

THE BOSTON DRAFT RIOT

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DURING THE THIRD WEEK of July 1863, as mobs of draft rioters roamed the streets of New York City, another potentially disastrous confrontation was brewing 250 miles to the north, in Boston. This affair had a less tragic conclusion, perhaps explaining why historians have devoted less attention to it. In Boston, quick, decisive action by city and state authorities, coupled with prompt cooperation from the Catholic community, kept loss of life and destruction of property to a minimum. Likewise a further examination of the Boston riot uncovers other significant differences between the two disturbances.

Just as in New York City, the Irish had a prominent part in the Boston riot. With a total population in 1863 of about 182,000, the city's Irish numbered well over fifty thousand,¹ and the North End, where the riot occurred, was one of the two largest Irish enclaves.

Since coming to the North End in great numbers beginning in the late 1840s, the Irish had lived in a state of poverty and degradation that shocked most Bostonians. Packed into squalid tenements that lined dark and filthy streets, they attempted to scrape out a meager existence as dock hands, construction laborers, or domestic servants. Their poverty, with its attendant crime, disease, and idleness, placed a heavy and unwelcome burden on the city's resources.²

Yet the Boston Irish were proud of the part they had played in defending the Union. The state contributed two entire Irish regiments, and in

¹ City of Boston, *Report by the Registrar of Births, Marriages, and Deaths in the City of Boston for the Year 1862*, City Document No. 34, p. 13; Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Abstract of the Census of Massachusetts 1860, from the Eighth U.S. Census with Remarks on the Same* (Boston: Wright & Potter, State Printers, 1863), table 4, 124. In 1860 the Irish population of Suffolk County was 48,095.

² For example, in Ward One in the North End, the City of Boston spent nine times more money for the relief of foreigners than for natives. In neighboring Ward Three, the amount was six times greater. City of Boston, *Report of the Committee on the Communication of the Overseers of the Poor, 1863*, City Document No. 55, p. 10; see also Paula Todisco, *Boston's First Neighborhood: The North End* (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1976), 19-27.

both—the 9th and 28th Massachusetts Volunteers—North Enders were heavily represented. Additionally, Company E of the 19th Massachusetts Regiment, previously known as Mahoney's Guards, was composed mainly of Irishmen, and here too there was a large contingent of Bostonians.

The tragedy of war found its way quickly to the North End because all three of the Irish outfits suffered heavily throughout 1862 and 1863. On the Peninsula, the 9th Regiment suffered more than two hundred casualties. Similarly the 28th, which had seen almost one-quarter of its members fall at Antietam, was transferred to the famed Irish Brigade and arrived just in time to be slaughtered at Fredericksburg, where almost 40 percent of the regiment were killed or wounded. Finally, Mahoney's Guards, after valiant action and heavy losses on the Peninsula and at Antietam and Fredericksburg, had joined the rest of the 19th Massachusetts in helping to repulse Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, where the regiment saw more than half its members killed or wounded.³

Despite their gallantry on the battlefield, the Boston Irish had immediately opposed the Enrollment Act of March 1863. Army enlistments were declining, they contended, because of Lincoln's "absurd" Emancipation Proclamation, further unfortunate proof of Republican "nigger on the brain" disease. They saw the draft law as "downright Caesarism," a punitive measure directed at the foreign-born. The Irish, unable to pay the commutation fee or hire substitutes, would be called upon to give their lives in support of a policy that they wholeheartedly opposed.⁴ Thus political alienation and smoldering anger, when added to poverty and despair, made the teeming streets of the North End ripe for civil disorder.

The Boston riot took place on July 14, 1863, a week after the commencement of the draft in the city. The trouble began at about midday, when David Howe, a special officer employed to serve conscription notices, entered a building on Prince Street in the North End. In the course of performing his duty he became involved in an argument with an Irish woman who lived upstairs. The subject of the dispute has been lost to history, but Howe and the woman continued their squabble until she slapped him across the face. Perhaps the tragedy that followed could have been avoided entirely if Howe had prudently withdrawn at this

³ William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War* (Albany, N.Y.: Albany Publishing Co., 1889), 157, 169, 163; Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1951), 116-18, 121-22.

⁴ *The Pilot*, Mar. 28, Apr. 4, May 23, 1863. Ironically, very few Bay State men were drafted. The names of 41,582 men were drawn, but because some fled and others were exempted, only 9,295 were held to service. Of this number, fully 90 percent either paid the commutation fee or hired substitutes. The total number of men drafted in Massachusetts was 912. Eugene C. Murdock, *One Million Men: The Civil War Draft in the North* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971), 353.

time. Instead of ending the confrontation, however, he announced that he would have the woman arrested. She responded with shrieks and curses that carried through the neighborhood.

Recognizing the danger in which he had placed himself, Howe decided to retire. But it was too late, for as he retreated from the building he was met on the sidewalk by a crowd of about twenty-five persons, including many women and boys, who assaulted him. Meanwhile, the woman, still screaming, attracted the attention of several Irish laborers across the street at the Gas Company Works, and they arrived just as Howe was being hustled into a nearby shop by a police officer named Wilkins.

The two men had taken refuge in a drugstore at the corner of Prince and Causeway Streets, where they stayed for a few minutes until Officer Wilkins deemed it safe for Howe to leave. This was a mistake, for as soon as they emerged from the store they were greeted by a much larger crowd, which, after separating Howe from his police escort, severely beat him. The draft marshal's life was saved by a German immigrant family who took him into their Causeway Street home and called a doctor.⁵

An alarm of riot spread quickly through the North End, and this brought hundreds of persons into the streets. Several police officers were dispatched to the scene from the District One station house a few blocks away, and upon arrival they were confronted by an angry mob of two hundred or more throwing bricks and bottles. At least three policemen were seriously injured, and several others suffered cuts and bruises. Officer Ostrander later testified that someone in the crowd knocked him down, and as he tried to rise at least a dozen rioters pounced on him with a shower of kicks and punches. The policeman said that he barely managed to crawl home, pursued by women and children who pelted him while screaming, "Kill the damned Yankee son-of-a-bitch!"⁶

After overpowering the police, the mob, which, according to the reporter for the *Boston Journal*, was "composed largely of boys and a good number of Irish women," made a dash for Haymarket Square, about four blocks from the scene of the Howe incident. "An Irishwoman was conspicuous in the crowd on Haymarket Square," continued the *Journal's* report, "showing a photograph of her boy who she said was killed in battle, and praying that 'Yankees, Irishmen and Dutchmen might all be killed.'" ⁷ One ironic feature of the Boston riot, and one which it shared with the disturbance in New York City, was the widespread participation of women and children.

⁵ *Boston Journal*, July 15, 1863; *Boston Daily Courier*, July 15, 1863.

⁶ *Boston Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 17, 1863.

⁷ *Journal*, July 15, 1863.

The mob remained in the Square for only a short time before rushing to the District One police station. Apparently many in the crowd believed that the woman who had assaulted Howe had actually been arrested and taken there. At about two o'clock the reporter for William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* said that the rioters numbered about five hundred.⁸

Although the protestors milled about the police station for the remainder of the afternoon, the violence was temporarily spent. At one point two officers who left the building were followed a short distance by a group of about two hundred persons, the majority of whom, according to the *Boston Journal*, "were boys, some shouting exclamations designed to keep the melee going."⁹ Nevertheless, as late afternoon approached, the crowd around the station house diminished in size, causing some to hope that the trouble was over.

The violence came as no surprise to police chief John W. Kurtz, who later reported that rumors of trouble had been abroad in the city since news of the New York riot reached Boston two days earlier. When a messenger brought word of the fighting then raging in the North End, Kurtz was huddled with Mayor Frederick W. Lincoln making contingency plans for just such an event. All of Boston's 330 policemen were immediately summoned for duty and posted at strategic locations.

Likewise, Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew was called back to the city from his ceremonial duties at the Harvard commencement. He quickly issued orders to Adjutant General William Schouler to call out the militia, including four companies of infantry, a company of light dragoons, and another of light artillery. In addition, from Fort Independence in Boston Harbor came a detachment of heavy artillery, which arrived at Commercial Wharf shortly after 6:00 P.M. Finally, at least six independent military organizations, usually referred to as home guards, reported for duty. They, along with other arriving military personnel, were posted at key points throughout the Boston area.¹⁰ While the troops on duty in the city numbered no more than a few hundred during the most dangerous hours,¹¹ their quick deployment to highly visible locations was the single most essential element in preventing a repeat of the carnage then taking place in New York City.

Earlier in the afternoon, shortly after news of the riot reached authorities, the members of the Eleventh Battery Light Artillery, a militia

⁸ *The Liberator*, July 17, 1863.

⁹ *Journal*, July 15, 1863.

¹⁰ Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Annual Report of the Adjutant General, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. . . for the Year Ending December 31, 1863* (Boston: Wright & Potter, State Printers, 1864), 22.

¹¹ H. J. Pearson, *The Life of John A. Andrew* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1904), vol. 2, 133.

unit commanded by Captain E. J. Jones, were ordered to report to their armory, located at the corner of Cooper and North Margin Streets in the North End, about two blocks from Haymarket Square. This building was later said to have contained the only two cannon in Boston at this time, so it was important that the location be secured. The militiamen arrived individually throughout the afternoon, and since the trouble was centered some distance away they were admitted to the building without incident.

By six o'clock, however, the tenor of the disturbance had become more political. Young rowdies were seen entering the North End in twos and threes, like moths toward a flame, and a rumor was circulating that an attempt would be made to seize the Cooper Street armory. Acting to counter this threat, officials ordered Major Stephen Cabot, commanding the First Battery Massachusetts Volunteer Heavy Artillery, recently arrived from Fort Independence, to reinforce Captain Jones and his militia.

As Major Cabot and two companies of soldiers, numbering about one hundred men, approached the armory it was close to seven o'clock in the evening. Cabot later remembered that "before we reached Cooper Street there was a crowd of children, and some women with them, who pelted the men somewhat with rotten apples, bits of crockery and small stones." Patrick Gould, who lived next door to the armory, numbered the crowd at about 150, and noted that there were not many men among the group, which, he said, "was composed mostly of women and children." He also noted, however, that the crowd was quickly increasing in size.¹² Nevertheless, the soldiers passed into the building without further trouble.

Almost as soon as Major Cabot and his men entered the armory the windows began to smash around them. Several witnesses later stated that they saw small children throwing stones at the building. William Currier, a police officer, remembered that the objects were being thrown by "small boys," and another spectator, George Talbot, testified that he saw a crowd of youngsters firing stones and bricks at a large circular window over the armory door. Some of the children, said Talbot, were so small that they could not reach the object at which they were aiming.

The same scene presented itself to Bernard Carr, the fourteen-year-old employee of a local provision dealer, who watched from across the street. "Some of the children were as large as me," said the youth, "and the rest were smaller."¹³

¹² Major Cabot's testimony, given at the trial of one of the rioters, is found in the *Journal*, Dec. 16, 1863; Patrick Gould's statement was reported in the *Journal* on July 23, 1863.

¹³ The statements of Currier and Talbot are found in *The Boston Riot, July 14, 1863*:

In the minutes just before 7:30 the mob in front of the armory swelled to between five hundred and one thousand persons,¹⁴ including hundreds of young ruffians shouting insults and pro-Confederate slogans at the soldiers. At one point Major Cabot and Captain Jones left the building and warned the crowd to disperse. They were met by a hail of stones and curses that drove them back inside.

Shortly thereafter word reached the armory that a man was being beaten at the corner of Cooper and Blackstone Streets, a short distance away. Cabot sent two detachments of soldiers to rescue the victim, who turned out to be a Lieutenant Sawin of the Eleventh Battery, trying to report for duty. The *Daily Advertiser* reported the next day that the soldier had been badly beaten and had been "actually trampled upon by women, a large number of whom was [sic] in the crowd, and added to its fury by their demoniac yells."¹⁵

While returning to the armory with the injured man, some of Cabot's soldiers fired their weapons over the heads of the demonstrators, an unauthorized action that was immediately regretted. Cabot later said that by firing above the rioters, the soldiers encouraged them to think that blank cartridges were being used, and this only served to make them more daring in their assault.¹⁶

Whatever the effect the shooting may have had on the crowd, the attack on the armory now began in earnest. Some of the demonstrators began tearing up the sidewalk bricks at the corner of Cooper and Endicott Streets and pitching them into the road. Here young men would seize them, run up to within a few feet of the large double doors on Cooper Street, and hurl the bricks at the building. Then they would retire, get another armful of bricks, and renew the assault. The next day officials noted that it took two full wagons to carry the stones that had been removed from inside the armory.

In the midst of the attack, the reporter for the *Boston Herald* noted the activity of:

one Amazonian woman, shouting and screaming, and urging the assailants on in their desperate work. A dozen men were trying to get her away from the scene, but she tore herself from their arms, and with hair streaming, arms swinging, and her face the picture of phrenzy [sic] she rushed again and again to the assault.¹⁷

A Plain Statement of Facts, by a Plain Man (Boston: n.p., 1863), 11; Bernard Carr's recollection is found in the *Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 18, 1863.

¹⁴ Fred Albert Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1928), vol. 2, 217.

¹⁵ *Daily Advertiser*, July 15, 1863.

¹⁶ Major Stephen Cabot, *Report of the "Draft Riot" in Boston, July 14, 1863* (Boston: n.p., n.d.), 3.

¹⁷ *Boston Herald*, July 16, 1863.

There were other, more shocking incidents as this episode of frustration and fury moved toward its climax. Forty-six years later, Emma Sellew Adams, who as a young neighborhood girl had watched the riot, remembered that at its peak screaming women had held up their babies and taunted the soldiers to fire.¹⁸

As the missiles, and now an occasional gunshot from the mob, rained down on the armory Major Cabot decided he could wait no longer. Earlier he had ordered that both of the Eleventh Battery's six-pound cannon be double-shotted with canister. One gun was then rolled to a point just inside the building's North Margin Street door, while the other was positioned behind the large wooden doors that opened onto Cooper Street. If the cannon had to be fired these soldiers would cover the artillerymen as they reloaded the piece.

The Cooper Street doors took a tremendous pounding in the fifteen minutes after eight o'clock. Finally the upper panel on one gave way, and it seemed only a matter of seconds before the mob would surge into the building and capture the weapons. "I now felt that the time had come to act," wrote Cabot, "and gave the order to fire."¹⁹

There was a tremendous report as the powder ignited, sending the double dose of canister through the wooden doors, through the crowd, and into the buildings across the street. The concussion blew out the gas lights in the armory and the darkness was pierced by tongues of flame from the small arms of the soldiers, firing to make certain that there was no second assault by the mob. This was unnecessary, for the crowd had scattered in all directions, leaving behind only those unable to move.

The number of killed and wounded in the Cooper Street incident has never been fully ascertained, because some victims were apparently carried away from the scene by friends. One Boston newspaper said that the number of dead would exceed twenty, and a modern writer has placed the death toll at fourteen,²⁰ but there is no surviving evidence to support either figure. A thorough search of newspaper accounts as well as available medical records places the number of identifiable dead at eight.

One of those killed was William Currier, the seventy-two-year-old father of the Boston policeman who had witnessed the entry of the soldiers into the armory earlier in the evening. The old man had gone

¹⁸ Emma Sellew Adams, "A Remembrance of the Boston Draft Riot," *The Magazine of History* 10 (July 1909):39.

¹⁹ Cabot, 4.

²⁰ *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, July 17, 1863; Michael S. Hindus, "A City of Mobocrats and Tyrants: Mob Violence in Boston, 1747-1863," *Issues in Criminology* 6, No. 2 (Summer 1971):77.

to the armory seeking shelter and was shot dead during the assault. The other seven victims were either rioters or bystanders. Tragically, of these seven dead, four—three boys and one girl—were children fourteen years old or younger.

In addition to the above, several newspapers mentioned an unidentified Irish woman who had been shot through the chest or neck—it was thought fatally—and afterward carried away by the mob. However no further information about her was available.

Excluding the soldiers and policemen who received cuts and bruises, it is much more difficult to get an accurate count of the wounded. Only four were hospitalized, and the newspapers mentioned about twenty others. Though most remained unidentified, here too a large number were children.²¹

The riot moved into its third and final stage as elements of the mob regrouped on Endicott Street, around the corner from the armory, and set out to sack the hardware stores and gun shops in Dock Square, a few blocks south in an area around Faneuil Hall. Upon arriving there the mob broke into two groups, one of which headed for the hardware store of Thomas P. Barnes. They pulled down the shutters, smashed the plate glass window, and entered *en masse*. Gun racks filled with muskets were looted, as were pistol cases and several displays of cutlery. Fortunately the rowdies overlooked the powder magazine at the rear of the store.

As they emerged from Barnes's shop the reporter for the *Journal* noted that "many of the pillagers were mere boys." The writer for the *Daily Advertiser* reported that "Dock Square now presented an exciting scene, filled with a turbid mass of people... with bayonets and knives quite plenty, glistening over their heads."²²

As this was transpiring the other portion of the mob headed for the gun shop of William Reed & Son in Faneuil Hall Square. Detective John Dunne at that moment was leading a squad of twenty-five well-armed policemen to the North End station. When informed of the crowd's intention, Dunne commandeered a passing omnibus, climbed up on the box with the driver, ordered his men inside, and set off at high speed for Faneuil Hall Square. The bus soon overtook the mob and Dunne forced his way through, arriving at Reed's store just ahead of the crowd. The detective deployed his men in front of the gun store and for a few

²¹ The records of those taken to Massachusetts General Hospital are found in *Massachusetts General Hospital, Surgical Records*, vols. WEST, 106, pp. 82-86, and EAST, 109, pp. 114-24 (hereinafter cited as *MGH Records*). These volumes reside at the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts. The most extensive newspaper coverage of casualties is found in the *Journal*, July 15-17, 1863, and *The Pilot*, July 25, 1863.

²² *Journal*, July 15, 1863; *Daily Advertiser*, July 15, 1863.

crucial minutes held off the angry demonstrators. There were a few skirmishes between policemen and individual rioters, and several alleged ringleaders were arrested.²³ By now the mob, augmented by hundreds of onlookers, was swirling throughout the Dock Square-Faneuil Hall Square area.

At this point Mayor Lincoln arrived leading a large contingent of city officials and police. Accompanying him was Major Charles Wilder, commanding two companies of infantry and a battalion of dragoons. Wilder attempted unsuccessfully to warn the crowd to disperse, and then Mayor Lincoln was shouted down as he read the Riot Act.

This was a critical moment, and the officials recognized it as such. Major Wilder ordered his soldiers, whose guns were already loaded, to "prime" in the presence of the crowd. Simultaneously he directed the dragoons, with sabres drawn, to clear the square. This proved decisive because the rioters, as well as hundreds of onlookers, quickly fell back before the horsemen. A heavy military presence was then established in Faneuil Hall Square, and squads of cavalry and light artillery were sent to patrol the streets of the North End. Although there were a few sporadic incidents during the night, including one in which a few hoodlums set fire to the back of the Cooper Street armory, the worst violence of the Boston riot had been effectively quelled by shortly after 11:00 P.M.²⁴

The next day, Wednesday, July 15, dawned with a gloomy foreboding of new trouble. The air was thick with rumors of secret organizations about to surface, or of the impending arrival of the leaders of the New York riot, coming to "give the Boston mob backbone." Others were equally sure that the Gas Works were about to be blown up or that the drawbridges into the city faced imminent destruction.²⁵

Throughout the day North End residents and others walked over to the heavily guarded Cooper Street armory to view the scene of the previous night's carnage. "The doors and windows of the armory show the effects of the assault of last night," said the *Journal*. "The upper panels of both doors are knocked entirely away, and the glass on the second story windows is almost entirely demolished." The double doors, according to the newspaper, were "riddled with shot," while in the middle of Cooper Street lay a pool of blood.

Throughout the Irish neighborhood adults engaged in quiet conversation on doorsteps and street corners. The tone, said the *Journal*, "was one of regret that the disturbance had arisen, and hope that the end of the excitement had come." Yet in spite of the previous night's bloodshed,

²³ City of Boston, *Annual Report of the Chief of Police, 1864*, City Document No. 6, pp. 32-34 (hereinafter cited as Kurtz); *Boston Journal*, July 15, 1863.

²⁴ Kurtz, 33-34.

²⁵ *Journal*, July 16, 1863.

the newspaperman found that "three-fourths of those loitering on the sidewalks were boys from 12 to 14 years of age, who were ready for any excitement, and any act of recklessness."²⁶

To prevent this, additional military companies were placed on alert in order to suppress further violence. Both the police and militia maintained a high profile throughout the city as this state of emergency remained in place for several days after the riot.

Just as determined to see that no more trouble occurred was Reverend James Healy, chancellor of the Boston diocese. Disappointed with what he considered the dilatory manner in which Archbishop John Hughes had approached the New York City riot, Father Healy quickly issued a circular to all priests urging them to do their utmost to maintain calm in their parishes. As local curates walked the streets of the North End in the days after the riot, the *Journal* said that "boys, girls and men by the score were admonished that there was no necessity for their presence [on streetcorners], and a large number were led to disperse under the mild but firm and unceasing efforts of their priests."²⁷

Likewise *The Pilot*, the newspaper representing Boston's Irish Catholics, took a clear and unequivocal stand against lawlessness. "Great credit is due to the State and city authorities," wrote editor Patrick Donahoe, "for the energy with which they put down, what might otherwise have been, a serious riot. . . . Mobs should be nipped in the bud."²⁸

In addition to the prompt, concerted action taken by Boston's secular and religious authorities, there were other respects in which this riot differed from the New York City disturbance. Because they occurred simultaneously, Bostonians were quick to blame their own trouble on a network of disloyal Copperheads intent on destroying the government. Most readily agreed with Police Chief Kurtz when he said, "This was no superficial affair, but a formidable combination backed by influential parties, who dared not show themselves publicly."²⁹ The evidence, however, does not support the chief's claim of conspiracy, nor does it verify his appraisal of the rioters.

It is probable that, just as in New York, there were seditious groups in Boston planning to oppose the draft. If so, their leaders must have been dismayed at the spontaneous outburst of violence on the afternoon of July 14, for there is no evidence that the riot began over anything more than an error in judgment by an indiscreet draft marshal. Indeed,

²⁶ *Journal*, July 16, 1863.

²⁷ A very useful summary of the efforts of the Catholic hierarchy to maintain calm among the Irish is found in Thomas H. O'Connor, *Fitzpatrick's Boston, 1846-1866* (Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 1984), 209-12; *Journal*, July 16, 1863.

²⁸ *The Pilot*, July 25, 1863.

²⁹ Kurtz, 34.

...it seems clear that the melee did not begin as a draft riot at all. Instead, the trouble started when a group of Irish attempted what they thought was the rescue of one of their own from police custody, an action that occurred with some frequency in Boston during that period.³⁰

Certainly by early evening, with the appearance of hundreds of young ruffians, the riot assumed political overtones and became a much more serious problem for the authorities. Yet even then the mob seems not to have represented a "formidable combination" of Copperheads. Clearly some of its members were dangerous men, but for the most part this was a leaderless, poorly armed crowd of street people. Some of the most violent were women and children, individuals who were, in the words of the newspaperman, ready for any act of excitement, and "any act of recklessness." There is no evidence that they were part of a larger plot, and their actions on this night were roundly condemned by all of the Boston newspapers, including even the most strident antiwar, pro-Democratic journals.

It is interesting to note that over the next several months at least a dozen persons were prosecuted for their actions during the riot. At no time did the Commonwealth attempt to prove that they were part of a Copperhead conspiracy. Several were shown to have been under the influence of alcohol before and during the riot, and it was never alleged that there was a connection between the defendants and any political organization.

From the Copperhead perspective, therefore, the Boston draft riot should have been viewed as a setback. Precipitously begun, poorly executed, and quickly suppressed, all it guaranteed was a greater military presence within the city. This, along with the increased vigilance of civil authorities, rendered future violent resistance unlikely.

Two other elements of the New York City riot that were absent from the Boston disturbance were class warfare and attacks on Negroes. There was a long history of nativist sentiment in the city, and the fact that they were not represented on the police force certainly offended the Irish. But while this may have made their assaults on the policemen more furious, those "Yankee son[s]-of-bitch[es]" who tried to protect the draft marshal—the heavy military presence later in the day—kept the mob from swarming up Beacon Hill toward the stately homes of Boston's Yankee aristocracy.

Likewise, there were no attacks on Boston's black citizens during the riot. The federal census of 1860 listed 2,261 Negroes living in the city,

³⁰ For example, less than two weeks before the draft riot, a crowd of three hundred to four hundred Irish in East Boston severely beat three policemen in an effort to rescue an Irishman who had been arrested for drunkenness. *Journal*, July 7, 1863.

accounting for about 3 percent of its population.³¹ The largest black neighborhood was located north and west of Beacon Hill, a considerable distance from the Cooper Street–Dock Square area. There was bitter, longstanding animosity between the Irish and the blacks, and the fact that none of the latter was listed among the dead or wounded must be credited to the decisive action of the authorities as well as, to a lesser extent, the distance the mob would have had to travel to reach the black neighborhood.

So as New York City continued to suffer, Bostonians breathed a sigh of relief and congratulated themselves on having averted a similar tragedy. The alliance of state, local, and religious authority held firm, and within a few days the awful tension subsided. Behind it all was the certain knowledge that, if necessary, force would again be used to maintain law and order. Most Bostonians agreed with the editor of the *Journal* when he wrote, "Reliance may be placed on the fact that no discrimination will be used by the troops in case of renewed rioting, and that whoever stands in the path of the public peace will have to bear the consequences."³²

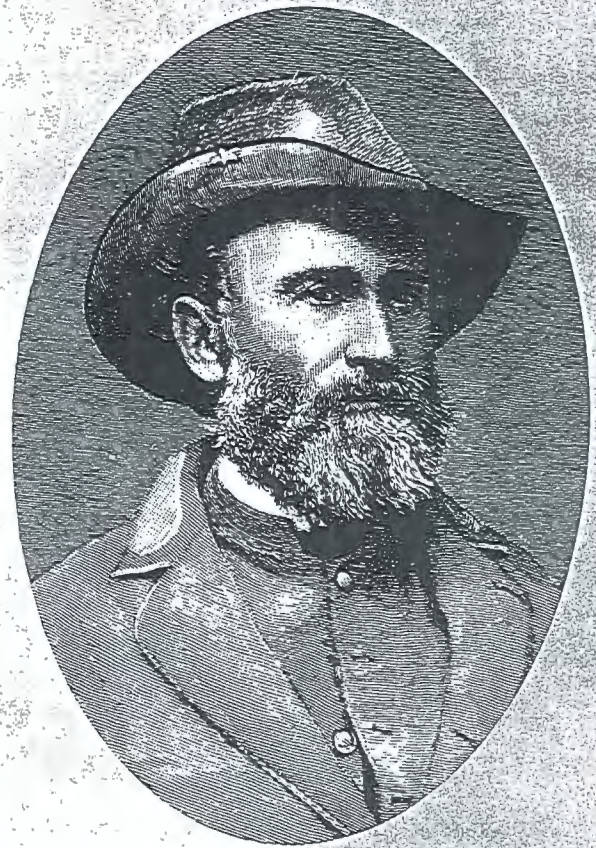
³¹ Peter R. Knights, *The Plain People of Boston, 1830-1860: A Study in Growth* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), 29-30.

³² *Journal*, July 16, 1863.



CIVIL WAR HISTORY

A Journal of the Middle Period



VOLUME THIRTY-SIX NUMBER THREE

September 1996