

*Note: Peter
Quinn. The Drafted
Children of Eve*

History 225
Re: Notes w/ Draft/NYC Riot

The Civil War was our first war in which conscription was employed to answer the North and the South's manpower needs.

[Mythic conceit among Americans that were the nation was imperiled the citizen soldier would answer the call].

The North's 1863 CA made all kinds of concessions to anticipated reaction. Control of the draft was turned over to local draft or enrollment boards. The draft was an appeal to citizens' obligations to defend their states and not the nation.

And of course commutation and the buying of substitutes was written into the draft law. See Grievances in main notes.

Conclusion on CW draft:

D. Michael Shafer: The draft produced few draftees in the North. Of the 300,000 men called some 9% sent substitutes; 18% paid commutation fees, 70% found medical reasons for avoiding service. Only 3% answered the 1863 call up.

Draft symbolized the federal govt.'s power and determination to challenge its opponents. Moreover, the draft persuaded many Northern men to volunteer before they were draft. Many took the \$ 300.00 sign-up bonuses.

McPherson (Text): Calls it a limited success in that it turned out 164,000 (out of the 300,000 called over the next two years). He notes that when it is recalled that the draft was to stimulate volunteers it's effects were impressive.

*the whole
the CW draft
was a loss
how not to
a negative model
for future
Conscription
WW II
not for WW*

History 225
Re: NYC Draft Riots
Source: Bernstein

I. Urban rioting in Antebellum America was one of the nation's favorite outdoor sports if we can judge by frequency.

In pre-Civil War 19th century urban centers were periodically visited by riots--economic, ethnic, racial, and religious in motivation.

1844 Southwark, Phila. riot caused 12 deaths
1849 the so-called anti-Abolitionist riot caused 22 deaths

Many northern cities were hit w/ anti-Abolitionist riots in the 1840s with large property destruction.

In 1834 there was a 5-day riot in NYC targets were black homes and churches.

In 1854 Irish dock workers in NYC rioting against black stevedores to chase them away from the docks .

No urban riot in America could match the destruction, savagery, and intensity of the NYC Draft Riots (July 13-17th) 1863. This riot was the most violent in American history. (at least 105 deaths)

A. NYC and King Cotton

NYC was the national economic capital and had expansive political ambitions. Much of this financial strength was pegged to King Cotton. Where the money is there you find strong political ties. Outside of the South, the Democratic Party was strongest in NYC and in the state of New York. (Explain the ties between Southern cotton and NY financial growth).

B. Grievances

The Congress passed the Conscription Act in March 1863 in order to supply the one ingredient in the Union's war machine that was in critical short supply--manpower. In all other categories the North by 1863 excelled.

Union manpower needs were critical especially after the Union military fortunes were slumping in the East through 1862 and early 1863--Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. The early onrush of volunteers when the war began was drying up. Northern men were not anxious to see the Monkey Show of the battlefield.

The Conscription Act (the first draft in the North) made all males between ages of 20-35 eligible for the draft; and all unmarried men bet/ ages of 35-45 liable to military service.

The CA and the \$300.00 commutation clause. (along w/ a

History 353
Page two
Re: Bernstein/ NYC Draft Riot

*Ave. worker made
\$600.00 / year*

substitute provision) was a key grievance. The Republican apologists for this act argued that the \$300.00 ceiling was a democratic gesture to make commutation available to rich and poor by placing a ceiling on the process. (Working men in 1863 may have made as little as \$2.00/day)

But for the non-rich the CA was regarded as a naked exercise in class power by the wealthy. A variation of the Southern complaint of a rich man's war and a poor man's fight. Added to this class interpretation of the draft was the provision in the law that limited the draft to " . . . able-bodied male citizens of the US." That meant white males only.

In addition to the CA workers in the North were also facing federal taxation, inflation brought on by the Legal tender Act, and emancipation. These were all whopping assertions of federal or central power intruding into the lives of citizens whose former association with Washington was usually limited to a trip to the Post Office. Now the war was bring the federal government into the lives of the people in ways that they regarded as intrusive and controlling. With the draft--potentially lethal.

This alarming and unexampled outreach^y by federal power was a kin to stirring up a volcano under the social surface of many New Yorkers--the working class in general, the ethnic Irish who were in competition for unskilled work with the black population, and the Democratic Party that was solidly in place in NY at the state and the city level.

*Gov. Seymour
+
Farrago
works*

The Administration slated NYC for the draft call up at a time when most of the state's Union troops were off in Pennsylvania to stop Lee's invasion of the North in the summer of 1863. The only force in the city to see that the draft went off without dissent and disruption were the Metropolitans, the Provost Marshall and his handful of deputies, and the Corps of Invalides.

C. A Brief Chronology

July 11th (Saturday) the first lottery took place

Sunday nothing was scheduled. But workers and the poor were gathered in the saloons and their homes talking and planning.

July 13th (Monday) The riot began. The first target of the resisters were the draft offices. These were attacked and some burned to the ground. Workers and unionists urged a work stoppage. The closing down of the entire city. Most of this activity was carried out by workers and city firemen(who thought they were exempt from the draft because of their critical civic roles).

*Common people
+ protest for
Democratic
Gov. to
repeal the
draft.*

History 225
Page three
Re: Bernstein

Their's was a show of force that was aimed at making a political statement and not any attack on private property or persons.

July 14th-17th The riot changed into what might be called the second phase. The targets were now the upscale residents of the wealthy (usually identified as Republicans) in rich neighborhoods of Lexington Ave and Gramercy Park. Others targeted were known and outspoken Abolitionists. Their homes were invaded and their belongings were either stolen or burned. Looting was all the fashion by the second day.

Also targeted were blacks. The splendid Colored Orphan Asylum was razed to the ground. The bushes, trees, and iron fencing were torn up by mobs. Blacks who fell into the hands of the mob were beaten and many were lynched on the spot in the most savage manner. Black neighborhoods and homes were invaded and residences were put to the torch.

By the third day the rioting was carried out by the Irish poor who came out of their shebeens, shanties, and cellars. (606)

Targets were the communication systems (telegraph lines were pulled down), the ferry system out of NYC to New Jersey, Bronx, and Queens, were attacked, railroad tracks were torn up (in many cases by women), bridges were targets, and the Metropolitan gas works was attacked. Metropolitan (police) were prized targets. When caught by the mobs they were defaced. Also Union soldiers were brutally beaten and some killed if they were unlucky enough to fall into the hands of the rioters.

(Republican leaders/and Democratic politicians) were ready to believe that what was taking place was more than random violence. That, in fact, a coup de main was underway--that is an attempt by the rioters to take over the city probably in league with Confederate spies and agents provocateurs who were coordinating the riot w/ hoped for Confederate victories on the battlefield.

[Suppose for a moment that Lee had won at Gettysburg or had not retreated back across the Potomac but brought his army North to NYC while these riots were in progress. Would European intervention have been far off????????]

The Draft Riot had turned into something more than just a violent resistance to the draft. It appeared that the rioters were determined to attack anything that was symbolic of Republican rule and also determined to drive all the blacks out of the city. A kind of political and racial "cleansing" if you will.

*no evidence of a coup
Met. Police
Federal Spies
Coppers*

History 225

Re: Add notes w/ NY Draft Riot

Irish began coming to New York in great numbers in the late 1840s as a result of the Great Potato famine in Ireland.

English landlords paid many a fair across the Atlantic to get rid of their Irish tenants to avoid Parliament's ruling that they would be financially responsible for relief costs of their famine-stricken tenants.

In New York they were pushed into squalid tenement houses that lined dark and filthy streets. The Irish were America's first ghetto dwellers. They took the most undesirable work in the city and competed with blacks for this work--dock hands, draymen, unskilled construction laborers ("diggers"/they dug cellars for new buildings), domestic servants, and washer women. They were as roundly exploited and discriminated against as the black population.

Point: Not to stereotype the Irish as uniformly anti-Union or as all Peace Democrats and rioters.

Point to the Irish Brigade. The 28th Massachusetts. Or more generally New York men. New York provided about 17% of the Union manpower during the war. This was larger than any other state.

History 225
Page four
Re: Bernstein

By July 17th regiments of Union troops fresh from the Gettysburg battlefield reached NYC and began to subdue the rioters.

After a period of reduced tension the draft was started up again on August 19th.

Note: That on July 18th, the day after the riots stopped, the 54th Mass. stormed Ft. Wagner in So. Carolina.

The savagery of the riot and the especially cruel and inhumane treatment of blacks in the city played some favorable role in the 1863 elections.

II> Toward the 1863 Elections

See notes

History 225

Re:Notes w/ Draft Riot

Source: Hanna "The Boston Draft Riot"

He makes some interesting points that apply to the NYC draft riot.

He notes that Union Irish troops had played a significant role in the fighting in 1862 and 1863.

It was the Irish Brigade that lost 40% of its complement in the charge against the stone wall at Fredericksburg. The 28th Massachusetts (Boston Irish) lost about 25% of its regiment at Antietam.

The 19th Massachusetts (Boston Irish) in helping to repulse Pickett's charge at Gettysburg lost 50% of its men.

Some notes on the Boston riot.

It began on July 14th, a day after trouble broke out in NYC. But the Boston riot was over by that evening. Much of the rioting was carried out by women and children. But it was nipped in the swift reaction by the town's leaders. Military units were sent quickly to the scene of the troubles. In defending the Cooper street armory the troops shot into the crowd that was attempting to storm the installation killing some of the people.

The other factor that was different from NYC was quick intervention of the Catholic Church (unlike in New York). The Boston diocese sent priests into the streets to calm the citizenry of North End, most were Irish and Catholic.

Since the unrest was so swiftly put down there was no repetition of any class warfare (Beacon Hill was spared) and blacks were not victimized at all.