

# EFFECT ON THE SUBURBS



THE WEDDINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS of socially prominent people in Livonia, Farmington and Plymouth were being set in type less

than 100 feet away from this scene Wednesday morning. Of interest to suburbanites is that the fire truck was from Royal Oak.

*'Most of us, I believe, sought to leave petty political squabbles, 'central city' problems and crusading newspapers behind so that we might enjoy the fruits of our labors and relatively peaceful family life in semi-rural surroundings.'*

A FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP RESIDENT  
In a Letter to the Editor  
Feb. 5, 1967

A widely-held suburban notion — that "what goes on in Detroit is Detroit's problem" — died in agony last week.

The "Detroit" riots, looting and burning and bloodshed didn't spill out into suburban property, but they did affect the daily lives, the livelihoods, the comforts, the sense of security, the local governments and the taxes of suburbanites. In some cases, they even affected suburban consciences.

Here, as of publication time, is a list of centers in the western suburbs where donations of clothing and hard packaged food may be delivered:

Franklin High School, Joy near Merriman (Livonia PTA Council).

Livonia Family Y, 12330 Middlebelt, Livonia.

Faith Lutheran Church, 30000 Five Mile, Livonia.

Mosanna-Tabor Lutheran Church, 9600 Leburne, Redford.

Wayne 19th District Republican headquarters, 15584 Beech-Daly, Redford.

Masonic Hall, Grand River at Farmington Road, Farmington (local Republicans).

Antioch Lutheran Church, Farmington Road at 12 Mile, Farmington.

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, Shawwassee at Powers Road, Farmington.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church, 1151 William, Plymouth (parish).

Republican Headquarters, 217 N. Main, Plymouth (Teen-Age Republican Club).

Detroit police precinct 18, Grand River at Six Mile (F.O.P. auxiliary).

All Secretary of State branch offices.

THE FARMINGTON FOUNDERS Festival, scheduled to be held last Thursday through Friday, was called off and at first re-scheduled for the end of August.

But discovering that that was also the time of the Michigan State Fair, the Farmington Board of Commerce reset the time to Aug. 17-19. That is now official.

Countless meetings were postponed or certain times pushed forward.

In terms of involvement, no one from the Observer Newspapers' area was known to have been killed.

If any were injured, there was no compilation made or lists available.

A number of National Guardsmen who served in the riotous area are from this area. So, for that matter, is their commander, Gov. George Romney, of Bloomfield Hills.

EMOTIONAL REACTION to the riots was mixed.

One church after another became a collecting point for clothing and canned or hard-packaged food. Reacting swiftly and widely to the collecting effort were Republican State Chairman E. L. Peterson, GOP women's groups, and especially the party's teenage club (TARS).

A variety of other groups, too numerous to count or list, also helped.

If suburbanites weren't personally involved in the riots, there were few who didn't have relatives there. Suburbia's population swelled as white inner city residents joined their children in the wide-open subdivision spaces. Many suburbanites got first-hand accounts of burned houses, stores, neighborhoods where they had grown up and used to call home.

One leader in the charitable effort, however, reported that other members were indignant that their organization was offering aid that might go to rioters. "They wanted to throw the stuff out on the streets," the leader reported.

State Sen. George Kuhn, R-West Bloomfield, represents Livonia, Plymouth and Farmington, called for a State Senate investigation, blaming "local political leaders" (presumably Mayor Cavanagh) for failing to employ a "get tough" policy quickly enough. "Gotta send 'em all back to Africa," said one suburban civic leader.

The order "uld be given to shoot all looters on sight," said a prominent attorney.

A man called one of the Observer news offices and said: "I'm making a collection and, by God, I want some credit for it!"

Replied the newsmen: "What are you making the collection for — credit or for the sake of doing it?"

ECONOMICALLY, THE EFFECT of the riot was much worse than it appeared on the surface.

Suburban branches of banks were open, but all was far from normal. Bob Barber, of the National Bank of Detroit's Plymouth office, said that branch closed early on Monday and maintained regular hours the rest of the week, but work was jammed up because the downtown main office's absenteeism rate of women employees was high.

Much the same situation was reported at Bank of the Commonwealth. Ron Pieper, manager of the Orchard Lake-13 Mile branch in Farmington Township, said that office, located in a trailer and another trailer office were closed all day Tuesday and Wednesday because of concern for police ability to protect them. Other suburban B. C. branches were open.

## roundup and analysis

Chevrolet's big Spring and Bumper Division plant on Eckles Road in Livonia has a relatively large Negro work force, and it was hard hit. Fifty-five per cent of the employees were scheduled to work last week during the model changeover. Of these, about 40 per cent were absent Monday and Tuesday and 20 per cent on Wednesday and Thursday, a company spokesman said.

After Monday's initial shock, most stores maintained relatively normal business hours, but shoppers were scarce.

A Detroit firm that was planning to move to the suburbs in October hastened its move by two months. Metropolitan Printers, planning to move from the Russell and El Grand Blvd. area to Plymouth Township, decided to move one of its operations temporarily to a garage on Plymouth Road as of Aug. 1.

Some plants in auto-related work here closed or nearly-closed during the week and felt the effect of the riot less severely.

AN INDUSTRY WHICH suffered severely from the riot was Northville State Hospital.

Day shift absenteeism was 100 (out of 300 to 400) on Monday's day shift and even worse on the night shift.

A lot of people worked double shifts, said the superintendent, Dr. E. Gordon Yudashkin, explaining that many employees are from inside the City of Detroit. At midweek, the absentee rate was still 25 per cent.

Volunteers helped out, especially in food service.

Several patients were trapped in the city while on leaves of absence from the hospital, Dr. Yudashkin said. A couple of family care homes were burned out during the riot, and NSH officials had to negotiate by telephone for the care of seven homeless patients.

FEAR AND RUMOR ran rife in suburbia.

Topinka's at Seven Mile and Telegraph is burning. . . A gas station at Seven and Telegraph. . . Station at Six and Telegraph. . . at Five and Telegraph. . . Seven-Grand Shopping Center is burning. . . Wonderland is closed. . . Livonia Mall is closed. There's a guy with a machine gun on top of the State Police post.

The Observer Newspapers tracked them down, one by one, until reporters got bored. They were just rumors.

Livonia police were told of a Negro driving down the street, drinking. They found him and stopped him. The Negro was drinking, all right — a bottle of pop. He was released.



BLOOD DONORS FLOCKED from all over the western suburbs Wednesday to a Red Cross station at Merriman and Five Mile. Twelve

to 15 beds were set up, but the lines were so long that people had to wait an hour to donate.

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## OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS

leased.

One boy said he had seen — repeat, seen — the K-Mart in Southfield aflame. Why did he and others tell these stories?

"There's always a tendency for people to sensationalize during times of stress," explained Dr. Yudashkin. "They want to feel part of something really important, part of a 'big thing.' They're looking for attention."

"You always find this — such as when there has been a bloody battle in a war."

"These are people who lack something. As a psychiatrist, I don't want to make any sociological generalization, though."

IRONICALLY, suburbanites were worse off in one way than the rioters. Whereas rioters often had ample supplies of stolen liquor, suburbanites found their sources pretty much dried up by late Monday afternoon.

At midweek, the state Liquor Control Commission had granted state and local police authority to halt all liquor sales not only in the Detroit area, but also in all of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, Washtenaw and Monroe counties. In addition, Kent and Genesee counties went dry.

Fine restaurants — the cocktails-and-steak spots — generally stayed open, but they couldn't serve drinks, business was down, they had to stop the inflow at 8 p.m. to clear out at 9, and the big parties from Detroit canceled out.

To wet your whistle, you had to go to Jackson or Lansing.

Parks stayed open, subject, of course, to the curfew.

Things were quiet at Kensington Metropolitan Park, one of the few spots outside Detroit that attracts any substantial number of Negro visitors. Traffic was light, and patrols were normal. Consumption of beer and wine, permitted in the park except at beaches, was still allowed — if you had any to consume.

SUBURBANITES WILL PAY — and pay heavily — for the damage done in Detroit, even if they didn't own any of the stores or tenements that were burned.

Look at it this way:

The damage loss was estimated at \$200 million. To the tax assessor, that represents \$100 million in state equalized valuation. That's the equivalent of burning two-thirds of the Plymouth School District.

With a 1966-67 combined winter-summer tax rate of just under 55 mills, Detroit city and schools and Wayne County will lose \$5.5 million in taxes.

Those taxes will have to come from somewhere. The answer will be state and federal aid. Thus, it's a financial certainty that suburbanites will directly bear part of the cost of "Detroit's" riots.

THE TAX LOSS from the burned-out Detroit property will include more than property taxes.

Business was curtailed, in the riot area, in the downtown, and in the suburbs. That means a loss of sales taxes.

Emergency programs will cost goodness-knows-how-much, and persons who were formerly self-supporting will be jobless and homeless, thus increasing the welfare load.

The racetracks have been closed down. The state raked off eight per cent of Hazel Park's running track bets and five per cent of Northville's harness track bets.

Liquor wasn't being sold legally, and therefore wasn't being taxed.

All of these losses will tend to place a greater burden on direct taxation — and the kind where you quietly tax a fellow who's having fun, but the kind where you walk up to him and take it, like the income tax.

In another way, however, suburbia may also gain. Not many people go all the way downtown to shop except for a few items, but the downtown can expect to lose some of that business, perhaps permanently, and safe suburbia has a chance to gain.

Suburbanites will pay for the riots in other ways.

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