

SOCIETY

*Bumpkins 1,
Brahmins 0*

"The First Big Upset: American Culture and the Regatta of 1871" by Douglas K. Fidler, in *The New England Quarterly* (Mar. 1977), Hubbard Hall, Brunswick, Maine 04011.

When crews from Harvard, Brown, and the Massachusetts Agricultural College lined up for the first regatta of the Rowing Association of American Colleges in July 1871, nothing more seemed to be at stake than a trophy. But when the Massachusetts Aggies crossed the finish line 43 seconds ahead of Harvard, the victory sparked philosophical debate and changed the face of college sports.

The Aggie crew and their record time created a sensation far greater than a mere sporting event would ordinarily merit, writes Fidler. Widely discussed in the nation's press, the Aggies' victory seemed to refute the theories of Harvard professor Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. concerning the natural superiority of the "Brahmin caste of New England." Holmes had originally used the term to refer to an "untitled aristocracy . . . in which aptitude for learning . . . is congenital and hereditary," but it grew to mean the whole class of cultured city-dwellers, proud of their ancestry and disdainful of those with less socially prominent antecedents.

With American society changing from rural to urban, many in the 1870s resented cities and the values they represented and longed for the greater simplicity of country life. The triumph of the farm boys and their brawn over the city slickers and their brains seemed to prove the superiority of Jefferson and Franklin's aristocracy of talent over Holmes's aristocracy of genes.

A second Aggie win in 1872 and one by Amherst College in 1873 proved that small colleges could successfully challenge Harvard, until then dominant in the sport. So many schools began to put forward teams, both for the regatta and for track and field events accompanying it that the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletics of America (better known as the IC4A) was established in 1876 to handle the arrangements.

*The Other Side
of the Tracks*

"Negro Urban Clusters in the Postbellum South" by John Kellogg, in *The Geographical Review* (July 1977), Broadway and 156th St., New York, N.Y. 10032.

Settlements of blacks in Southern cities followed a distinctly different pattern from those in the North, writes Kellogg, a graduate student at the University of Kentucky. Unlike inner city districts in the North, filled by massive black migration during World War I, black "urban clusters" sprang up in Southern cities immediately after the Civil War in rigidly determined neighborhoods. (Between 1860 and 1870, Southern cities of more than 4,000 saw their black