The Six-Shooter State

American violence is schizophrenic. On the one hand, many Americans support the creation of a powerful bureaucracy of coercion made up of police and military forces that provide public security. At the same time, many of those citizens also demand the private right to protect their own families, homes, and property. This book diagnoses this schizophrenia as a product of a distinctive institutional history in which private forms of violence – vigilantes, private detectives, mercenary gunfighters – emerged in concert with the creation of new public and state forms of violence, such as police departments or the National Guard. This dual public and private face of American violence resulted from the upending of a tradition of republican governance, in which public security had been indistinguishable from private effort, by the nineteenth-century social transformations of the Civil War and the Market Revolution.

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The Six-Shooter State

Public and Private Violence in American Politics

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And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

— James 3:18
Contents

List of Figures page ix
List of Tables xi
Acknowledgments xiii
List of Abbreviations xvii
1 Introduction 1
2 Jurisdictional Decoupling as Institutional Change 23
3 Bandits, Elites, and Vigilantes in Antebellum Illinois 63
4 Pinkertons and Police in Antebellum Chicago 99
5 Racist Vigilantism as Reform in Reconstruction Louisiana 138
6 The Violent Careers of American Gunfighters 197
7 Conclusion 238
Index 261
Figures

1. Jurisdictional coupling .......................... page 34
2. Enclosed authority and jurisdictional coupling .......................... 70
3. Northern Illinois ........................................ 74
4. Membership in claims associations and vigilante organizations (1835–1845) ............... 90
5. Mayoral co-affiliations (1835–1868) ......................................... 110
6. Delegative authority and jurisdictional coupling ........................................ 112
7. Delegative capacity in select neighborhoods (1855–1856) ............... 119
8. Trends in private security employment in Chicago (1851–1870) ............... 130
9. Selected career trajectories of Chicago violence experts (1850–1870) ............... 135
10. Representative authority and jurisdictional coupling ............................ 144
11. White League presence and political intimidation (1874) ............... 183
12. Imperial authority and jurisdictional coupling ........................................ 204
13. Gunfighting participants (1850–1930) ........................................ 226
14. Professional gunfighter career types (1850–1930) ........................................ 230
15. Flow of gunfighters between locales (1850–1930) ........................................ 232
16. US military battle campaigns against Indian groups (1866–1891) ............... 233
17. Gunfighter social network (1850–1930) ........................................ 235
18. Ratio of watchmen to police in select cities (1865–1900) ............... 246
## Tables

1. Jurisdictional coupling and coercive enforcement in the nineteenth-century United States  
   page 34
2. Change in coercive enforcement in the nineteenth-century United States  
   61
3. Network clusters and county membership in Ogle-Lee  
   86
4. Networks and quasi-legal enforcement  
   92
5. Location of local violent events in Chicago newspapers (1853–1856)  
   116
6. Personal networks in select Chicago neighborhoods (1856)  
   117
7. Private special constable commissions in Chicago (1840–1871)  
   123
8. Number of private watchmen employed in Chicago firms (1851–1870)  
   130
9. Links between security institutions in Chicago (1845–1871)  
   133
10. Career trajectories of important actors (1845–1871)  
    134
11. Occupations of CCWL members  
    177
12. Class background of CCWL members  
    177
13. CCWL employees across different industries  
    178
14. Class background of Metropolitan Police (1874)  
    181
15. Race and politics in White League parishes (1874)  
    182
16. White League meetings and speakers (April–July 1874)  
    186
17. Lynching in Louisiana (1876–1920)  
    193
18. Entrepôt towns on the cattle frontier (1865–1890)  
    219
19. Private detective agencies in select American cities (1870–1900)  
    245
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Abbreviations

AC  Alexandria Caucasian
CDP  Chicago Daily Democratic Press
CP  Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833–1871 (Illinois Regional Archives Depository, Northeastern Illinois University)
CTR  Chicago Tribune
CWD  Chicago Weekly Democrat
CWT  Chicago Weekly Times
NDD  New Orleans Daily Delta
NOC  New Orleans Crescent
NOP  New Orleans Daily Times-Picayune
NOR  New Orleans Republican
NOT  New Orleans Times-Democrat
OC  Opelousas Courier