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*Revolting New York: How 400 Years of Riot, Rebellion,
Uprising, and Revolution Shaped a City* ed. by Neil Smith, et
al. (review)

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own and control perceived valuable edge-lands drove outward what was once a city crowded on the southern end of Manhattan Island. Today these usually disparate parts remain tied mostly together by those earlier pathways that led people out of New York City to find “good air,” scenic vistas, and shoreline fun.

The author has found yet another enlightening approach to understanding the dynamics of the growth and development of New York City. The many shorelines and their changing usage over time did play an important role in how, when, and where New York City became what it is today. This volume is detailed and well researched, with extensive coverage of individual players, groups, economic and social forces for land-use change, and the explosive outward movements of urbanization away from the initial core of the city. It is well supported by many maps, diagrams, and panoramas of the areas being discussed, and it has an extensive and complex bibliography of primary and secondary resources. It is also clearly written and without writing and printing mistakes. It should be on the bookshelves of those interested in New York City, urban growth and development studies on the United States, and those who just want to read an interesting account of an important episode of America's past.

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Revolting New York: How 400 Years of Riot, Rebellion, Uprising, and Revolution Shaped a City. Neil Smith, Don Mitchell, Erin Siodmak, Jenjoy Roybal, Marnie Brady, and Brendan O'Malley, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018. Pp. vii+348, photographs, maps, notes. \$94.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8203-5281-7. \$29.95, paperback, ISBN 978-0-8203-5282-4.

As a native New Yorker who had worked in New York City, I began reading *Revolting New York* with great anticipation. I was not disappointed in this volume, which reads more like a saga about the persistence of New York's unique character despite all of its different areal permutations, immigrant groups, political factions, and global connections since its founding (as New Amsterdam) in 1624. As Colin Woodard explained in his *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cul-*

tures of North America (Viking Penguin, 2011), New York City (hereafter called the City) is “the most vibrant and powerful city on the continent, and one with a culture and identity unlike that of anyplace else in the United States” (65).

In *Revolting New York* the editors and authors have focused on the social geography of the City via a history of its riots, rebellions, uprisings, and revolutions. These spasms are so frequent that they are part of the City’s natural order, often taking the form of popular protests, but sometimes official suppression of unwanted behavior or, worse, official refusal to restrain mob violence against the “Other.” The book is divided into nineteen chapters, beginning with the 1655 revolt of the Munsee, loosely affiliated bands of Lenape, and ending with the Occupy Wall Street protest of 2011. Minor disturbances are covered in vignettes at the end of some chapters.

One of the goals of the editors is to link the violent events to changes in the landscape and the spatial arrangement of land uses in the City. Although this goal is not always realized, as most of the authors are not geographers but anthropologists, sociologists, and activists, there is plenty of grist to satisfy readers interested in the evolving geography of the City. For example, two parks in lower Manhattan—Tompkins Square and Union Square—were often staging grounds for mass protests that escalated into uprisings. The City’s officials responded by redeveloping the squares to make them less open to mass occupation and movement. The Astor Place Riot (1849) involved a working-class mob trying to burn down the Astor Place Opera House, a den of elitism. The mob was stopped by a militia shooting and killing twenty-two and wounding many more; the violence drove the upper class and their opera house northward to the Union Square area. Finally, the Tenderloin Race Riot (1900), in which police refused to stop white mobs attacking black citizens, drove many African Americans north to Harlem.

This volume makes clear that revolt usually has been tied to race, ethnicity, and class. Rioting associated mainly with race occurred in 1655 with the revolt of the Munsee against the colony of New Netherland, in 1741 with the “Great Negro Plot” when fires over several weeks led to white mobs rounding up hundreds of blacks (who made up 20 percent of the population) and hanging or burning at the stake dozens, and the Harlem riots of 1935, 1943, and 1964.

In the nineteenth century the emergence of the City as the industrial

and financial center of the nation's capitalist economy exacerbated class (as well as racial) tensions. By 1863, 1 percent of the population controlled 61 percent of the City's wealth. As the wealthy luxuriated in fine townhomes and decamped in the muggy summers to resorts, rampant inflation increasingly condemned the working class to shantytowns or even homelessness. Tensions were already high from the recruitment of southern blacks to fill factories and break strikes. As soon as the local draft boards drew names for the draft lottery, begun in 1863, riots erupted. The rioters burned the mansions of rich Republicans along Fifth Avenue and then surged west to torch the homes of blacks, beat and even hang blacks, and attack any establishment associated with racial mixing. Five regiments had to be dispatched to the City, and to restore order they fired into crowds with rifles and howitzers. Many blacks fled the City. This deadliest riot in US history had two major consequences: reformers set out to improve living conditions in the tenement districts, and white ethnic groups merged to form an expanded white identity.

In explicating the pre-World War II unrest in the City, the authors emphasize class struggle as a defining feature. The Harlem Riots of 1935, 1943, and 1964 are portrayed as primarily blacks' destruction and looting of white property as opposed to a clash of races.

Beginning with 1969, the rebellions discussed feature different marginalized identity groups—radicalized students, homosexuals, low-income neighbors under pressure from gentrification, and so on—rising up to challenge the status quo. The one exception covering this recent era is the chapter on the two-day blackout in July 1977 in which an acute breakdown in social norms was evidenced by arson, looting, and the largest mass arrest in the City's history. All five boroughs were affected, although the rioting was most widespread in poor districts such as Harlem and Brooklyn's Bushwick. There are plenty of reasons (high unemployment, service cuts, blighted neighborhoods, etc.) proffered in this reader to explain the mayhem, but I think the key underlying factor is what Charles Derber has identified as the growing gap between socially cultivated appetites via the American Dream Machine and the limited social opportunities available.

The book closes with an afterword by Don Mitchell titled "Early 2017" in which he argues that "it feels like a whole wild storm is about to break over the city" (301). It is undeniable that the restlessness has been

palpable since the presidential election of Donald J. Trump, a master of wilding.

I recommend this volume for anyone with an interest in New York City or, more generally, in the roles that ethnicity, race, class, and identity groups play in the evolution of a city. The well-illustrated book is very accessible to the lay reader, and much of its discussion suggests topics worthy of further research in urban social geography.

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