



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Battle of New Orleans for Freedom, September 14, 1874

**Stock#:** 50114mb  
**Map Maker:** Hardee  
**Date:** 1874 circa  
**Place:** New Orleans  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 18 x 23 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

### *Rare Plan of the 1874 Battle of New Orleans, a failed revolt of the supremacist White League against the Reconstruction government of Louisiana*

Detailed plan of the so-called Battle of New Orleans, depicting in great detail the actions of the combatants in and around the City, published by City Surveyor T.S. Hardee.

### Background

The revolt had its origins in the disputed Louisiana gubernatorial election of 1872, in which Republican Senator William Pitt Kellogg took office only after being awarded victory by a Federal court. Whether or not Kellogg had won the popular vote, supporters of Democratic-Conservative "Fusion" candidate John McEnery saw clear evidence of Federal tyranny. The Fusionists established a shadow government in January 1873 and instigated a coup against Kellogg. The attempt, sometimes known as the "First Battle of Liberty Place," was more of a mob action than an organized coup attempt and was easily broken up by the well-equipped, Republican-dominated Metropolitan Police.

In 1874 the Fusionists established the White League, a proper military force of some 1500 white males, both veterans of the Confederacy and younger men itching for battle and honor. Organized into companies, well trained, and armed with surplus weapons from the Civil War, it posed a far more serious threat than that of 1873. At the same time the League conducted a propaganda campaign designed to inflame the white population against Reconstruction and the Kellogg administration.



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### **Battle of New Orleans for Freedom, September 14, 1874**

Conflict was ignited on September 14 by the government's seizure of the steamboat Mississippi, which carried a covert shipment of arms for the White League. Companies of White Leaguers established barricades along Poydras Street, then advanced on Metropolitan Police units emplaced along Canal Street from the Custom House down to the River. The Metropolitan Police were quickly routed and retreated to the Jackson Square Station, where they were surrounded and surrendered the next day. In control of the city, the White League installed McEnery as governor and David Penn as lieutenant governor.

#### **Plan of the "Battle of New Orleans"**

This pro-Fusionist plan by New Orleans City Surveyor T.S. Hardee must have been published in late 1874, within weeks of the battle. It depicts the heart of the city from Delord Street downriver to Ursuline and inland as far as Baronne and Dauphine, including the street plan, Jackson and Lafayette Squares, the State House, the Custom House and other landmarks. Against this backdrop are shown the positions of the combatants and the general flow of the battle. The White League positions and barricades along Poydras are shown in detail, with individual companies identified and their officers named. Dotted lines indicate their advance on the Metropolitan Police positioned at the New Orleans and Mobile Rail Depot, and the subsequent retreat of the Metropolitan Police to the Police Station. There is much other detail, including the positions of important White League leaders and the various locations where several Leaguers fell. Columns of text give a detailed "History of the Revolution," with actions by White League companies alphabetically keyed to locations marked on the plan. At lower right a "Roll of Honor" lists those White Leaguers killed and wounded in the engagement.

#### **Aftermath**

Despite the triumphant tone of the plan, the short-term consequences of the "Battle for Freedom" were limited. The White League revolt outraged President Ulysses Grant, who immediately ordered Federal troops to retake the city. Sensing a battle it couldn't win, the White League surrendered the city within days, and Governor Kellogg was returned to power.

The long-term consequences for the state were enormous. Kellogg retained power only with backing of the Federal Army, and he had little or no authority in rural areas of the state. Further, the rebellion gutted the city's Republican-dominated Metropolitan Police and the mostly black militia, creating a vacuum that allowed the White League to regain control of the city by 1876. The election of Democrat Francis Nicholls as governor in 1876 and the subsequent establishment of the White League as the official state militia brought Reconstruction in Louisiana to an end. Participation in the events of 1874 became a mark of honor for citizens, and in 1891 a Liberty Monument was erected on Canal Street in memory of the White League fallen. For many years the monument was the site of an annual wreath-laying ceremony, and it was only in the 1980s that it was moved to an out-of-the-way location on Iberville Street.



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**Rarity**

The plan is extremely rare, with no recorded sales of the map at auction or in dealer catalogs. We locate institutional holdings at the American Antiquarian Society, Historic New Orleans and the University of Virginia.

**Detailed Condition:**

Few small areas of restoration along left and top edge, barely affecting printed image.