

= 1689 Boston revolt =

The 1689 Boston revolt was a popular uprising on April 18, 1689, against the rule of Sir Edmund Andros, the governor of the Dominion of New England. A well @-@ organized "mob" of provincial militia and citizens formed in the city and arrested dominion officials. Members of the Church of England, believed by Puritans to sympathize with the administration of the dominion, were also taken into custody by the rebels. Neither faction sustained casualties during the revolt. Leaders of the former Massachusetts Bay Colony then reclaimed control of the government. In other colonies, members of governments displaced by the dominion were returned to power.

Andros, commissioned governor of New England in 1686, had earned the enmity of the local populace by enforcing the restrictive Navigation Acts, denying the validity of existing land titles, restricting town meetings, and appointing unpopular regular officers to lead colonial militia, among other actions. Furthermore, he had infuriated Puritans in Boston by promoting the Church of England, which was rejected by many Nonconformist New England colonists.

= = Background = =

In the early 1680s, King Charles II of England began taking steps to reorganize the colonies of New England. The charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony was revoked in 1684 after its Puritan rulers refused to act on his demands for reforms in the colony, when Charles sought to streamline the administration of the small colonies and bring them more closely under crown control. He died in 1685 and his successor, the Roman Catholic James II, continued the process, which culminated in the creation of the Dominion of New England.

In 1686, the former governor of New York, Sir Edmund Andros, was appointed as dominion governor. The dominion was composed of the territories of the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island colonies. In 1688, its jurisdiction was expanded to include New York, and East and West Jersey.

Andros's rule was extremely unpopular in New England. He disregarded local representation, denied the validity of existing land titles in Massachusetts (which had been dependent on the old charter), restricted town meetings, and actively promoted the Church of England in largely Puritan regions. He also enforced the Navigation Acts, unfavored laws that threatened the existence of certain trading practices of New England. The royal troops stationed in Boston were often mistreated by their officers who were supporters of the governor and often either Anglican or Roman Catholic.

Meanwhile, in England, James became increasingly unpopular. The king alienated otherwise supportive Tories with his attempts to relax the Penal Laws, and in 1687 issued the Declaration of Indulgence, establishing some freedom of religion, a move opposed by the Anglican church hierarchy. He increased the power of the regular army, an action seen by many Parliamentarians as a threat to their authority, and placed Catholics in important military positions. James also attempted to place sympathizers in Parliament who he hoped would repeal the Test Act, which required a strict Anglican religious test for many civil offices. With the birth of his son and potential successor James in June 1688, some Whigs and Tories set aside their political differences and conspired to replace James with his Protestant son @-@ in @-@ law, William, Prince of Orange. The Dutch prince, who had tried fruitlessly to get James to reconsider his policies, agreed to an invasion, and the nearly bloodless revolution that followed in November and December 1688 established William and his wife Mary as co @-@ rulers.

The religious leaders of Massachusetts, led by Cotton and Increase Mather, were opposed to the rule of Andros, and they organized dissent targeted to influence the court in London. After King James published the Declaration of Indulgence, Increase Mather sent an appreciation letter to the king regarding the declaration, and suggested to other Massachusetts pastors that they also express gratitude to the king as a means to gain favor and influence. Ten pastors agreed to do so, and they decided to send Increase Mather to England to press their case against Andros. Despite dominion secretary Edward Randolph's repeated attempts to stop him (including pressing criminal

charges ) , Mather was clandestinely spirited aboard a ship bound for England in April 1688 . He and other Massachusetts agents were received by James , who promised in October 1688 that the colony 's concerns would be addressed . The events of the revolution , however , halted this attempt to gain redress .

The Massachusetts agents then petitioned the new monarchs and the Lords of Trade ( predecessors to the Board of Trade that oversaw colonial affairs ) for restoration of the Massachusetts charter . Mather furthermore convinced the Lords of Trade to delay notifying Andros of the revolution . He had already dispatched , to previous colonial governor Simon Bradstreet , a letter containing news of a report ( prepared before the revolution ) that the annulment of the Massachusetts charter had been illegal , and that the magistrates should " prepare the minds of the people for a change " . Rumors of the revolution apparently reached some individuals in Boston before official news arrived . John Nelson , a Boston merchant who would figure prominently in the revolt , wrote of the events in a letter dated late March , and the letter prompted a meeting of senior anti @-@ Andros political and religious leaders in Massachusetts .

Andros first received a warning of the impending revolt against his control while leading an expedition to fortify Pemaquid ( present @-@ day Bristol , Maine ) , intending to protect the area against French and Indian attacks . In early January 1688 / 9 , he received a letter from James describing the Dutch military buildup . On January 10 he issued a proclamation warning against Protestant agitation and prohibiting an uprising against the dominion . The military force he led in Maine was composed of British regulars and militia from Massachusetts and Maine . The militia companies were commanded by regulars , who imposed harsh discipline that alienated the militiamen from their officers . Alerted to the meetings in Boston , and in receipt of unofficial reports of the revolution , Andros returned there from Maine in mid @-@ March . Amid wild rumors that Andros had brought them to Maine as part of a so @-@ called " popish plot " , the militia there mutinied , and those from Massachusetts began to make their way home . When a copy of a proclamation announcing the revolution reached Boston in early April , Andros had the messenger arrested , but his news was distributed , emboldening the people . Andros wrote to his commander at Pemaquid on April 16 that " there is a general buzzing among the people , great with expectation of their old charter " , even as he prepared to have the returning deserters arrested and shipped back to Maine . The threat of arrests by their own colonial militia increased tensions between the people of Boston and the dominion government .

= = Revolt in Boston = =

At about 5 : 00 am on April 18 , militia companies began gathering outside Boston at Charlestown just across the Charles River and at Roxbury , located at the far end of the neck connecting Boston to the mainland . At about 8 : 00 am the Charlestown companies boarded boats and crossed the river , while the Roxbury companies marched down the neck and into the city . Simultaneously , conspirators from the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company entered the homes of the regimental drummers in the city , confiscating their equipment . Joined by a growing mob , the militia companies met up at about 8 : 30 and began arresting dominion and regimental leaders . They eventually surrounded Fort Mary , where Andros was quartered .

Among the first to be arrested was Captain John George of the HMS Rose , who came ashore between 9 : 00 and 10 : 00 , only to be met by a platoon of militia and the ship 's carpenter , who had joined the rebels . When George demanded to see an arrest warrant , the militiamen drew their swords and took him into custody . By about 10 : 00 , most of the dominion and military officials either had been arrested or had fled to the safety of Castle Island or other fortified outposts . Boston Anglicans , including a churchwarden and an apothecary , were rounded up by the mob . Sometime before noon an orange flag was raised on Beacon Hill , signaling another 1 @,@ 500 militiamen to enter the city . These troops formed up in the market square , where a declaration was read . In it , the leaders claimed to support " the noble Undertaking of the Prince of Orange " , and to rise up because of a " horrid Popish Plot " that had been uncovered .

The old Massachusetts colonial leadership , headed by ex @-@ governor Simon Bradstreet , then

urged Governor Andros to surrender for his own safety , citing the mob of which they claimed to be " wholly ignorant " . He refused and instead tried to escape to the Rose . A boat that came ashore from the Rose was intercepted by militia , and Andros was forced back into Fort Mary . Negotiations ensued and Andros agreed to leave the fort to meet with the rebel council . Promised safe conduct , he was marched under guard to the townhouse where the council had assembled . There he was told ( as an anonymous account of the exchange described it ) that " they must and would have the Government in their own hands " , and that he was under arrest . He was taken to the home of dominion official John Usher , and held under close watch .

The Rose and Fort William on Castle Island refused to surrender immediately . On the 19th , when the ship 's crew on the Rose was told that the captain had planned to take the ship to France to join the exiled James , a struggle ensued , and the Protestants among the crew took down the ship 's rigging . After the troops on Castle Island saw this , they surrendered .

= = Aftermath = =

After Fort Mary fell on the 19th , Andros was moved there from Usher 's house . He was confined with Joseph Dudley and other dominion officials until June 7 , when he was transferred to Castle Island . A story circulated widely that he attempted an escape dressed in women 's clothing . This was disputed by the Anglican minister in Boston , Robert Ratcliff , who claimed that story and others had " not the least foundation of Truth " , and that they were " falsehoods , and lies " propagated to " render the Governour odious to his people " . Andros did make a successful escape from Castle Island on August 2 , after his servant bribed the sentries with liquor . He managed to flee to Rhode Island , but was recaptured soon thereafter and kept in what was virtually solitary confinement . He and others arrested in the wake of the revolt were held for 10 months before being sent to England for trial . Massachusetts agents in London refused to sign the documents listing the charges against Andros , so he was summarily acquitted and released . He later served as governor of Virginia and Maryland .

= = Dissolution of the dominion = =

When the other New England colonies in the dominion were informed of the overthrow of Andros , pre @-@ dominion colonial authorities moved to restore their former governments to power . Rhode Island and Connecticut resumed governance under their earlier charters , and Massachusetts resumed governance according to its vacated charter after being temporarily governed by a committee composed of magistrates , Massachusetts Bay officials , and a majority of Andros 's council . The committee was disbanded after some Boston leaders felt that radical rebels held too much sway over it . New Hampshire was temporarily left without formal government and was controlled by Massachusetts and its governor , Simon Bradstreet , who served as de facto ruler of the northern colony . Plymouth also resumed its previous form of governance .

During his captivity , Andros had been able to send a message to Francis Nicholson , his New York @-@ based lieutenant governor . Nicholson received the request for assistance in mid @-@ May , but most of his troops had been sent to Maine , and with rising tensions in New York , he was unable to take any effective action . Nicholson himself was overthrown by a faction led by Jacob Leisler , and he fled to England . Leisler governed New York until 1691 , when a detachment of troops arrived , followed by Henry Sloughter , commissioned governor by William and Mary . Sloughter had Leisler tried on charges of high treason ; he was convicted and executed .

After the suppression of Leisler 's Rebellion and the reinstatement of colonial governments in New England , no further effort was made by English officials to restore the " shattered " dominion . Once the fait accompli of Andros ' arrest was known , the discussion in London turned to dealing with Massachusetts and its revoked charter . Out of these discussions came the formation of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in 1691 , merging Massachusetts with the charterless Plymouth Colony and territories previously belonging to New York , including Nantucket , Martha 's Vineyard , the Elizabeth Islands , and parts of Maine . Increase Mather was unsuccessful in his attempts to

restore the old Puritan rule : the new charter called for an appointed governor and religious toleration .