

Washington, D.C. Riot Report

Prompt:

The year is 2015. Through a strange twist of fate, you have landed a job in the [Washington D.C. Mayor's office](#). The city's new mayor believes that the best way to enrich civic life in Washington, D.C. is to commemorate important events from the city's history. To find overlooked historical events, the mayor assigned every staffer a specific month and date range to research, and, by chance, you were given August 1835. To your surprise, you discovered that quite a lot has happened in the city of Washington during the month of August. You are particularly intrigued by a line of text you find in the Wikipedia article entitled "[List of riots](#)":

"1835 August – Lynch mob and riots in Washington, D.C. over a drunken attack by slave Arthur Bowen against his mistress, Anna Thornton."¹

You decided that this event deserved more research, and so you spent the better part of an afternoon at the Library of Congress going through rolls of microfilm, searching through old newspapers for stories that would shed light on what happened that week in August 1835. You managed to find eight useful articles in issues of the *Globe*, the *Mirror*, and the *Metropolitan* – daily newspapers published in Washington and Georgetown during the 1830s. Unfortunately, you're on a tight deadline. The mayor has asked you to submit a full report on the alleged "riot of 1835" and the week surrounding it, and, sadly, you'll have to work on it over Memorial Day weekend.

¹ Wikipedia contributors, "List of riots," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List_of_riots&oldid=606335132 (accessed May 18, 2013).

Assignment:

Your task is to prepare a special report for the mayor. The final report should be approximately 1,200 words long. First, you must read and analyze all of the historic newspaper articles you have to consult, all of which can be found on the HIST-100 Blackboard course website. After reviewing these primary sources, you must construct a report for the mayor, who has left specific instructions about what the report should contain:

- **A detailed interpretation of the riot of 1835 and related events from the week surrounding it (August 9th - August 15) based on primary sources.** For historians, an interpretation is a historical narrative based on the best available primary sources. The mayor wants you to construct a historical narrative of this particular week in D.C.'s history, one that explains the sequence of events, who the major historical actors and groups were, what they did, and any other information you deem relevant. Importantly, your narrative should make it clear how the week's events were linked together. Riots and other forms of disorder do not simply "happen," so according to the sources, what caused the riot? (Some causes may be less obvious than others). By the end of the report, the mayor should know both *what* happened during this week in D.C.'s history and, just as importantly, *why*.

This part of the report should be at least 750 words long, and your word count for this and subsequent sections should not include footnotes.

- **A reflection on your historical method.** The mayor is a bit of history buff, so she would like to read about your historical method. Include a few paragraphs explaining how you extracted, organized, and synthesized the information you found in the sources, how you compared your sources for similarities and differences, how you weighed which sources were most trustworthy (or not) or most useful (or not), and anything else you did to help yourself reconstruct the week's events. End this section with a brief discussion of other sources the mayor could seek out to improve the report in the future; describe them, and specifically explain why you think they could help improve the interpretation.

This part of the report should be at least 250 words long.

- **A recommendation of what the mayor should do for the 180th anniversary of this week.** This whole project started because the mayor wanted to encourage the people of Washington, D.C. to remember and reflect upon their shared history. Since you are now city's hall resident expert about this chaotic week in August, 1835, the mayor would like you to conclude your report by answering these questions: should the city commemorate what happened this week in 1835? If so, how? And if not, why not?

This part of the report should be at least 200 words long.

Formatting Instructions

Since you'll be turning in this assignment via email, I may transform your text to suit my peculiar tastes. Still, there's a few academic standards you should follow:

- A header with your name, the date, the class number, and the assignment (D.C. Riot Report) in the top right corner of the first page.
- 12 point, Times New Roman font.
- 1 inch margins (the standard in Microsoft Word).
- Double or 1.5 spacing.
- Page numbers (first page optional)
- No cover page please, but I'd love it if you gave your report a unique title.
- Subheadings should left out of most historical essays, but feel free to use them here.

Citation Instructions

For this report, please cite your sources (the newspaper articles) using the special student-friendly subset of the Chicago Manual of Style called "Turabian." Turabian is the most common footnote-citation style used by historians, so learning it will help you both write your own historical arguments and critically assess the arguments of professional scholars. Purdue University's Writing Lab has a robust [online guide](#) that combines the Chicago Manual/ Turabian style, which I highly recommend. (There are many other guides out there on the web. If you find a great one, let me know).

In Turabian style, instead citing your sources through parenthetical citations (Grant 2009) you'll put all of your citation information into a footnote (as I've done below).² In order to ease you into this process, I've decided to go ahead and format all your citations for you, just for this first assignment. You'll find all the citations for the articles listed on the next page.

When you decide you'd like to cite an article for the first time, simply create a new footnote and then copy and paste the citation into it at the bottom of the page. (You can create a footnote by clicking on References, then "Insert footnote" in Microsoft Word. The keyboard shortcut on a PC is ctrl+alt+f; on a Mac the shortcut is option+command+f). After you cite the article once with a the full citation, you can abbreviate the citation for the every subsequent entry. Look at the bottom of the page to see an illustration of how this works.³⁴

² Jordan Grant, *Washington, D.C. Riot Report* (Washington, D.C.: American University, 2014), 3.

³ "It is with extreme regret...," *Globe*, August 14, 1835.

⁴ "It is," *Globe*

Note-Style Citations for Newspaper Articles

Globe:

"It is with extreme regret....," *Globe*, August 14, 1835.

"Washington City, Aug. 11, 1835," *Globe*, August 20, 1835 (from the *Hartford (Ct.) Democrat*).

"Many thousands of a pamphlet....," *Globe*, August 24, 1835, (from the *Louisville Advertiser*).

Metropolitan:

"Much excitement has prevailed....," *Metropolitan*, August 12, 1835.

"The Public Peace," *Metropolitan*, August 15, 1835.

"We see that several of the old Editors....," *Metropolitan*, August 19, 1835.

Mirror:

Snow and Walker, "Look at This!," *Mirror*, August 8, 1835.

"Disturbed State of This City," *Mirror*, August 15, 1835.

Rubric:

	<i>Excellent Mastery</i>	<i>Good Mastery</i>	<i>Some Mastery</i>	<i>Minimal Mastery</i>	<i>No Mastery</i>
<p>Historical Interpretation</p> <p>40%</p>	<p>Using almost all the available primary sources, the interpretation gives readers an excellent chronological understanding of what happened that week. The narrative describes all major events and actors, and it discusses many factors that caused or shaped the sequence of events.</p>	<p>Using many of the available primary sources, your interpretation gives readers a good chronological understanding of what happened that week. The narrative describes most major events and actors, and it discusses several factors that caused or shaped the sequence of events.</p>	<p>Using some of the available primary sources, your interpretation gives readers a rough chronological understanding of what happened that week. The narrative describes several major events and actors, and it discusses a few factors that caused or shaped the sequence of events.</p>	<p>Using very few of the available primary sources, your interpretation gives readers a vague chronological understanding of what happened that week. The narrative describes very few of the major events and actors, and it discusses almost no factors that caused or shaped the sequence and outcome of events.</p>	<p>Using almost none of the available primary sources, your interpretation gives readers an incorrect chronological understanding of what happened that week. The narrative describes none of the major events and actors, and it overlooks or ignores factors that caused or shaped the sequence and outcome of events.</p>
<p>Reflection on Historical Method</p> <p>20%</p>	<p>The reflection explains in detail how the writer extracted, organized, and synthesized the information. It demonstrates that s/he carefully compared all the available sources and made justifiable, observation-based judgments about the sources' relative trustworthiness and usefulness. It provides readers with thoughtful and creative examples of primary sources that could be used to improve the report and clearly explains why they would be helpful.</p>	<p>The reflection generally explains how the writer extracted, organized, and synthesized the information. It demonstrates that s/he compared many of the available sources and made mostly justifiable, observation-based judgments about the sources' relative trustworthiness and usefulness. It provides readers with limited but interesting examples of primary sources that could be used to improve the report and mostly explains why they would be helpful.</p>	<p>The reflection superficially explains how the writer extracted, organized, and synthesized the information. It demonstrates that s/he casually compared some of the available sources and made somewhat justifiable judgments about the sources' relative trustworthiness and usefulness. It provides readers with a few, adequate examples of primary sources that could be used to improve the report and mostly explains why they would be helpful.</p>	<p>The reflection only hints at how the writer extracted, organized, and synthesized the information. It indicates that s/he haphazardly compared a few of the available sources and made possibly rushed judgments about the sources' relative trustworthiness and usefulness. It provides readers with almost no examples of primary sources that could be used to improve the report and only vaguely alludes to why they would be helpful.</p>	<p>The reflection fails to explain how the writer extracted, organized, and synthesized the information. It indicates that s/he did not compare the available sources or make judgments about the sources' relative trustworthiness and usefulness. It provides readers with no examples of primary sources that could be used to improve the report.</p>

<p>Discussion of Commemoration</p> <p>20%</p>	<p>The final section thoughtfully weighs the pros and cons of commemorating this week in Washington's history. Either s/he explains what a good commemoration strategy would be, citing several specific aspects of the historical narrative and its connection with present-day Washington or s/he describes in detail why s/he opposes it, citing several specific aspects of the historical narrative.</p>	<p>The final section competently weighs the pros and cons of commemorating this week in Washington's history. Either s/he explains what a good commemoration strategy would be, citing one or two specific aspects of the historical narrative and its connection with present-day Washington, or s/he describes in detail why s/he opposes it, citing one or two specific aspects of the historical narrative and its connection with present-day Washington.</p>	<p>The final section adequately weighs the pros and cons of commemorating this week in Washington's history. Either s/he explains what a good commemoration strategy would be, citing general aspects of the historical narrative and its connection with present-day Washington, or s/he describes in detail why s/he opposes it, citing general aspects of the historical narrative and its connection with present-day Washington.</p>	<p>The final section attempts but fails to weigh the pros and cons of commemorating this week in Washington's history. Either s/he explains what a good commemoration strategy would be, citing general aspects of the historical narrative and its connection with present-day Washington, or s/he describes in detail why s/he opposes it, citing general aspects of the historical narrative and its connection with present-day Washington.</p>	<p>The final section does not weigh the pros and cons of commemorating this week in Washington's history.</p>
<p>Citation and Evidence</p> <p>10%</p>	<p>The writer correctly and thoroughly cites sources throughout the report.</p>	<p>The writer usually cites sources, though there are some gaps in citation and possible errors in their construction.</p>	<p>The writer offers partial citations for the various sections of the report and a few citations are constructed incorrectly.</p>	<p>The writer offer little to no citation of primary sources and almost all the citations are constructed incorrectly.</p>	<p>The writer did not cite sources.</p>
<p>Mechanics</p> <p>10%</p>	<p>Spelling, punctuation, grammar all correct; proper sentence and paragraph construction.</p>	<p>Occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence and paragraph construction; not severe enough to hinder an understanding of the report's main sections</p>	<p>Weaknesses in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence and paragraph construction make sections of the paper unintelligible.</p>	<p>Problems in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence and paragraph construction make sections of the paper unintelligible.</p>	<p>Problems in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence and paragraph constructions severe as to make the paper unintelligible.</p>

