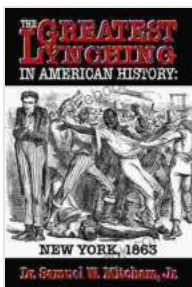


The Greatest Lynching in American History: The New York Draft Riots of 1863

On a sweltering July day in 1863, New York City became the stage for one of the darkest and most shameful chapters in American history: the Draft Riots. Sparked by opposition to the Civil War draft, the riots erupted into a frenzy of violence, looting, and arson that left hundreds dead and the city in ruins.

The Roots of Discontent

The Draft Riots were not born out of a vacuum. They were the culmination of years of simmering tensions that had been exacerbated by the outbreak of the Civil War. New York City was a hotbed of anti-war sentiment, particularly among the city's large Irish immigrant population.



The Greatest Lynching in American History: New York 1863 by Samuel W. Mitcham

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
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Print length : 137 pages
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The Irish had flocked to New York in the decades leading up to the war, seeking refuge from poverty and famine in their homeland. However, they found themselves facing discrimination and prejudice in their new country. Many worked in low-paid, dangerous jobs, and they often lived in crowded, unsanitary slums.

The outbreak of the Civil War only deepened the resentment felt by many Irish Americans. They saw the war as a conflict that had nothing to do with them, and they feared that they would be forced to fight and die in a cause they did not support.

The Draft Law

In March 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Enrollment Act into law, which established a national draft to raise troops for the Union Army. The law exempted certain groups from the draft, including men who had already served in the military, those who were physically unfit, and those who could pay a commutation fee of \$300.

The exemption for wealthy individuals angered many working-class New Yorkers, who felt that they were being forced to bear the brunt of the war effort. This resentment was particularly strong among the Irish, who were disproportionately represented among the city's poor.

The Riots Erupt

On July 13, 1863, the first draft lottery was held in New York City. Enraged by the results, a mob of protesters gathered outside the draft office on Broadway. The protesters were initially met with a small force of police officers, but the crowd quickly overwhelmed them.

The rioters then began to spread out across the city, looting and burning businesses and homes. They targeted Irish-owned businesses in particular, and they also attacked police stations and government buildings.

The violence reached its peak on July 16, when a mob of rioters attacked the Colored Orphan Asylum on Fifth Avenue. The mob burned the asylum to the ground and murdered several of the children who lived there.

The City's Response

The city's response to the riots was slow and ineffective. Mayor Fernando Wood was initially sympathetic to the rioters, and he refused to call out the National Guard. It was not until the violence had spiraled out of control that Wood finally ordered the Guard to intervene.

The Guard's arrival did not immediately quell the riots. The rioters continued to fight back, and the city was in a state of chaos for several days. Finally, on July 19, the Guard managed to restore order to the city.

The Aftermath

The Draft Riots left New York City in ruins. Over 1,000 buildings had been burned, and the city's economy had been devastated. The riots also claimed the lives of hundreds of people, including both rioters and innocent bystanders.

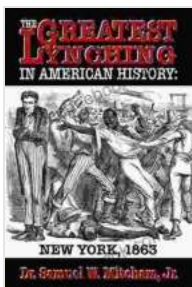
The riots had a profound impact on the city's social and political landscape. The Irish were blamed for the violence, and they faced increased discrimination and prejudice in the years that followed. The riots also weakened support for the war effort in New York City, and they contributed to the city's growing reputation as a hotbed of crime and violence.

The Draft Riots of 1863 were a dark and shameful chapter in American history. The riots were sparked by a combination of anti-war sentiment, economic inequality, and racial prejudice. The city's response to the riots was slow and ineffective, and the violence did not end until the National Guard intervened.

The Draft Riots left a lasting legacy of pain and division in New York City. The riots deepened the resentment felt by many Irish Americans, and they contributed to the city's growing reputation as a hotbed of crime and violence.

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A mob of rioters burns down a building during the Draft Riots of 1863.



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