Notes

Introduction


2. I am following the method of the historian of riots George Rudé, who asks, What happened? What was the composition of the crowd? Who were the victims? “How effective were the forces of repression, or of law and order?” “What were the consequences of the event?” George F. E. Rudé, The Crowd in History: Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730–1848 (New York, 1964), pp. 10–11.


7. Historians argue whether class lines had hardened into definable categories in the eighteenth century. There was a clear demarcation between the rich (or patricians) and the more common folk (plebeians). A discernible middle class developed only in the 1840s or 1850s. See Stuart Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760–1900 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1989). However, a historian writing in 1856 saw no problem in distinguishing the eighteenth-century lower class. He used the term when discussing impressment: “The lower class were the especially aggrieved, because it was upon them the depredation was made.” Samuel Drake, History and Antiquities of Boston (Boston, 1856), p. 624.


10. The only example of a serious, complete history of American rioting is Paul Gilje's *Rioting in America*. Gilje characterizes four periods of rioting: 1. In the seventeenth century, disturbances were either minor ritualized affairs with little violence, or serious rebellions occurring in response to tumult in England (e.g., Bacon's Rebellion). 2. From the early eighteenth century until about 1820, rioting became even more ritualized, less violent, and a means of holding the community together against outside challenges, such as by "a market economy, by outsiders, and by violators of local morality." 3. This third phase, running from 1820 to 1940, was the most violent and brutal period of rioting. The increased violence, particularly to persons, was due to the breakdown of old community attachments based upon hierarchy and deference. The new democracy of the post-Revolutionary period meant greater individuality and intense competition. Americans formed new associational connections based upon race, ethnicity, class, and religion to combat this isolation. These new identifiable groups created a combative atmosphere among themselves, leading to major violence. 4. After 1940, more ritualized, less violent riots evolved, characterized by symbolic attacks upon property rather than upon persons. This was due to the greater extension of democratic practices, the rise in power of a national state and its ability to mediate problems and use force to control levels of violence, the end to immigration, the acceptance of strikes as legal vehicles for resolving economic conflicts, and the civil rights movement, which minimized the impact of racial division in the country.

11. For example, interpretations of eighteenth-century crowd actions vary considerably. One view is that rioting was "communal" in the sense of being about the preservation of lower-class privileges or "customary rights" in the face of uncaring or impotent governments. Riots were examples of lower classes bargaining with their rulers, particularly over economic issues. Defense of local custom implies that the crowd acted in a conservative manner. See, for example, Pauline Maier, "Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 27 (January 1970): 3-35; Gordon S. Wood, "A Note on Mobs in the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 23 (October 1966): 635-42; Bernard Bailyn, *Pamphlets of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), I, p. 582. Other scholars see the crowd acting to make known their "class" rights in the community and against upper-class oppression. This view interprets rioting from the vantage point of the class struggle, with emphasis on the political culture of the crowd. The argument is that these types of riots were radi-
cal events and necessary precursors for the coming of the American Revolution. See, for example, Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 25 (July 1968): 371–407; Hoerder, *Crowd Action in Revolutionary Massachusetts*; Marcus Rediker, "A Motley Crew of Rebels: Sailors, Slaves, and the Coming of the Revolution," in *The Transforming Hand of Revolution: Reconsidering the American Revolution as a Social Movement*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, Va., 1996), pp. 155–98; Alfred Young, "English Plebeian Culture and Eighteenth-Century Radicalism," in *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism*, ed. Margaret Jacob et al. (Boston, 1984), pp. 185–212. Other historians can straddle both fences. A pair of historians judge the Knowles impressment riot of 1747 in light of communal motivations, but make the case that the riot itself set Samuel Adams to thinking about revolutionary ideology (John Lax and William Pencak, "The Knowles Riot and the Crisis of the 1740s in Massachusetts," *Perspectives in American History* 10 [1976]: 163–214). As for the Revolution itself, contradictory interpretations abound. For example, some historians have long held that too much has been made about the importance of radical mobs, and that conservative gentry actually manipulated lower-class rioters. See Richard B. Morris, "Class Struggle and the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 19 (January 1962): 3–29; Lloyd I. Rudolph, "The Eighteenth-Century Mob in America and Europe," *American Quarterly* 11 (Winter 1959): 447–69. Another view is that Sam Adams did not control mobs or force others to agree on the need for revolution, and that he was a reluctant revolutionary (Pauline Maier, *The Old Revolutionaries: Political Lives in the Age of Samuel Adams* [New York, 1980]). Similar historical controversies over interpretation are part of the literature on direct action in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Scholarly debates such as these are noteworthy for their analysis of crowd motivation and their attempt to correlate them to larger historical events. However, the goal of this narrative differs from these approaches. The aim of this book is to familiarize the intelligent general reader with events that are largely unknown and to tell a good story in the process. The academic issues will be left for others.

Chapter 1


This article attempts to clarify whether a freehold was to be worth forty or fifty pounds.


Samuel Eliot Morison, Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860 (Boston, 1921), p. 23; Warden, Boston, p. 49; James Henretta, "Economic Development and Social Structure in Colonial Boston," p. 369. It is the thesis of this book that eighteenth-century rioting was in part a means of challenging the deference forced upon the populace by the elite. For a fuller discussion of deference and the historical controversy over this issue, see Chapter Two, on Pope Day riots.

The General Court was then made up of the House of Representatives, whose members selected candidates for the other chamber, the Council. Today, the state has a Senate and House of Representatives, both popularly elected.


Chapter 2


14. Ibid.


24. The three letters were all printed in the *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, April 14–21, 1737; *Boston Evening Post*, April 18, 1737; *Boston Gazette*, April 11–18, 1737.

25. Ibid.


37. In New York City Pope Day was an official sponsored holiday until 1748, when New Yorkers, “borrowing and building upon the Boston practice,” began parading and burning effigies on their own initiative. While such celebrations became an annual event, they do not appear to have been as violent as those in Boston. The historian of New York City’s riots suggests that besides blatant anti-Catholicism, Pope Day reveling was also “an implicit challenge to the social hierarchy.” Gilje, *Road to Mobocracy*, pp. 26, 28. On the issue of deference, see “Deference or Defiance in Eighteenth-Century America? A Round Table”; John Kirby, “Early American Politics—the Search for Ideology: An Historiographic Analysis and Critique of the Concept of Deference,” *Journal of Politics* 32 (November 1970): 808–38.


40. *Adams Almanac*, 1740 and 1746, in “Communication by Henry Winchester


45. Ibid., p. 277.


52. *Boston Evening Post*, November 11, 1745.


54. Ibid., p. 662; Forbes, *Paul Revere*, p. 94, no date given.

55. Douglass, *Summary*, I, n., p. 239.


60. Letter dated November 8, printed in the *Boston Evening Post*, November 11, 1745.


63. Ibid., November 13, 1769.


67. Warden, Boston, p. 168.


Chapter 3


6. Ibid., pp. 207-12, 215-16.


22. These events are described in the following: *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, November 21 and 28, 1745; *Boston Weekly Post Boy*, November 25, 1745; *Boston Evening Post*, November 25 and December 9, 1745.


24. *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, March 27, 1746; *Boston Evening Post*, March 24,


34. Ibid.


38. Ibid., p. 432.


45. Douglass, *Summary*, n. p. 238. Douglass called Knowles a “Maniac,” who was “laboriously indefatigable in running too and fro, and in expending of Paper; true Symptoms of Madness” (n., p. 236). Later, after being prodded by Shirley, Knowles sued


48. For the town meeting resolves and Shirley’s letter to his secretary, November 20, 1747, see Boston Weekly Post Boy, December 21, 1747.


Chapter 4


2. Of the total, sixty-one involved the issue of slavery and race. Quotation is from David Grimsted, American Mobbing, 1828–1861: Toward Civil War (New York, 1998), p. 4.


was to rob skilled craftsmen of whatever degree of independence they had once enjoyed” (Rowland Berthoff, *An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History* [New York, 1971], p. 195).


11. For a sampling of the spirited discussion of these issues, see “Political Engagement and Disengagement in Antebellum America: A Round Table,” *Journal of American History* 84 (December 1997): 855–909.


Grimsted, "Rioting in Its Jacksonian Setting," *American Historical Review* 77 (April 1972): 361–97; Joel T. Headley, *Pen and Pencil Sketches of the Great Riots* (New York, 1882), pp. 121–26. In his recent book on rioting, David Grimsted suggested that levels of violence differed between North and South. In the North there were more attacks against property than people, while in the South the rioting was particularly brutal, with many deaths (*American Mobbing*, p. 13).


23. Such norm enforcement riots were common. For example, between 1855 and 1859 there were twelve brothel riots in Detroit. These were lower-class houses with white prostitutes that catered to blacks. When disgruntled neighborhood residents received no satisfaction from authorities, they took matters into their own hands. John C. Schneider, *Detroit and the Problem of Order: A Geography of Crime, Riot and Policing* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1980), pp. 26–29.


34. Handlin, Boston's Immigrants, p. 186.


41. Lane, Policing the City, p. 32.


43. Complaint of Deputy Sheriff Daniel Parkman to Justice of the Peace Edward G. Prescott, October 21, 1835, quoted in Ames, “Communication Relating to the Garrison Mob,” pp. 343–44. In 1835, with a population of some 78,000, Boston had no regular police force, only sixty night watchmen and fifteen constables, whose main duty was issuing subpoenas; five constables could be called in by the mayor to assist in maintaining order.


47. *Boston Advocate*, October 23, 1835. The newspaper is referring to an anti-Catholic riot in which truckmen and assorted workers burnt down a Catholic convent. (See Chapter 5 for a discussion of this riot.)


62. Von Frank, Anthony Burns, p. 11.

63. Ibid., pp. 23–26.


65. Von Frank, Anthony Burns, p. 67.

66. Boston Evening Transcript, May 27, 1854. Reports vary as to the cause of Battchelder’s death, including a stab wound by a sword, and not a bullet. On the other hand, one of the abolitionist attackers, Martin Stowell, did fire a pistol during the melee, and he believed that he shot the marshal (Von Frank, Anthony Burns, p. 94).

67. Boston Evening Transcript, June 2, 1854.


70. New York Times, June 3, 1854; Boston Evening Transcript, June 2, 3, 1854; Von Frank, Anthony Burns, p. 206.


72. It is the contention of this book that Boston’s 1863 draft riot was not a racial affray. See Chapter 6 for an explanation.


75. Quoted in O'Connor, *Civil War Boston*, p. 45.

Chapter 5


22. New England Galaxy, August 16, 1834; Hampshire Gazette, August 20, 1834; Whitney, The Burning of the Convent, pp. 137–38; Brayley, Boston Fire Department, p. 189.


40. The circumstances of the Broad Street Riot are drawn from the following sources: Boston Daily Atlas, June 17, July 11, 1837; the Boston Morning Post, June 15, 16, 1837; Commercial Gazette, June 15, July 13, 17, 1837; Niles Register 52 (June 24, 1837): 266; Lord, Archdiocese, II, pp. 244–50; Brayley, Boston Fire Department, pp. 197–99.
41. Brayley, Boston Fire Department, p. 198.
42. Ibid., p. 200; Pease and Pease, Web of Progress, p. 157.

Chapter 6
1. New England Galaxy, August 16, 1834.
15. Bean, “Puritan versus Celt,” p. 82.

36. Lord, *Archdiocese*, III, pp. 64–68. A historian suggests there was at least one riot in 1871 between Yankees and British American immigrants against Catholic Irish. “That rivalry inflamed by differences in religion and in attitudes toward England, steadily generated tension and occasionally [sic], as in 1871, led to riots” (Handlin, *Boston’s Immigrants*, p. 220). This author could find no record of that riot.
41. For accounts of these events, see the *Globe* and *Herald* articles cited above. The *Boston Evening Transcript*, on July 5, 1895, denied that it was an Orange-Catholic conflict. See also O’Connor, *Boston Irish*, pp. 153–56; Lord, *Archdiocese*, III, pp. 147–55.

**Chapter 7**

4. Ibid., June 28, 1912.
6. The major sources on this riot are the Boston newspapers, the *Boston Globe*, *Herald*, and *Evening Transcript*, July 2–4, 1917.

7. The order of the parade was as follows: Central Branch Socialist Party, Lettish Branch, Young People’s Socialist League, Estonian Branch, Malden and Grove Hall Branches, Boston and Roxbury Jewish Branches, Mother’s League, Boston IWW, Italian Branch, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, United Hebrew Trades, Cutters Local 73, Labor League 20, Chelsea organizations, and the Lithuanians of Boston.

8. All three quotes are from the *Boston Herald*, July 2, 1917.


10. Ibid.


12. Ibid.


14. Ibid.


22. The notion that Curley formulated a policy of class conflict for political gain is not a new interpretation. But it has been redefined by James J. Connolly, *The Triumph of Ethnic Progressivism: Urban Political Culture in Boston, 1900–1925* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998). See pp. 133–60. Connolly suggests that Yankees and ethnics were both users of Progressive rhetoric and discourse, the former attacking corruption and bossism and the latter emphasizing activist governmental intervention to promote improvements for the lower classes.


25. Ibid., p. 139.


28. Curtis was dubbed "an uncompromising martinet" with "no great affection for the Boston Irish," and with "skepticism about the capacity for democracy for self-government" and "lacking the forbearance necessary for effective political action in twentieth-century America." A more lenient view is that he was "credulous" but "eminently fair-minded"; however, a "less obstinate man might have saved money and bloodshed." (Russell, A City in Terror, p. 43; William Allen White, A Puritan in Babylon: The Story of Calvin Coolidge [New York, 1938], pp. 151–52; Koss, "The Boston Police Strike," p. 43; Claude M. Fuess, Calvin Coolidge: The Man from Vermont [Boston, 1940], pp. 204, 218.)


33. See all three papers for September 8, 1919.


42. Boston Globe, September 10, 1919.

43. Boston Evening Transcript, September 10, 1919.


47. Boston Evening Transcript, September 10, 1919.


49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. This is the view of Russell, City in Terror, pp. 173–74.


55. *Boston Evening Transcript*, September 11, 1919.

56. Ibid.


Chapter 8


2. Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians*, p. 201.


5. This dismal story is recounted in Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon, *The Death of an American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions* (New York, 1992).


12. Ibid.


Chapter 9


8. The stark realities of Boston’s poor black schools were portrayed in the prize-winning book of a young teacher (Jonathan Kozol, *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools* [Boston, 1970, 1985]).


10. J. Anthony Lukas, “All in the Family: The Dilemmas of Busing and the Con-


24. Ibid., p. 270.


26. Ibid.

27. Lupo, Liberty’s Chosen Home, p. 276.


33. Boston Phoenix, October 15, 1974; Boston Globe, October 8, 1974; Boston Herald American, October 8, 1974.


42. Boston Globe, "Busing Retrospective."

Chapter 10
3. Ibid., p. 134.
17. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
33. Winegar is quoted in Malloy, Southie Won’t Go, p. 268.
41. Malloy, Southie Won’t Go, pp. 86, 89, 272.
47. Sheehan, The Boston School Integration Dispute, p. 73.

Chapter 11
3. Suzanne Desan’s characterization of European crowds of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is in Desan, “Crowds, Community, and Ritual in the Work of E. P.

