

Source 1

James Morone, "The Election that Foreshadowed 2020," *The Washington Post*, January 11, 2021.

James Morone is a professor of political science at Brown University. Below is an excerpt of the article. The full text is available at <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/01/11/election-that-foreshadowed-2020/>>.

In the months since Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential election, we've watched a barrage of efforts to reverse the result—President Trump launched rants, recounts, lawsuits, threats and now a violent insurrection at the Capitol aimed at disrupting congressional certification of the results. The denial and the chaos have been shocking. But are they unprecedented?

Not exactly. The very first contested presidential election, in 1800, was also chaotic. It, too, reflected ferocious partisanship, exposed problems in the electoral process and ended in a raucous congressional session in which the losers tried to flip the results. When it was all over, however, the winners reached for bipartisanship....

In many ways, that election—between Federalist President John Adams and Republican Vice President Thomas Jefferson—resembled 2020. Seven (out of 16) states fiddled with the voting rules to boost their candidate—Pennsylvania was so bitterly divided about its voting procedures that it almost missed the election. Each party thought the other dangerous—the two sides believed they were fighting about nothing less than the nation's identity....

In the end, Jefferson easily won the popular vote and squeaked by in the electoral college. Then, the shenanigans began thanks to the rules governing the electoral college. The Constitution clearly stated the person with the most votes would be president, the runner-up vice president. But in 1800, the political parties—which the men who wrote the Constitution did not see coming and roundly abhorred—nominated tickets. Both Jefferson and his running mate, Aaron Burr, tallied the same number of votes. The election headed to the House of Representatives which might have simply certified Jefferson as president and Burr as VP. But the defeated Federalists tried to steal a victory by flipping the ticket, rallying around Burr and trying to boost him into the presidency. After all, they rea-

soned, Burr was an expedient politician who would defect to the party that thrust him into power.

In the House of Representatives each state would cast a single vote—a majority (nine states) would secure the presidency. The House voted. And voted. And voted again. Each time, the sitting vice president—none other than Jefferson himself—tallied the same result: Eight states for Jefferson. Six for Burr. Two abstained (because their delegations were evenly divided between the parties). Jefferson, one agonizing state short of victory, saw "dismay and gloom."...

Finally on the 36th ballot, Federalist James Bayard of Maryland...cast a blank ballot which broke the state's four-four tie and flipped it into Jefferson's column. Other Federalists followed his lead and Jefferson finally took the office he had won at the polls.

All that rigmarole from long ago broadcasts important lessons to our own time.

After 1800, leaders quickly adjusted the Constitution by adding the 12th Amendment. Electors would now cast separate ballots for president and vice president to prevent a tie—and then transmit the results to Washington. Procedural fixes helped prevent the problems that had beset the 1800 election.

But, there was a deeper issue they didn't resolve—slavery. The Federalists seized on it as a way to attack the new administration. They grouched that Jefferson had won the election only because the Constitution inflated the power of his Southern base through the notorious three-fifths clause that helped allocate electoral votes. Jefferson "rode into the temple of liberty upon the shoulders of slaves," as one Connecticut newspaper put it.

Today, a deep partisan division once again spurred an effort to overthrow the presidential election. Like that long ago contested election in 1800, we, too, risk letting our political differ-

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ences obscure deep national problems: More than two centuries later, the race line remains raw and marked by injustice. We face an economic inequality that has soared to levels unmatched among wealthy democracies. We confront a ferocious urban/rural rift and a burning planet. A deeply divided Washington—reflecting a deeply divided nation—has a lot of work to do. The final lesson from 1800: We ignore the big problems at our peril.

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Source 2

Kellie Carter Jackson, "The Inaction of Capitol Police Was by Design," *The Atlantic*, January 8, 2021.

Kellie Carter Jackson is an assistant professor of Africana studies at Wellesley College. Below is an excerpt of the article. The full text is available at <<https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2021/01/inaction-capitol-police-was-design/617590/>>.

What Americans witnessed on their TV screens on [January 6] was not just an insurrection against American democracy—it was also an expression of white supremacy. As mobs of white Trump supporters stormed the Capitol building to ransack offices, terrorize lawmakers, and interrupt the certification of the presidential election, they were met with a notably weak show of force by the Capitol Police, who were responsible for quelling the insurrection. According to reports, more than 50 officers were injured, and footage of police being physically assaulted by rioters proliferated online. To many of these acts of violence, officers responded with immense restraint or full capitulation. In other cases, their unpreparedness had fatal consequences: One woman was killed by police, three other people died, and last night an officer succumbed to his injuries.

Videos also portray a friendlier side of these interactions: One widely circulated shot appears to show a rioter taking a selfie with an officer inside the Capitol halls, while others depict insurrectionists being calmly escorted by police out of the building they'd just overtaken. These scenes provide a stark contrast to what the nation witnessed from police mere months ago, during the Black Lives Matter protests: Peaceful demonstrators tear-gassed and pinned to the ground. People who were standing still shown the full force of state violence.

According to the Associated Press, the Capitol Police knew about the potential threat of the riot days before it took place, but rejected offers of help from the National Guard and the FBI. Officials

said that they wanted to avoid using federal force against Americans, as they had done this summer. The choice to turn down help amid warnings of an insurrection is as revealing as it is disturbing: Why did law enforcement assume that they'd encounter violence from protesters marching for Black lives in June, but think that a largely white crowd of pro-Trump extremists and conspiracy theorists would remain peaceful? The difference in the Capitol Police's response shocked many who bemoaned the double standard. But police brutality against Black Americans and police inaction toward white Americans is not some surprising anomaly; it is the status quo....

The mob attacks on the Capitol are not so much "unprecedented" as they are consistent with America's history of white backlash to racial equality and white entitlement to political, economic, and social control. It is not a coincidence that on the same day of the riot, the first Black and Jewish Americans were elected to Senate seats in Georgia. Wednesday's violence claims no legitimate grievances. It is merely the perpetual retaliation to racial progress, as evidenced by the insurrectionists' parading of Trump flags, Confederate flags, Gadsden flags, Blue Lives Matter flags, and neo-Nazi symbols. This was not an uprising against a tyrannical government; it was an uprising against a multicultural government. And the police reaction—calm, measured, tolerant—to that uprising suggests that when it comes to engaging in violence against the state, white perpetrators have nothing to lose.

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Source 3

Kathleen Belew, "'The Turner Diaries' didn't just inspire the Capitol attack. It warns us what might be next," interview with Dorany Pineda of *The Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 2021.

Kathleen Belew is assistant professor of U.S. History at the University of Chicago. Below is an excerpt of the interview. The full text is available at <<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/books/story/2021-01-08/kathleen-belew-on-the-turner-diaries>>.

What we're looking at on [January 6] is sort of a broad coalition of Trump fans and QAnon believers and more extremist white power groups.... It's clear to anyone who studies this movement that some of the activists at [the Capitol riot] were white power activists....

"[The] *Turner Diaries*" is a [1978] novel that imagines a successful coup by white power activists who take over a homeland, then the US, then the world.... [W]e know the novel is important to these activists. I just saw a video of Proud Boys [a white supremacist group at the riot] telling a journalist to read "*The Turner Diaries*" that was going around online. It shows up everywhere. In the 1980s, there are all of these stories about people finding the book in bookstores all around the world.... They distributed them at paramilitary training camps. Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh carried and read and sold the book to others on the gun show circuit. And it's just one of those things that keeps coming up because it answers this question of how a fringe movement can exert military control on a superstate like the United States....

But I think that "*The Turner Diaries*" really becomes a clear point of reference if you look at the photographs of the action. Activists erected a gallows outside the Capitol and hung up symbolic nooses. I saw another photograph of someone who had smashed a television camera and made the cord into a noose. That's a reference to "*The Day of the Rope*," the systematic hanging of lawmakers and other people they consider enemies. The "*Diaries*" also features very prominently an attack

on Congress that is significantly not a mass casualty attack. Although there are lots of mass casualty attacks in "*The Turner Diaries*," what happens at Congress is instead meant to be a show of force that a group of activists can impact even a highly secured target. So what we see there is a really clear alignment [with] the way it's imagined in the movement....

And what ["*The Turner Diaries*"] does is lay out a plan for guerrilla warfare and domestic terror that involves not only mass casualty attacks but also symbolic attacks that seek to "awaken" other white people to the cause. So that's what we're looking at this week. This is meant to be a symbolic strike not to tally a large body count—although certainly the casualties would've been a lot higher if the bombs had gone off and the Molotov cocktails deployed and the assault rifle used—but an event that will be seen as a highly symbolic victory. Activists successfully stormed the nation's Capitol. They got into the building. They made legislators cower. They defaced offices. And they delayed the tallying of our election. They actually did carry out a really successful action this week, and I think it will be seen as a green light by many people in this movement....

The Department of Homeland Security has been trying to tell us that white supremacist extremism is the greatest terrorist threat to the United States, that they represent an enormous danger to our democracy and to everyday people. I hope that after [January 6], more people will heed that warning and that we can finally hold our lawmakers accountable for keeping us safe from that threat.

Source 4

Joshua D. Rothman, "Opinion: Mobs of white citizens rioting have been commonplace in the United States for centuries," *The Hechinger Report*, January 8, 2021.

Joshua D. Rothman is professor of history and chair of the department of history at the University of Alabama. Below is an excerpt of the article. The full text is available at <<https://hechingerreport.org/mobs-of-white-citizens-rioting-have-been-commonplace-in-the-united-states-for-centuries/>>.

Among the more common initial reactions to the disgraceful mob assault on the United States Capitol on Jan. 6 has been the notion that it was unprecedented and out of keeping with American values and the American experience. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy claimed that what he saw was "un-American." One of his Republican colleagues, Tom Cole of Oklahoma, asserted that the behavior of the assailants was "not the American way," while another, Nancy Mace of South Carolina, said that it was "not who we are." On CNN, commentator Van Jones said he thought events looked "more like Syria than the United States of America"...

And they are wrong.

In some ways, of course, what transpired at the Capitol was indeed without exact parallel in American history. Never before has a U.S. president openly encouraged Americans to engage in seditious insurrection against their own government. Moreover, many Americans see the Capitol itself as a sacred space. It has been the site of violence before, such as when Puerto Rican nationalists opened fire in the chamber of the House of Representatives in 1954, but the last time the Capitol saw marauding on the scale of Jan. 6 was arguably when it was looted and burned by British forces during the War of 1812.

It does not require widening our angle of vision especially far, however, to see that mobs of white citizens rioting or attempting to overthrow legitimate governments, often with the complicity or support of public officials, have been commonplace in the United States for centuries. Nor does it take much effort to see that those mobs have frequently engaged in such activities in support of the idea that authority, power and speech in the United States are only legitimate when exercised by white people and on behalf of white people.

Mobs routinely assaulted and sometimes murdered antislavery activists in both the North and the South before the Civil War. During post-war Reconstruction, violence by white mobs and paramilitary terrorist organizations was legion [frequent]. These mobs particularly targeted Black lawmakers, Black voters and their allies as part of a larger campaign to "redeem" Southern states from Republican rule and restore power to white Democrats. The violence resulted in massacres in multiple states, the murders of thousands of people and the overthrow or near-overthrow of numerous multiracial state and local governments.

For decades after Reconstruction, white mobs carried out lynchings in broad daylight before crowds of thousands, often under the auspices of local authorities. In 1898, white supremacists engineered a coup to overthrow the city government of Wilmington, North Carolina. They murdered Black residents, burned large sections of Black neighborhoods and read a "White Declaration of Independence" at a mass meeting led by a former congressman.

During the so-called Red Summer of 1919, white mobs carried out riots and murders in dozens of cities, and they especially directed their ire at Black veterans recently returned from fighting in World War I. In Elaine, Arkansas that year, a white militia massacred Black sharecroppers who were attempting to unionize. In the 1920s, thousands of members of the Ku Klux Klan paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., and white mobs carried out anti-Black pogroms in Rosewood, Florida, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, where city officials and the police colluded with the rioters. Between the 1940s and 1970s, white mobs in Chicago, Boston, Little Rock, New Orleans and scores of other cities and towns across the country besieged Black communities, Black families and

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Black schoolchildren in opposition to housing and school integration....

Many Americans, and white Americans in particular, are unaware of this history nonetheless. They were likely never taught it....

A narrative of American history providing a thorough accounting of both the regularity of that violence and the consistent aims for which it has been put to use would obviously look quite different. It would not be as uplifting, as self-flattering or as comforting as a history in which such violence is understood as "un-American."

Yet it would be both more honest and more useful. We need not understand American history as nothing but an endless litany of riots and outrages. But we leave ourselves unprepared and in position to be "surprised" over and over again when we do not recognize that events like the attempted insurrection of Jan. 6 are very much part and parcel of our country's past and its present.

Source 5

Alexis Coe, "George Washington's Legacy Alone Was Enough to Guarantee a Peaceful Transfer of Presidential Power—Until Now," *Town & Country*, January 7, 2021.

Alexis Coe is a historian and author of a biography of George Washington. Below is an excerpt of the article. The full text is available at <<https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/politics/a35154049/peaceful-transition-of-power-history-george-washington/>>.

[On January 6], as we watched a sitting president incite violence in the nation's capital, I was overwhelmed by how little people seemed to understand that we were watching more than the conclusion of a 233-year tradition.

The peaceful transfer of power isn't some ritual. It defined us as a country, and while America sparked an age of revolution, it emerged as the only comparatively stable republic. The French executed their monarch, devolved into violence, and a decade later, installed an emperor. We, on the other hand, were led by George Washington, the man who wanted, after the [Revolutionary] war was won, anything but power....

Washington is often described as the father of the nation, but over time, I've come to think of him more as its mother. He'd carried America to term, but he needed to stick around until, at the very least, it was eating solid foods. The delegates of the Constitutional Convention thought so, and spent months imploring him to join them; upon arrival, they unanimously elected him to be the convention's president, confident they could work together under his leadership. He obliged, settling into a wooden chair on an elevated platform as the men debated issues, only speaking up when delegates became too heated, and even then, he needed to do little more than remind them of his presence. When it came time to sign the Constitution, he was first in line, and likely the first to head home.

Not so fast, the founders said. By showing up, Alexander Hamilton argued, Washington "pledged to take part in the execution of the government." They'd agreed on one executive versus three, and not much else about the presidency, because they

assumed they were looking at the man who would fill the role, and could be trusted to figure it out along the way. Surely he'd help steady the government as it learned to walk. At 56, it was the last thing Washington, and most certainly his wife, wanted, yet it seemed as if the choice was not truly theirs to make. Washington called the presidency "the place of his execution." The country might benefit, but he had everything to lose.

The next eight years proved him right. By his second term, Washington had avoided international conflicts, created the cabinet, oversaw the establishment of a central bank, and set other precedents future leaders would follow, with few exceptions, but he also made a series of blunders. He was no longer immune to criticism, and estranged from most of the founders, including Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, which convinced him the country no longer needed his service.

The Constitution had not limited the number of terms he could serve, but rather delimited the terms to four years, and Washington, having now raised the country to the age of eight, announced he would not seek reelection....[T]he world waited for confirmation that Washington had done the unthinkable, and America, in practice, not theory, was truly a democratic country. And they got it—then and in the years to come.

Until yesterday, Washington's example of a peaceful transfer of power had been followed by 44 presidents. Perhaps an amendment is needed, as it was for term limits after FDR, but one thing is certain: This is not George Washington's America. So whose is it?

Source 6

Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, "Yes, Wednesday's attempted insurrection is who we are," *Made by History, Washington Post*. January 8, 2021.

Gregory P. Downs is a professor of history at UC Davis. Kate Masur is associate professor of history at Northwestern University. Below is an excerpt of the article. The full text is available at <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/01/08/yes-wednesdays-attempted-insurrection-is-who-we-are/>>.

The shocking scenes [January 6] at the Capitol remind us that there have always been Americans who have little regard for procedures established by the Constitution. When Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860, political leaders in South Carolina refused to accept the result, fearing that a Lincoln presidency would lead to the weakening of Southern political power and ultimately to the elimination of slavery. Ten other Southern states eventually joined in rejecting the election's outcome and declaring that they intended to form a nation of their own.

The Confederacy's defeat ended the threat to the nation's integrity but did not vanquish the ideas it had stood for.... The enfranchisement of African American men had the potential to dramatically change American politics, particularly in the Southern states, where most Black Americans lived. But many White Southerners responded with rage and violence to the prospect of sharing power with Black neighbors. Ex-Confederates organized the Ku Klux Klan and other groups to drive Black people from politics through murder, intimidation and fraud, seeking to destroy the power of the Republican Party....

Rampant political violence shaped the contested 1876 election, which [Senator Ted] Cruz and his allies brought so prominently to public consciousness in recent days. In that election, held during the 100th anniversary of American independence, Democratic intimidation prevented Black voters from casting ballots in many Southern states, but Republican-led governments in Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina accordingly declared Republican Rutherford B. Hayes the rightful victor over Democrat Samuel Tilden. In those states, each party submitted to Congress its own results of the presidential election. The election itself was so close

that those ballots would determine the winner of the White House. To resolve the crisis, Congress created an electoral commission that chose Hayes as the winner.

Despite Cruz's argument, no state submitted competing 2020 electoral ballot results to Congress. In short, 1877 was little like 2021. Grave threats to voting access do remain. But in the recent presidential election, registered voters went to heroic efforts to cast their ballots, officials tallied those votes in accordance with state law, the states' results survived dozens of challenges in state and federal courts, the states' electors certified the results and governors forwarded them to Congress.

Where the Civil War era does connect to our present moment is in the enduring importance of authoritarian thought and action in American life, often infused with and exacerbated by racism. In the 1870s, White Americans created a national political crisis by refusing to accept Black political power and rejecting election outcomes they didn't like.... It took 70 years, a fierce grass-roots movement and countless more Black lives lost before democratic rights would be restored in the South....

Among President-elect Joe Biden's first words when he addressed the nation [on January 6] were: "The scenes of chaos at the Capitol do not reflect the true America. This is not who we are."

But this is not quite true, and Biden seemed to recognize that fact on [January 7], when, in appointing an attorney general, he reminded Americans that the Justice Department was created in 1870 "to enforce the civil rights amendments that grew out of the Civil War—the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments. To stand up to the Klan. To take on domestic terrorism."