

Mobtown Massacre: Massachusetts legislator Josh Cutler's book tells story of nation's first fatal newspaper attack

On July 27, 1812, muskets defended the free press

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When muskets defended the free press
[Legislator Josh Cutler](#) (D-MA)'s new book tells story of
'[Mobtown Massacre](#)' -- nation's first fatal newspaper
attack

HANSON, MA, DUXBURY, MA and BALTIMORE,
MD...Massachusetts State Representative and former
newspaper editor Josh Cutler of Duxbury, MA has
published *Mobtown Massacre*, with all donations from
the sale of the book to benefit the Baltimore City
Historical Society (MD) and the Hanson Historical Society
(MA).

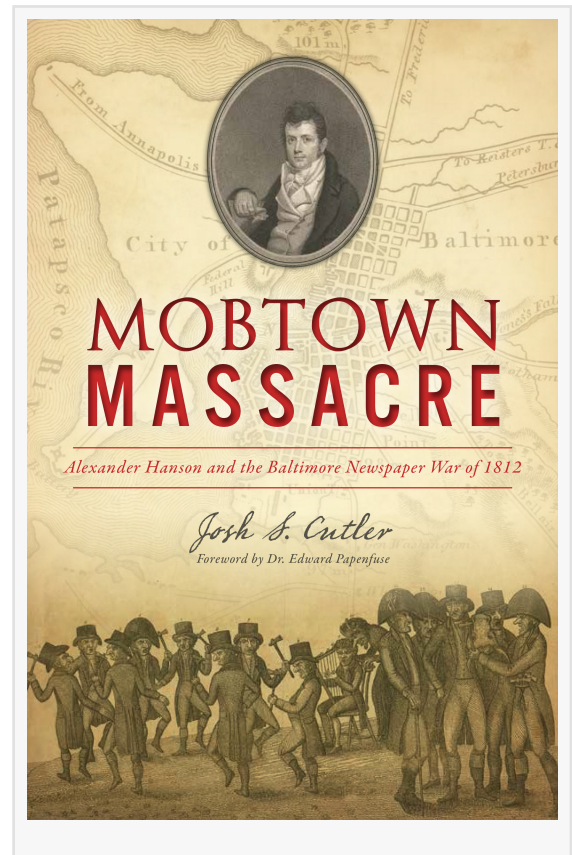
His book notes that on July 27, 1812, the nation's
cherished notion of freedom of the press nearly
succumbed to a rampaging mob led by a hot-tempered
shoemaker and an eccentric doctor.

Long before the era of "fake news," newspapers often had to be defended with pens and pistols. *Mobtown Massacre* tells the story of [Alexander Hanson](#), a 19th century Federalist newspaper editor whose strident anti-war writings provoked a bloodthirsty mob, a midnight jailbreak and a brutal massacre that stunned the nation. A defiant Hanson refused to back down, even when his own life was in peril.

Two hundred years after his death, he remains a little known figure in American history, yet Hanson put his life on the line to defend the nation's principle of freedom of the press in a way few have done before, or since.

Hanson later became one of the youngest U.S. Senators in history, but he never fully recovered from the attack against his newspaper. Still he was luckier than General James Langan, a veteran of the American Revolution who helped Hanson defend the newspaper and was killed in the two-day mob attack, becoming the first known American to die in defense of the free press.

Mobtown Massacre: Alexander Hanson and the Baltimore Newspaper War of 1812 is published by The History Press, an imprint of Arcadia Publishing. Author Josh S. Cutler is a Massachusetts state legislator and former newspaper editor who represents the town of Hanson, Mass. The



book includes a foreword by Dr. Edward Papenfuse, a noted historian and retired Maryland State Archivist.

All royalties from the sale of the book are being donated to the Baltimore City Historical Society & the Hanson Historical Society. For more information visit mobtownmassacre.com.

Views of Mobtown Massacre

"A compelling story that's as timely today as it was two centuries ago. —U.S. Congressman William R. Keating

"A remarkably vivid, engaging and very readable account of a brief but major event in Baltimore history ... which reflected the sharp political divisiveness of the time at the start of the War of 1812, and had important implications for freedom of the press and the war itself." —Charles Markell, board member, Baltimore City Historical Society

"Mobtown Massacre is a timely and scholarly examination of one man's struggle for freedom of the press. Denied by word and brutal mob attacks, leaving deaths and injuries that defined a city and shaped a nation's very notion of freedom of the press." —Fred Dorsey, Howard County, MD historian

About the author

Josh S. Cutler is an attorney and state legislator representing the Sixth Plymouth District of Massachusetts, which includes the town of Hanson. Cutler is a graduate of Skidmore College (BA), Suffolk Law (JD) and the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth (MPP in environmental policy). He is also the author of "When the Press Really Was Under Attack: Alexander Hanson and the 1812 'Mobtown' Massacre," published by the New England Journal of History (Spring 2018).



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