Twitter Thread by Emily Clark



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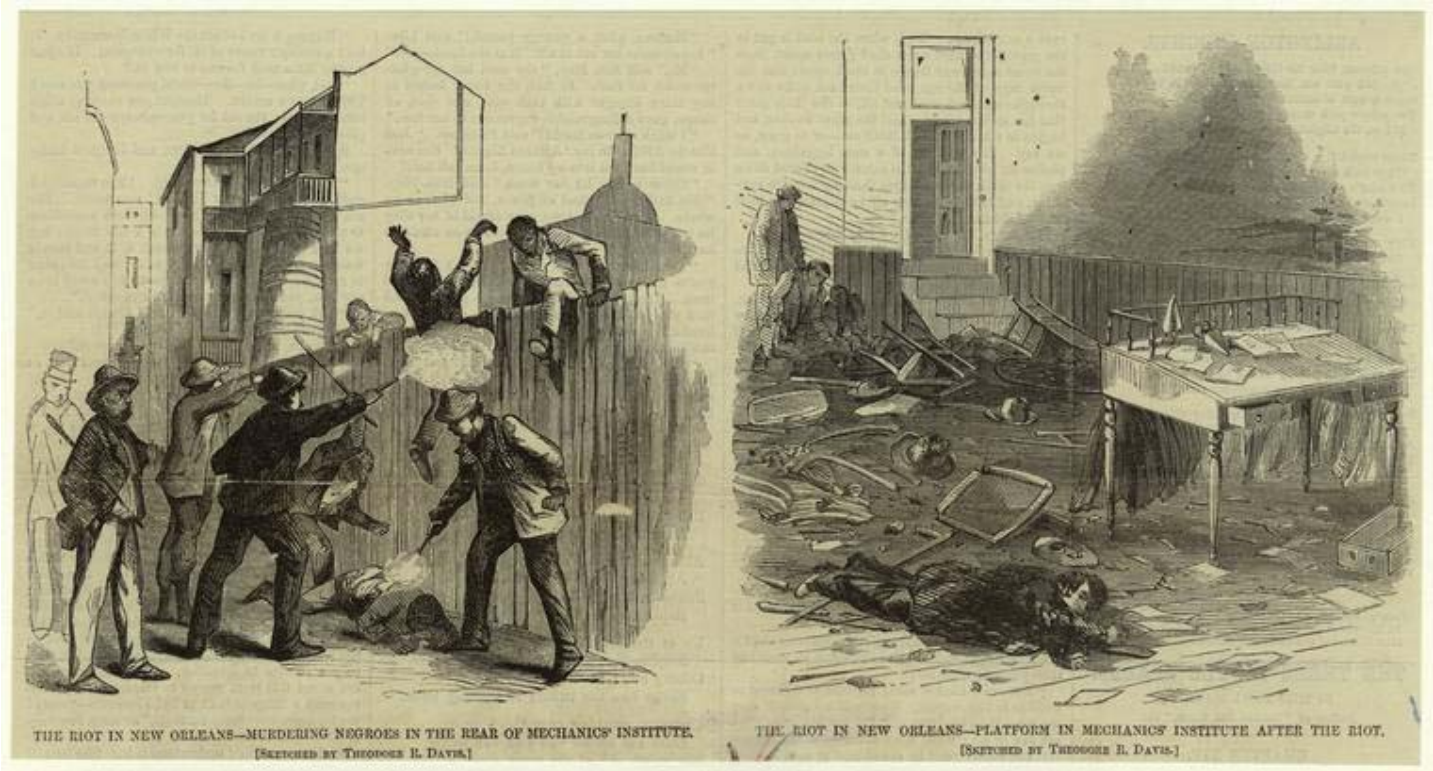
Not sure if people want a historical comparison thread, but here's one on insurrection and a violent attempt at a coup in 1874 New Orleans, often called the Battle of Liberty Place. Thread includes a white supremacist monument. 1/



During Reconstruction, there was a lot of white supremacist violence in the South, as former confederates and whites in general wanted to reclaim full political power. Image from Harper's after the New Orleans Massacre in the summer of 1866.



THE RIOT IN NEW ORLEANS—MURDERING NEGROES IN THE REAR OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.
[SKETCHED BY THEODORE R. DAVIS.]

THE RIOT IN NEW ORLEANS—PLATFORM IN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AFTER THE RIOT.
[SKETCHED BY THEODORE R. DAVIS.]

In the summer of 1874, the White League in New Orleans was galvanized by false stories spread by former confederate officer Frederick N. Ogden. Those false stories were that groups of Black men were going to incite violence. This was all false.

Political tension was high in New Orleans in 1874. Rather than concede the 1872 gubernatorial election, Democratic candidate John McEnery set up his own dueling government. (Remember that this was before the parties changed, as @KevinMKruse has detailed on here before.)

On Sept 12, 1874, a steamer came into the port of New Orleans with guns and ammunition for the White League. When the ship was seized, Ogden and others claimed their 2nd Amendment rights were being trampled.

The White League wrote in the local paper, “DECLARE THAT YOU ARE, OF RIGHT OUT TO BE, AND MEAN TO BE, FREE!”
(The pointed use of freedom and rights here certainly sounds familiar to recent events.)

The White League assembled. Some yelled to “Hang Kellogg,” a reference to William Kellogg, the officially recognized governor of the state. They then went for the guns.



CITIZENS' MASS MEETING IN CANAL STREET, AROUND THE CLAY MONUMENT

What followed was a massive street battle between the integrated police forces and the White League. The white supremacists overpowered the police and occupied City Hall and other official buildings.



A STREET BARRICADE, GUARDED BY WHITE LEAGUERS.
THE LOUISIANA OUTRAGES.—[See Page 842.]

After seizing Gov. Kellogg's office, one White Leaguer wrote a note for his wife late on the night of 14 September and this note reminds me of all the images from yesterday.

That White Leaguer wrote, “I never have seen so complete an uprising of the people and their faces indicated the reaction a change of government must produce. The citizen troops were received with a complete ovation.”



RENDEZVOUS OF WHITE LEAGUERS.

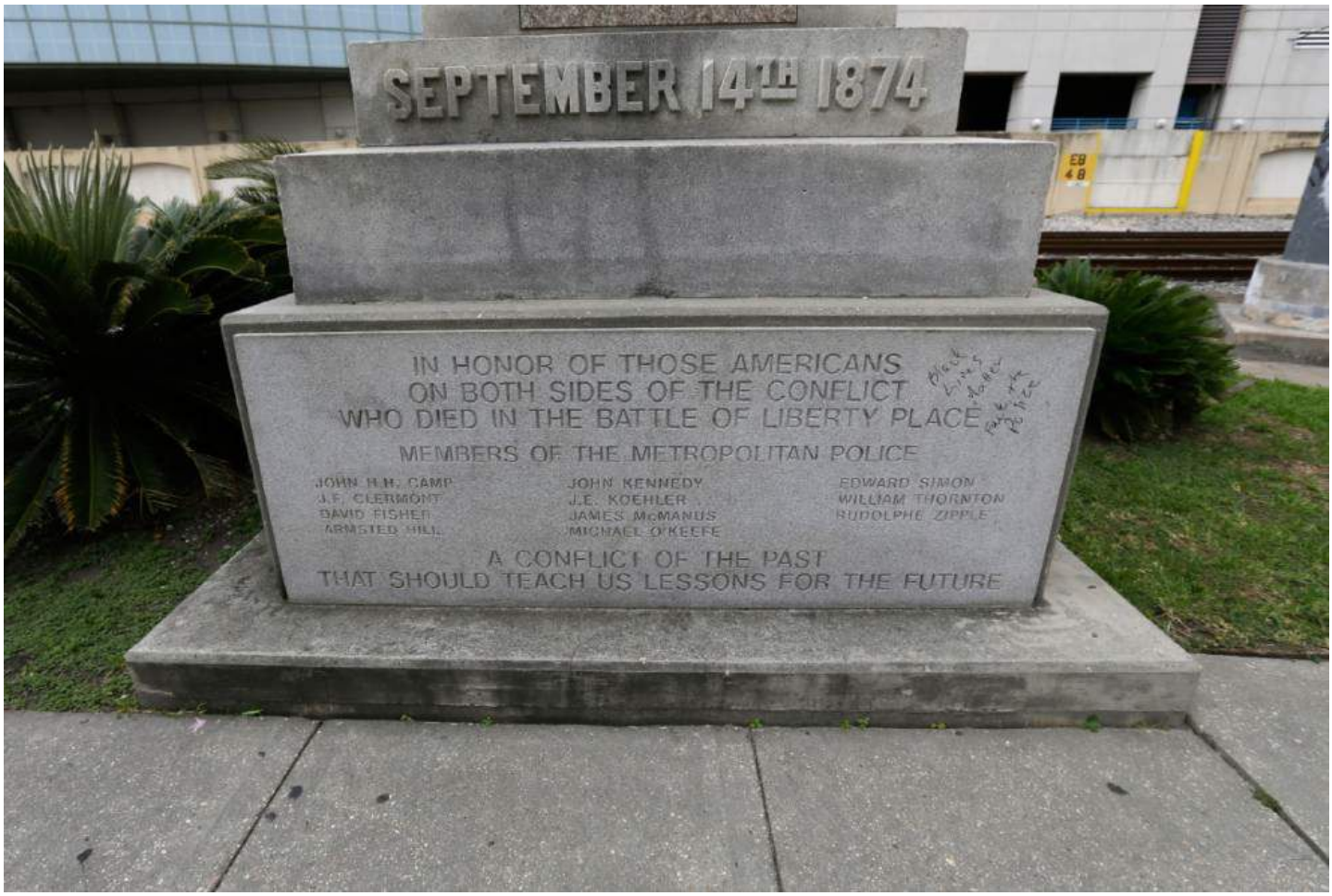
The result was the creation of a temporary government controlled by unlawful "Gov." McEnery, the White League, and confederate veterans until federal forces restored lawful Republican rule a few days later.

Their rule was terrifying for non-white citizens. And none of them were later prosecuted for the insurrection.

In 1891 the city honored the illegal, violent insurrection with a monument. Until 1989 the obelisk had a place of prominence on Canal Street. Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke frequently invoked the monument as an important symbol for white supremacy.



In 1989 when the monument was moved off the main road but still near the Vieux Carre (French Quarter), the city changed the inscription and used the familiar “both sides” phrase while also instructing readers to learn from the past.



Though it was not on the main road. It was still easy to find, even if you weren't looking for it. On this Google map screenshot, the foundation in the bottom right corner used to support the obelisk. It was right by public parking.



When mayor Mitch Landrieu proposed and removed the statue of Lee from “Lee’s Circle” a few years ago, they also removed a few others, including the obelisk.

Let's not forget the confederate flag yesterday and that this was the first time it flew in the U.S. Capitol. https://t.co/zmelIHqzJZ

> The confederate flag is a very intentional choice. Violent white supremacy in action. (The violent isn't necessary there. White supremacy is inherently violent.) https://t.co/7MYjB7MITM
>
> — Emily Clark (@clark_ems) January 6, 2021