **TUESDAY 19 March**

Another cold day. M. 19 early this morning, but the sun took the snow off before night. There does not seem to be any news in particular afloat but Warlike rumors are in the secession papers. The Cabinet does not seem to be a unit upon all questions and it may not hold together long. Sent packages of seeds from the Agrict Room to both the Editors at Lyons, Tinsley & Van Camp. Went down to the Ave with Juliet. Called upon Miss Douglas on H Street. She commences school with Miss D. tomorrow. 11 o'clock.

## **THURSDAY 21 March**

It has been a cold windy day. It snowed some last night, and we are now having about as much Winter as we have had. The indications are now that Fort Sumpter will be evacuated and perhaps the other Forts in the seceded states, and that there will be no War. But in my opinion a peaceable separation will ultimately be brought about (probably with all the Slave States) and two confederacys be formed. Went with Julia (after calling on our neighbor Mr Douglass with my wife) to the Raven Club at Prof Whitakers, heard Doct Chesney discuss the Character of Queen Elizabeth.

## **WEDNESDAY 27 March**

A rainy morning, but pleasant by noon. It rained nearly all last night. We have at last got a Comr of Patents. Mr Holloway of I.A. was confirmed by the Senate today. Went down to the Hotels this evening. Strange and anxious faces yet crowd them. Called at the "National" upon Judge Ira Harris NY Senator. Had a pleasant "call," conversed upon various subjects. He thinks the Secession Movement will die out if it is let alone. Got the NY "Times" and came home 1/2 past 9 & read it. Got letter today from Prest Cowles of Elmira Female College. Clock has just struck 11.

## **FRIDAY 12 April**

It has been rainy the latter part of the day and rains hard tonight. Went with Juliet and the boys to see the soldiers over to the Long Bridge. Nothing but the guard there. Visited the City Armory, a company of U.S. Artillery stationed there. The Military companies are now divided and stationed at various points all over the City. Treason is in our midst. One hardly knows whom to trust. But I speak my own sentiments freely as I have all the time and denounce "seceders" as Traitors. Went down to the Ave & got the NY papers. It is said today that Fort Sumpter has been provisioned without bloodshed.

### **SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1861.**

This has been the most exciting day yet. The last report about the provisioning Ft Sumpter was untrue and today or early this morning news came that the Rebels were bombarding it and tonight the report is that Maj Anderson has surrendered, it being on fire. The last report is not generally credited. Even if true, it is not astonishing. The Rebels have ten thousand men & nineteen Batteries. Anderson had 70 men only. I went on to the Ave after 3 o'clock, a great crowd round all the Printing or News paper offices. Everybody much excited, and all will soon be compelled to "show their hands," for or against the Union.

### **SUNDAY 14 April 1861**

A fine cool day. Went to church in the morning with all the children, wife staid at home and went in the afternoon. The excitement in the City increases all the time now the war has begun. But the reports from Charleston are mostly "bogus." Maj Anderson has probably not surrendered, but there is fighting there. I left Willards about 1/2 past 10 this evening, never saw a more excited crowd. It is said that Martial law will be proclaimed tomorrow morning, and that the Prest has made requisition upon the States for 75,000 men or Volunteers to defend the Government. Think of sending my family out of the City immediately.