

0. DEAD RABBITS vs. THE BOWERY BOYS - Story
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By 1857, vast numbers of Irish working people - trying to escape restrictive laws and famine in their own country - had moved to New York City. Aiming to curb immigrants' drinking habits, the New York State Assembly passed a Liquor Excise Law which closed saloons on Sundays. The law took effect on Sunday, the 4th of July, 1857.

Totally disregarding the law aimed directly at them, the Irish people of Five Points kept their saloons open. When the police tried to enforce the law, the Irish - led by the "Dead Rabbits" gang - started a riot. The police - aided by the "Bowery Boys" gang - were quick to respond. Several people died in the fighting which was reported in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*.

Although the lives of street children in tenement New York were extremely difficult, "Amsterdam Vallon" and "Jenny Everdeane" (as depicted in the movie *Gangs of New York*) are works of fiction. It is not hard to imagine, however, that historical gang members (like William Poole - known as "Bill the Butcher") were capable of killing people the way "Bill the Butcher" dispatches Liam Neeson in the movie.

Who were the historical characters William Poole and Monk Eastman? Were they really part of the gangs who lived and fought in New York City during the Civil War?

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DEAD-RABBITS-vs.-THE-BOWERY-BOYS-Gangs-of-New-York>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DEAD-RABBITS-vs.-THE-BOWERY-BOYS-Gangs-of-New-York>



Irish People of Five Points - July 4, 1857 Riot

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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<p>RIOTING AND BLOODSHED THE 4TH AND 5TH OF JULY. THE STREETS BARRICADED. THE CITY UNDER ARMS. Six Men Killed and Over One Hundred Wounded. THREE REGIMENTS CALLED OUT. Riots in the 6th, 7th and 13th Wards. "Dead Rabbits" Against the "Bowery Boys." Metropolitans Driven from the 6th Ward. THE FIGHT AT COW BAY. Chimneys Hurled Down Upon the Populace. ORDER RESTORED AT MIDNIGHT.</p> <p><small>When the sun set on the Fourth of July, the people were saying, "What a stupid, quiet, noiseless Fourth it had been." There being no telegraph connections at the Metropolitan headquarters, and no news,</small></p>	<p>VOL. VI</p> <p><small>close together, funds, feelings as were Bowery Boy berry-street soon make a combine up the street (the the fugitives rein upon their pursu: return down to M. Baxter-street, an hour.</small></p> <p><small>As length tw drawn from vario conflict with a vie A reserve of 80 m marched steadily with yells and i from alley ways s even thrown up passed along. A upon the houses: chimneys and h making them at full still pushed and making sev house, near the shot were fired, as the officers, continued that t dash for the how fastened on the i with such effec</small></p>
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Reports of Gang-Related Violence in NYC - July 4-5, 1857

Image, described above, online courtesy Library of Congress.

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Scene from the July 1857 Saloon-Closing Riot in NYC

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