The Archives of Violence

RICHARD MAXWELL BROWN

THE STUDY OF AMERICAN VIOLENCE in recent years has been greatly enriched by research in archival sources. It is now generally accepted that among the nations that most resemble us in political, social, and economic character we are the most violent. In modern times America has led its peer-group of nations in the rate of homicide, the number of lynchings, and the incidence of urban riots, as well as in racial violence, industrial violence, and criminal activity.[1] These aspects of human violence are not original to America; they are replicated on a lesser scale in other modern, industrial nations. But there is one type of violence that is distinctively American, our turbulent frontier vigilantism.[2] All of the aspects of American violence (including vigilantism) have been illumined in the last twenty years by notable historical studies based on archival research.

Two trends have converged to strengthen the linkage between the study of American violence and archival research. One trend has been the emergence of American violence as a sub-field of American history.[3] This is something quite new, a trend heavily nurtured by public concern over the violence of the 1960s: the civil rights movement and its related violence; the black ghetto riots of the time; the wave of presidential and political assassinations; and the anti-war and campus violence. The other trend has been the transformation, the broadening, of archives, especially the national and state archives, as centers of research.

Before about 1960, archival centers were mainly the bastions of historical researchers in traditional political and military history. The old nineteenth-century maxim that "history is past politics" was generally perceived as largely defining the scope of archival research resources. But by the early and middle 1960s an important change was underway. The rich provenance of archives collections in the records of the life of the people—vital statistics, land and tax records, occupational status, distribution of wealth, evidence of geographic and social mobility, and the episodes of social conflict and misbehavior—began to be recognized. And as historians began to turn away from the more narrowly tradi-

The author is Beekman Professor of Northwest and Pacific History, at the University of Oregon. The article is taken from his address delivered at the luncheon meeting of the Society of American Archivists held in New York City on April 13, 1978, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians.

[1] Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., *The History of Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969).

[2] Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), chaps. 4-6.

[3] Only a few of the leading works can be cited here: Graham and Gurr, eds., *History of Violence in America;* Richard Maxwell Brown, ed., *American Violence* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), and *Strain of Violence;* Richard Hofstadter and Michael Wallace, eds., *American Violence: A Documentary History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970); Robert Brent Toplin, *Unchallenged Violence: An American Ordeal* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975); and Roger Lane and John J. Turner, Jr., eds., *Riot, Rout, and Tumult: Readings in American Social and Political Violence* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977). Other important works are cited in these volumes and in the notes below.

tional political history and drum-and-trumpet military history toward newer emphases and approaches to social, economic, and cultural history, it began to be realized that archives were indeed a "Comstock lode of material for social history."[4]

The near-craze for historical demography in the study of American life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had its inception in the research efforts of a coterie of innovative historians who mined the state and local archives of the old colonial states along the Atlantic seaboard from New England to the Carolinas.[5] As the social concerns of the 1960s renewed the interest of historians in our racial and ethnic diversity and its accompaniment in conflict, aggressive researchers began beating new pathways to the National Archives as well as to regional, state, local, and private archives.

New approaches seemed to demand new research materials, and increasingly such materials were being located and, for the first time, exploited in archives collections. In no field was this more pronounced than in the vital, young field of violence studies. The broader archival revolution that I have mentioned has its parallel among those of us who work on the history of American violence. Our field's archival revolution may be characterized by distinguishing works of scholarship and interpretation in terms of two categories of research: pre-archival and post-archival. By *pre-archival* works, I mean books and articles on the history of American violence whose research largely neglected archival sources. On the other hand, the term *post-archival* refers to works of scholarship for which archival research and the archival perspective are major intellectual bases. In regard to American violence, the dividing line between the publication of pre-archival and post-archival works is about 1960. The pre-archival works are flawed by superficial research and, all too often, the perpetuation of myth, legend, and easy generalization about their subjects. In the realm of the history of industrial (or labor) violence, two pre-archival works that were, thirty years ago, standard works are Louis Adamic's book of 1934, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America,* and Samuel Yellen's book of 1936, *American Labor Struggles.*[6] Both of these old war horses of our bibliography have since been made obsolete by such post-archival historians of industrial violence as Robert V. Bruce and Wayne Broehl.[7]

The field of agrarian violence was once dominated by the likes of Henry Christman's study of the upstate New York anti-rent movement of the early nineteenth century, but a host of post-archival historians dealing not only with the anti-rent but other violent agrarian movements have outmoded Christman's quaintly titled book, *Tin Horns and Calico.*[8] In regard to the field of vigilantism

[4] Adrian Cook, *The Armies of the Streets: The New York City Draft Riots of 1863* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), p. 315.

[5] Leading this trend were Philip J. Greven, Jr., *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), and Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970).

[6] Louis Adamic, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America* (New York: Viking Press, 1934). Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936).

[7] Robert V. Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959). Wayne G. Broehl, Jr., *The Molly Maguires* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

[8] Henry Christman, *Tin Horns and Calico: A Decisive Episode in the Emergence of Democracy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1945).

and lynch law, earlier pre-archival books by Frank Shay and Alan Valentine that are long on generalization but short on research have been replaced by works by myself and others. The contrast between pre-archival and post-archival studies is nowhere more striking than in regard to the protean field of Western violence, that is, the range wars, town violence, outlaw activity, and gunfighting exploits of the legendary heroes and villains of the Far West from the Chisholm Trail to the Pacific. Works on famous violent characters and towns in the West by such authors as Walter Noble Burns, Floyd Streeter, Stuart Lake, Dane Coolidge, Eugene Cunningham, Homer Croy, and many others were united in their pre-archival approach. These works were characteristically weak in primary-source research, were often romantic in viewpoint, often cursed with an excess of color, usually narrative rather than analytical in mode, and given to perpetuating unsupported legend. In the persistent conflict between myth and reality in historical writing, reality was usually badly defeated in these works, and Nyle Miller, former director of the Kansas State Historical Society, has aptly characterized them as "fakelore." At last, a strong tide of realistic post-archival works of scholarship are eroding the dominance of fakelore in this field. Making salient use of state and national archival materials, biographical studies exemplified by those of Joseph G. Rosa on Wild Bill Hickok and William Settle on Jesse James have given us realistic, scholarly portraits of those two key individual protagonists of Western violence.[9] Also in the post-archival vein, again by way of example, is the collective-biography group portrait of great gunfighters of the West by Nyle Miller and Joseph W. Snell,[10] while Robert Dykstra has given us a provocative analysis of prototypical Western violence in his book on Kansas cattle towns.[11]

In even broader terms—and looking to a new subject—America's nearly three-centuries long history of pervasive urban rioting has produced shelf after shelf of books on the riotous crowds of our great cities. Urban rioting and crowd violence is a most significant subject in its own right as well as being one that cuts across such categories of American violence as ethnic, racial, religious, and industrial. Older pre-archival works, among them Joel Headley's nineteenth-century book on the great riots of New York City, have been superannuated by an ever-growing corpus of studies by such post-archival scholars as Adrian Cook, Hiller Zobel, and Robert V. Haynes.[12]

What and where are the archives of violence? The archives of violence are to be found practically anywhere. With the exception of such great outbreaks as the American Revolution and the Civil War, violence in the United States has been primarily local in nature. For this reason, state and local archives departments, especially the well preserved state archives, are citadels of research on violence whatever the particular subject might be. My long-term study of Amer-

[9] Joseph G. Rosa, *They Called Him Wild Bill: The Life and Adventures of James Butler Hickok* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964). William A. Settle, Jr., *Jesse James Was His Name, or Fact and Fiction Concerning the Careers of the Notorious James Brothers of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966).

[10] Nyle H. Miller and Joseph W. Snell, *Why the West Was Wild: A Contemporary Look at the Antics of Some Highly Publicized Kansas Cowtown Personalities* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1963).

[11] Robert R. Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968).

[12] Cook, *Armies of the Streets.* Hiller B. Zobel, *The Boston Massacre* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970). Robert V. Haynes, *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976).

ican vigilantism took me first to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, in Columbia, where I found a rich and largely unexploited trove of research materials on America's first vigilante movement, the South Carolina Regulators of 1767-69. My initial experience was prototypical, for research on the primary sources of American vigilantism is a job that must be done, primarily, at the state and local level.

Yet the richness of state archives for research on violence is far from restricted to vigilante materials. Nor are these remarks meant to imply secondary status for the great National Archives. The latter, increasingly during the 1960s and 1970s, has been a mecca for those making research breakthroughs in regard to the history of American violence. Thus, William McKee Evans's research in Freedmen's Bureau Records in the National Archives was a key to his rescue from historical oblivion the significant Lowry band of Indian outlaws and militants in southeast North Carolina during the era of Reconstruction,[13] and, by the same token, Robert V. Haynes on the Houston race riot of 1917,[14] Allen W. Trelease on the first Ku Klux Klan,[15] Robert M. Utley on the military conflict between the Sioux Indians and whites in late nineteenth-century South Dakota,[16] Charles E. Rosenberg on Garfield's assassin,[17] and Robert V. Bruce on the extremely violent nationwide railroad strike of 1877 have all made effective use of crucial research materials in the National Archives. A recent development in the field of national archival research is the increasing impact of the regionally located federal archives and records centers. Research findings at Suitland, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, Dallas, and other federal archives and records centers have helped us understand the careers of Wild Bill Hickok, of western peace officers in general, of the black soldiers who violently resisted oppressive white supremacy in Houston's summer of 1917, as well as Chicago's enormous race riot of 1919, and the gentile assassins of the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith.[19]

While the National Archives, its federal archives and records centers, and the state archives departments comprise the rich mother-lode of our violence research, they do not by any means exhaust the list of archival resources utilized by historians of violence. Municipal archives and court records, exemplified by those of Boston and New York, are proving to be important centers of local research. In these, Cook found key materials on the New York City anti-draft riot of 1863 and Hiller Zobel found key materials on the Boston Massacre of 1770.[20] Of comparable importance but even more long established are the ar-

[13] W[illiam] McKee Evans, *To Die Game: The Story of the Lowry Band, Indian Guerrillas of Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 271 and passim.

[14] Haynes, *Night of Violence,* pp. 325-26 and passim.

[15] Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 526 and passim.

[16] Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 287-88 and passim.

[17] Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Trial of the Assassin Guiteau: Psychiatry and Law in the Gilded Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 261 and passim.

[18] Bruce, *1877,* p. 367 and passim.

[19] Rosa, *They Called Him Wild Bill,* p. 267 and passim. Frank Richard Prassel, *The Western Peace Officer: A Legacy of Law and Order* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), p. 293 and passim. Haynes, *Night of Violence,* pp. xii, 325 and passim. William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 270 and passim. Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 229 and passim.

[20] Cook, *Armies of the Streets,* p. 315 and passim. Zobel, *Boston Massacre,* p. 314 and passim.

chives departments of universities. Varying widely in scope from the University of Texas Archives, rich in the violent history of that turbulent state, to the university archives departments more narrowly academic in their collections, these campus archives have been havens for aggressive scholars of violence like Frank R. Prassel in the pursuit of his study of western peace officers.[21] Private archives are also coming into their own as sources for research on violence. Indeed, business and corporation archives are also significant as such sources, and as they are expanded they are likely to be more and more important. Important harvests of knowledge have already been made among them. With its heavy involvement in the industrial violence of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and in the pursuit of outlaws during the same period, the Pinkerton Detective Agency archives are a prime center of research in our field.[22] Among those who have skillfully and productively tapped the Pinkerton archives are Wayne Broehl in the course of research for his engrosssing and model study of the Molly Maguire coal-field terrorists of the 1860s and 1870s.[23] The corporate archives of seven railroads, notably the Baltimore and Ohio and the Pennsylvania Railroad, were explored with profit by Robert V. Bruce.[24]

Even more specialized categories of private archives are church and labor-union archives. The Archives of the Church of Latter-day Saints, in Salt Lake City, were important in the research by Hill and Oaks for their illuminating book on the trial of the assassins of Joseph Smith;[25] and in the field of industrial violence, the archives of the American Federation of Labor in Washington, D.C., were useful to the research of Graham Adams on America's surge of industrial violence in the 1910 to 1915 period.[26] One of the most innovative feats of archival research is that done recently by Michael Lesy for his study of small-town violence in Wisconsin during the era of Frederick Jackson Turner. For his book, *Wisconsin Death Trip,* Lesy made heavy if controversial use of the photographic archives of Joseph Van Schaick in the rural center of Black River Falls in western Wisconsin.[27] Lesy was not, of course, the first historical researcher to center his work on photographic archives, but he was the first to focus on violence.

As I noted earlier, my primary source research on vigilantism has taken me through the archives of violence, mainly on a state-by-state basis. In the first, pre-doctoral, stage of my research I was working on the South Carolina Regulators of 1767-69, the first large-scale vigilante movement in American history. When it was time for me to leave Harvard Yard in search of the distant primary sources on the subject, the first thing I did was to write to the late J. Harold Easterby, then, in 1958, director of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. After an exchange of letters I met Easterby at the 1958 annual

[21] Prassel, *Western Peace Officer,* pp. 294-95 and passim. Prassel used the archives of Stanford University and the universities of California (Berkeley), Colorado, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. For a use of the University of Texas Archives, see, below, the discussion of John Wesley Hardin.

[22] James D. Horan, *The Pinkertons: The Detective Dynasty That Made History* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1968).

[23] Broehl, *Molly Maguires,* p. vi and passim.

[24] Bruce, *1877,* p. 368 and passim. Broehl, *Molly Maguires,* p. vi and passim, also made heavy use of the Reading Railroad archives.

[25] Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy,* pp. 227-30 and passim.

[26] Graham Adams, Jr., *Age of Industrial Violence, 1910-15: The Activities and Findings of the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 280 and passim.

[27] Michael Lesy, *Wisconsin Death Trip* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973).

meeting of the American Historical Association, in New York City. A chat there was followed soon by my trip to Columbia, South Carolina, where Easterby welcomed me into the quarters of the archives where I did the bulk of my research. This was the beginning of a close relationship between my research and the archives, a relationship continued with the current distinguished director of the Department, Charles Lee, and the very capable staff headed by Wylma Wates. Not only did I find in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History essential information on the Regulators—information that was the basis for a revisionist interpretation of the Regulator movement that has been generally accepted by other scholars—but, in emulation of the prosopographical model of research provided by Sir Lewis Namier, I found in the archives most welcome data on the land holdings, public service, and Revolutionary War records of the Regulators, data that enabled me to develop a social profile of the members of the movement in terms of biographical sketches of the Regulators as individuals.

With my book on the South Carolina Regulators published in 1963,[28] I broadened my research on the whole scope of American vigilantism; and in due course my archival, as well as other, research took me all the way across the country to one of the most remarkable collections in the entire archives of violence, the archives of the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1856, in the great Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The South Carolina Regulator movement was the prototypical vigilante movement, but the San Francisco vigilante movement of 1856 has the distinction of being the largest in American history, with six to eight thousand members, as well as one of the most significant. The San Francisco vigilante movement was dominated by the greatest merchants of San Francisco, men who ran the vigilante movement in the same systematic way they ran their own private businesses.[24]

These mercantile vigilantes were excellent record keepers, and one of the great joys in my research was finding within the vigilante archives in the Huntington Library the file of completed applications for membership in the vigilante organization. Wishing to keep from being infiltrated by the bad element in San Francisco, the vigilante leadership had printed up application forms for membership in the vigilante organization. On the printed form, each applicant for vigilante status had to fill in his name (and also the names of two vigilantes recommending him for membership), his city address of residence, his occupation, his age, and the place of his nativity; for, of course, the vast majority of San Franciscans of 1856 had come to the city by the Golden Gate from elsewhere. These completed applications for vigilante membership survived to the number of about 2,500, a more than adequate sample of the total membership. Analysis of the applications enabled me to establish a social profile of the vigilance committee. My research in the file of applications also produced one of those bo-

[28] Richard Maxwell Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

[29] Committee of Vigilance Papers, Huntington Library (San Marino, California). On the San Francisco vigilantes of 1856, see Brown, *Strain of Violence,* chap. 5, a slightly revised version of an article first published in John Alexander Carroll, ed., *Reflections of Western Historians* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969). Additional studies of the vigilantes of 1856 are Roger W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), chap. 8 and 9; Robert Michael Senkewicz, "Business and Politics in Gold Rush San Francisco, 1851-1856" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1974); and Peter R. Decker, *Fortunes and Failures: White-Collar Mobility in 19th-Century San Francisco* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 125-43.

nuses dear to the heart of the historical researcher, the approved application form of one Leland Stanford for vigilante membership. This, of course, was Leland Stanford, Sr., who in the 1860s would become one of the Big Four builders of the Central Pacific portion of the overland railroad, a governor of California, and, eventually, U.S. senator from California, as well as the founder, along with his wife, of Stanford University. Stanford was never more than an obscure member of the San Francisco vigilance committee of 1856, but his membership in the organization was significant in its revelation of the vigilante status of a leading nineteenth-century American capitalist, politico, and philanthropist; and it naturally pleased me that I had discovered something about Stanford that had eluded his biographers.

Another piece of archival research that gave me great satisfaction was at the University of Texas Archives where I went through the papers of John Wesley Hardin, a very significant figure in the history of American violence. The most deadly killer among the professional gunfighters of the Old West of the nineteenth century, with well over twenty kills to his credit in the relatively brief span of ten years, Hardin was involved in most of the major aspects of violence in one of the all-time most violent sections in American history, central Texas in the time from the Civil War to 1900. John Wesley Hardin himself barely escaped lynching at the hands of an enraged vigilante movement of Comanche County, Texas, a fate that did overtake his less fortunate brother Joe. What was the real character of Hardin as a prototypically violent figure in our history? Was Hardin no more than a brutal thug, no more than a heartless killer who killed for the mere joy and boast of killing to bolster his reputation as a manslayer? There is a clue to Hardin's character in the remarkable autobiography published posthumously over his by-line in 1896,[31] but the authenticity of that work has been challenged as being beyond the literary ability of John Wesley Hardin. Any doubts that I had of the genuine character of Hardin's autobiography were dispelled by my fascinated perusal of the John Wesley Hardin letters in the University of Texas archives,[32] then admirably presided over by Chester Kielman.

Going through the Hardin letters gave me several emotional shocks. One was the realization that although the young Hardin did indeed take great pride in his prowess as a gunman he also had emotions more admirable and reflective of natural human sympathy. The letters that I inspected were written by Hardin during his term in the Texas state prison from the late 1870s to 1892. Some of Hardin's letters to his wife, Jane, poignantly attest to his deep love for his mate and their children. Other Hardin letters, to the governors of Texas, had an axe to grind, having been written in Hardin's efforts to gain a pardon or clemency. These letters reveal that John Wesley Hardin was a partisan member of the Democratic Party, and they underscore the point that many of Hardin's kills in Texas during the 1860s and 1870s were, in effect, a spearhead of the movement of political violence by which ex-Confederates and Democratic Party members displaced the Radical Reconstruction regime of Governor E. J. Davis.

If the letters showed me that Hardin was much more politically oriented than I had thought, they gave me another feeling too, a feeling of the utter waste

[30] Box labeled "Applications for Membership, 1856," Committee of Vigilance Papers, Huntington Library. Brown, *Strain of Violence,* pp. 163-64, 366.

[31] John Wesley Hardin, *The Life of John Wesley Hardin as Written by Himself* (Seguin, Texas: Smith and Moore, 1896).

[32] John Wesley Hardin Papers, University of Texas Archives (Austin, Texas).

represented by Hardin's murderous career. Best known for his record as a killer, Hardin had intellectual gifts which appear not only in the letters that I read but in the fact that during his stay in prison he taught himself enough about the law to pass the state bar examination and to become a licensed lawyer after leaving prison. But it was too late for Hardin to establish himself in a respectable law career. He hung out his shingle in rural Gonzales County and the little town of Junction as well as the big town of El Paso, but he got practically no business; potential clients were probably too frightened of Hardin's image as a gunslinger to bring him their patronage.[33]

Wending my way through the archives of vigilante violence was not always like the sobering experience of reading the letters of John Wesley Hardin. In New Mexico, among the historical annals of that extremely violent state I found some comic relief. In Santa Fe where, under the skilled guidance and exceptional knowledge of New Mexico possessed by the state archivist, Myra E. Jenkins, I spent many profitable hours of research in the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, and came across evidence of a late nineteenth-century quasi-vigilante movement in New Mexico, the White Caps.[34] The most complete accounts of the New Mexico White Caps have since been published by Robert W. Larson and Andrew Bancroft Schlesinger,[35] but I am proud that, in a 1969 publication,[36] I was the first to call attention to the national significance of the New Mexico White Caps. The White Caps, of the northern New Mexican plains and mountains, were relatively poor Hispanic herders who cut fences and used violence to protect their pasture lands against land grabs by well-to-do New Mexicans of both Anglo and Spanish descent.

So rampant was the White Cap violence that the territorial governor, L. Bradford Prince, paid the Pinkerton Detective Agency to provide an operative, the famous Texas cowboy detective, Charlie Siringo, to infiltrate the White Caps. The comedy in the story resulted from a mail mix-up that at first left me puzzled. Siringo operated in New Mexico under an alias, of course, and he reported periodically by letter to Governor Prince.[37] Siringo's letters to Prince were most interesting, but suddenly I found myself reading a series of effusive letters to Siringo from a young woman in Colorado, letters that had nothing to do with the White Cap investigation. Then the mystery cleared up. It seems that Governor Prince was not the most happily married of men, and, to compensate for the joys absent at home, he had a mistress who resided in Colorado. The result was that the governor's secret correspondence with his paramour got crossed with his secret correspondence with Siringo, an episode that Siringo omitted from his published memoir of his detective work among the White Caps.[38].

[33] Brown, *Strain of Violence,* pp. 257-58, 261-65, 275-76. See, also, Lewis Nordyke, *John Wesley Hardin: Texas Gunman* (New York: Morrow, 1957).

[34] "The 'White Caps,' 1890-1893" (file of manuscripts and clippings in L. Bradford Prince papers, New Mexico State Records Center, Santa Fe).

[35] Robert W. Larson, "The White Caps of New Mexico: A Study of Ethnic Militancy in the Southwest," *Pacific Historical Review,* 44 (1975): 171-85. Andrew Bancroft Schlesinger, "Las Gorras Blancas, 1889-1891," *Journal of Mexican American History* 1 (1971): 87-143.

[36] Richard Maxwell Brown, "Historical Patterns of Violence in America," pp. 70-73, in Graham and Gurr, eds., *History of Violence in America.*

[37] The letters, reports, and expense accounts of Siringo (alias Charles Leon and C. Leon Allison), whose infiltration of the White Caps was very successful, are in the J. A. Ancheta file (for the period of Feb. 11-Aug. 7, 1891) of the L. Bradford Prince papers.

[38] Charles A. Siringo, *A Cowboy Detective: A True Story of Twenty-Two Years with a World-Famous Detective Agency* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1912).

As a byproduct of my research on American vigilantism, I compiled and published quite complete statistics on vigilante violence: the number and location of vigilante movements from 1767 to 1910, state-by-state; the size of such movements; and the number of fatalities inflicted by vigilantes.[39] We also have comprehensive knowledge of and statistics in regard to the vast subject of black-white racial conflict.[40] Our knowledge, also, of urban riots is quite complete on the basis not only of published works in letter press but of doctoral dissertations available from University Microfilms. But one of the most incompletely studied aspects of American violence is also one of the most important; that is industrial violence, the violent conflict between management and labor that flourished, especially, from 1877 to 1937. During that period there were over 100,000 strikes in the United States involving thirty-five to forty million workers and thousands of companies and corporations. Of these strikes we may conservatively estimate that about a thousand involved violence of at least minor degree, and approximately one hundred strikes involved major violence with at least a thousand deaths the cumulative result.[41] These hundred or so major strikes—or, in some cases, lockouts—are well known to historians.[42] Many have been the subjects of books, monographs, or solid scholarly articles, but there is no overall scholarly book-length study of violent American industrial conflict. There is a most informative brief overview of American labor violence published in 1969 by Philip Taft and Philip Ross, but, useful as it is, it barely scratches the surface of a huge subject of great historical significance.[43] We need to know much more, therefore, about the industrial aspects of our violent history.

In this connection, there is a sad story about a notable gap in the archives of violence, the loss of vital information that might have been avoided by wiser and more discerning retention of incomparable archival records on industrial violence. During the 1930s, and perhaps as far back as the period between 1910 and 1930, the Labor Department of the U.S. government compiled very detailed information on American strikes. During the 1930s, under the direction of Commissioner of Labor Statistics Isador Lubin, the Bureau of Labor Statistics obtained notices or leads regarding strikes from daily papers, labor and trade journals, as well as reports from government labor boards. The Bureau of Labor Statistics systematically received clippings "from newspapers in all cities in the country with over 50,000 population and from some industrial cities of less than 50,000." The Bureau also subscribed to or had access to "every known labor or trade paper published in the country." From the information "obtained in these 700 daily, weekly, and monthly papers and journals . . . few, if any, strikes" escaped the Bureau's attention. On the basis of such information, the Bureau then sent out a twenty-four-question questionnaire to "all parties," that is, both labor and management, engaged in each industrial dispute. The Bureau

[39] Brown, *Strain of Violence,* pp. 108-11 and appendix 3.

[40] Ibid., chap. 7 and appendix 4.

[41] These generalizations on strike activity and violence are based on Philip Taft and Philip Ross, "Amerian Labor Violence: Its Causes, Character, Outcome," pp. 281-395, in Graham and Gurr, eds., *History of Violence in America;* and Florence Peterson, *Strikes in the United States: 1880-1936,* U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 651, August 1937 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1938).

[42] A model study is George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, *The Great Coalfield War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), dealing with the southern Colorado coal miners' strike, 1913-14, and its climax in the Ludlow battle and tragic death of women and children, April 20, 1914.

[43] Taft and Ross, "American Labor Violence."

did this in order to get "detailed and authentic information" about the strikes in regard to such matters as location, length of the strike, the cause of the dispute, the numbers of man-hours lost, the terms of settlement, and the method of solving the dispute.[44]

What particularly intrigues me in the Bureau of Labor Statistics questionnaire is question number 20, concerning "violence in connection with [the] dispute." Under question 20 were the following eight significant sub-questions:[45]

1. Any deaths? If so, number of deaths?
2. Any injuries? If so, number of injuries (needing medical attention)?
3. Any property damage? If so, the amount of it in dollar terms?
4. Any damage suits? If so, the number of them?
5. Any arrests? If so, the number of them?
6. Any criminal suits at law? If so, the number of them?
7. Was the National Guard called in?
8. Was martial law declared?

The response to these eight questions embodied a census of industrial violence. The result of this part of the questionnaire was not quantified. Quantification of the results would make a most important contribution to the statistics of industrial violence in a very turbulent era of our labor history, the 1930s, and perhaps for several decades before the 1930s.[46] Aside from the tabulation of such matters as human casualty figures, amount of property damage, and so on, the individual responses to question no. 20, in the context of the entire questionnaire, would provide us a brief but pointed profile of virtually every industrial dispute in the U.S. during the 1930s.

It should be a simple matter, of course, for me or any interested researcher to go to the National Archives or the Labor Department to inspect, tabulate, and analyze the information on industrial violence contained there. But there, alas, the archives of violence are, apparently, blank; for my informants in both the National Archives and the Labor Department are confident that these questionnaires with their extremely significant data were destroyed long ago either in the National Archives or in the Labor Department.

I have mentioned some of the major pieces of research in the archives of violence, and I have related some of my own experiences in archival research. But, in general, what are the achievements of the archival approach to research on American violence? Overall, the post-archival works of scholarship on American violence, many of which I have already cited above, have immensely deepened our knowledge of the subject. Much of this scholarship has been revisionist, laying to rest long but uncritically accepted myths of violent behavior and belying unverified and inflated casualty figures of notable violent episodes. I can think of no better example than Adrian Cook's prodigious archival research on and perceptive interpretation of New York City's great anti-draft riots of the summer of 1863. Until the publication in 1974 of Cook's book, *The Armies of the Streets,* the number of dead in published historical accounts of the anti-draft riots had been grossly exaggerated. The traditional figure, published in book after

[44] Peterson, *Strikes in the U.S.,* chaps. 3-5, appendix 3.
[45] Ibid., p. 172.
[46] Ibid., chaps. 3-5, is unclear whether or not such information was collected for the period from 1880 to *circa* 1930.

book, was that a thousand or more persons had been killed in the course of the five-day rioting.[47] This astronomical number, many, many times larger than any other riot-fatality figure in American history, was totally punctured by Cook's research in the massive records of the municipal archives of New York City and in the archives of the Criminal Courts Building in downtown Manhattan. When Cook completed his painstaking archival research and his careful reckoning of the casualties, he informed us that only about one-tenth of the traditional number of 1,000 had actually lost their lives in the riots.[48] The replacement of the myth of the 1,000 dead, by the reality of the 105 to 119 who actually died, was a notable research achievement by Cook; the overall impact of his book was not, however, to diminish the importance of the New York City riots. Instead, by giving us dependable data as well as a graphic but authentic description of the riots and their suppression by municipal police and federal soldiers, Cook's perceptive account leaves us with the feeling that the riots may well have been the greatest in American urban history, and the total number of fatalities remains one of the highest in our riotous history.

A comparable achievement in archival research is the work done about Nat Turner's slave rebellion in antebellum Virginia. Publicity released in 1967 on William Styron's widely read novel, *The Confessions of Nat Turner,* stated that Styron had done his historical homework, that few primary sources on Turner's rebellion had survived, and that Styron's reading of them had been the work of a single day.[49] But the alleged paucity of primary sources on the Turner rebellion was stunningly refuted by the energetic archival research of Henry I. Tragle who found a gold-mine of primary sources in the Virginia State Archives supplemented by significant findings in the National Archives and the North Carolina Department of Archives and History. In addition, Tragle found the Southampton County Court record of Turner's trial. Tragle published many of these archival resources in 1971 in his massive documentary collection on the Turner revolt; and recently Stephen B. Oates, retracing Tragle's archival research, has given us at long last a complete and authoritative narrative and analysis of the Turner slave revolt.[50] Tragle's and Oates's archivally-based books are twin landmarks in the history of our violent black-white race relations.

Individual research feats like that of Cook, Tragle, and Oates can hardly be praised enough, yet there is an even more significant perspective emerging from post-archival research on American violence. This relates to the contribution which history makes as a generalizing social science. Has archival research on violence contributed to new and significant social-science generalization? The answer, I am happy to say, is heartily in the affirmative. Thus, one of the chief results of the archival trend in violence research is the new image of the riotous urban and rural crowd that has replaced Gustave Le Bon's late nineteenth-cen-

[47] For example, James McCague, *The Second Rebellion: The Story of the New York City Draft Riots of 1863* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), p. 178.

[48] Cook, *Armies of the Streets,* pp. 194, 213-18.

[49] William Styron, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. ix, states that only one significant contemporary source on the rebellion had survived. In an interview with George Plimpton in *The New York Times,* Oct. 8, 1967, Styron said that "what there is to know about Nat Turner can be learned in a single day's reading."

[50] Henry I. Tragle, ed., *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831: A Compilation of Source Material* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971). Stephen B. Oates, *The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

tury profile of the riotous crowd as a mindless mob, ready to be swayed and manipulated in any direction by calculating demagogues.[51] Many of us in the United States who have conducted archival research on American crowd activity have contributed to the new image of the crowd;[52] but the movement is an international one, with notable breakthroughs coming from the archival research in London and Paris by European historians headed by George Rudé with his impressive studies of French and English crowds in the period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[53] Thanks to the archival research of Rudé Hobsbawm, Thompson, Cobb, Hay, and others on the other side of the Atlantic[54] as well as the publications of many on this side,[55] and thanks also to the prosopographical method of collective-biography pioneered by Namier,[56] Le Bon's sketch of the mindless, faceless mob has been blown to smithereens. Archival research and the prosopographical method have enabled us to know in a precise way the character, identity, and role of many riotous urban and rural crowds. We know in instance after instance the names of the rioters, what they looked like, where they lived, and, most important, the intellectual and psychological motivation of their riotous behavior. Driven home, too, has been the fundamental rationality of crowd violence: riotous crowds that were not aimless in their violence but who used rioting as an accepted mode of protest, their ability to protest non-violently having been blocked by their manadated lack of participation in the political system.[57]

It has been possible to make the significant scholarly gains I have mentioned because of the high accessibility and usability of the archives of violence by individual researchers. Currently a wall of technological gimmickry is being built up by some librarians, a wall that is increasingly separating librarians from li-

[51] Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (London: Ernest Benn, 1930). Published first in 1895 as *Psychologie des foules,* Le Bon's book was first translated into English in 1896.

[52] In addition to works cited thus far, see Pauline Maier, "Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America, *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3rd series, 27 (1970): 3-35; William Ander Smith, "Anglo-Colonial Society and the Mob, 1740-1775" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1965); the chapters by Gary B. Nash, Edward Countryman, Marvin L. Michael Kay, Dirk Hoerder (a West German), and Ronald Hoffman in Alfred F. Young, ed., *The American Revolution* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976); Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976); and Richard Maxwell Brown, "Back Country Rebellions and the Homestead Ethic in America, 1740-1799," pp. 73-99, in Brown and Don E. Fehrenbacher, eds., *Tradition, Conflict, and Modernization: Perspectives on the American Revolution* (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

[53] George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); *Wilkes and Liberty: A Social Study of 1763 to 1774* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (New York: Wiley, 1964); *Paris and London in the Eighteenth Century: Studies in Popular Protest* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

[54] Eric J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968). Edward P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 50 (February 1971): 76–136, and *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975). Douglas Hay et al., *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975). For Rudé's books, see note 53, above. An American scholar, Charles Tilly, has contributed important works on European crowd activity; see Charles, Louise, and Richard Tilly, *The Rebellious Century: 1830-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), and Charles Tilly, "Collective Action in England and America, 1765-1775," pp. 45-72, in Brown and Fehrenbacher, eds., *Tradition, Conflict, and Modernization.*

[55] See the names of the scholars cited in these notes as well as others.

[56] Lawrence Stone, "Prosopography," *Daedalus* 100 (Winter 1971): 46–79.

[57] Among many works, see, for example, Maier, "Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority;" Smith, "Anglo-Colonial Society and the Mob;" and Thompson, "Moral Economy of the English Crowd."

brary users. There is, unfortunately, a university-library tendency to lower the accessibility and usability of research-library resources for historians.[58] This did not happen in the relations between archivists and historians. By the 1960s the National Archives was functioning as the colossal research institution it is; moreover, its immense resources in the Archives Building in the heart of Washington, D.C., came to be supplemented and extended by the riches of the regional federal records centers. Meanwhile the state archives departments of the 1960s were at a new level of accessibility and usability with many state archives collections being housed at last in spacious new buildings and being well served by expanded staffs of enthusiastic, knowledgeable, supremely helpful archival specialists. At the same time, new local, municipal, and private archival organizations were widening the scope of archival research. The result was the research breakthroughs in the archives of violence that I have discussed above.

[58] The issues and problems involved here were thoroughly aired in the University of Oregon Symposium on "The Future of Research Libraries," April 20-21, 1978; the proceedings of the symposium are being publsihed by the University of Oregon.