



Walter Stark

Bloomfield Hills resident Walter Stark, 83, was living in Huntington Woods and owned a Southfield-based plastics company when the riots started. He was at Pontiac Airport on the Sunday morning after, waiting to take his leased plane for a ride, when a *Detroit News* photographer assigned to take pictures of the riot asked for a ride.

"We had instructions and special clearance from the tower and the police," Stark said. "I was instructed to fly above 2,000 feet, out of the range of rifle fire. I saw the smoke and the guys running around."

He said he didn't go out with the intention of flying over Detroit, and his wife, Margaret, wasn't too thrilled with his adventure, either.

A day or so later, Margaret Stark was shot at while driving eastbound on the Ford Freeway. A sniper's bullet went through her convertible's windshield.

"That got me upset something fearful," her husband said.

It wasn't long before he had some police buddies give her shooting lessons.

REMEMBERING THE RIOTS from page 17

the neighborhood and we got on very well. Twelfth Street had bakeries, a place that roasted peanuts, all kinds of restaurants and clubs."

Hamilton checked on his business twice that fateful night. By the second time, "the neighborhood was an inferno."

An angry mob was forming.

"As I walked away, I heard my plate-glass window break, but I had to keep going," said Hamilton, who now owns Hair ExtraOrdinaire in downtown Detroit. "The riots killed my business. People didn't want to come there anymore. They were afraid."

The Jewish Response

The rioting and looting eventually spread throughout a wide area. About 15 percent of the core neighborhood storeowners were Jewish, but not all of the 78 Jewish-owned stores in the 25-block area were victimized, according to Bolkosky, author of *Harmony & Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity, 1914-1967* (Wayne State University Press).

"A number of Jewish businesses were protected by the people in the neighborhoods who worked for them. They stood in front of the door," he said.

Murray Gittleman, 73, of West Bloomfield lived on Webb Street in Detroit and had no fear of walking the streets before the riots. He was a third-generation pawnbroker, who opened Murray's Loan Office on Warren and McGraw in 1954. About 60 shops did business in the neighborhood before the riots; only 12 shops were left afterwards, he said.

His pawnshop was looted and burned to the ground. Gittleman walked away. "I've never been back to see what it looks like," he said.

Harriet Saperstein, 65, who lives in Detroit's Lafayette Park neighborhood, never left.

She was a sociologist teaching at Wayne State University in 1967. The week before the riots, she was speaking to a group of young police officers as part of a community relations study for the League of Women Voters.

One of the young policemen asked her whether there would be a riot.

After a very long pause, she said, "My silence is probably my answer. What I do know is that this is a tinderbox. If something happens in Detroit, it will be because some young policeman — perhaps sitting here — can't handle a crowd situation and the sparks will fly."

She was in Aspen, Colo., for a physics conference, when the riots started. She came back in September to work on the east side for the Mayor's Committee for Human Resource and Development, what used to be known as the poverty program.

Saperstein and her family stayed in Lafayette Park because she wanted to live in an integrated community.

"I care about Detroit, and I want to be part of the solution and not part of the problem," she said. "I felt I had something to give. It was a new urban integrated area and that was important for me in terms of how I wanted to bring up my family."

But she was in the minority. Debates still occur over whether the riots caused many Jews to move away from the city toward the suburbs.

"The riots were a coda to the migration of the Jews from Detroit," Bolkosky said.

He added that the motivation to move from Detroit changed from generation to generation. "The only consistent thing about the Jewish community in Detroit was its movement northwest," which began in earnest in the 1920s, he said.

The Rev. Nick Hood III, 51, a City Council member from 1994-2001, likens the exodus of people from Detroit to the Babylonian exile. He quoted the biblical verse: *By the rivers of Babylon, there we*

The Cutlers

Amy and Ezra Cutler of West Bloomfield were married on June 27, 1967, and honeymooned in New York City. Upon their return, they stopped at the Royal Theatre at Seven Mile and Meyers to see *Banning*, a movie starring Robert Wagner.

In the middle of the movie, the house lights went up. The manager went to the front of the theater, looking agitated and nervous.

A hush fell over the crowd when he announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, you know what's been going on around the city. We're going to have to close the show tonight, and we want you all to drive directly home and don't stop anywhere."

"We were still in our honeymoon bliss and had absolutely no idea what was going on," Amy Cutler said. "We asked other people, and they looked at us as if we were from Mars. They told

us about the rioting. The funny thing — we've never seen the end of the movie."

She remembers what a shock the riots were to her, her friends and the fourth-grade students in Ferndale where she taught.

"We had the feeling we were so cushioned. We didn't realize what the rest of the world, our community, was feeling," she said. "Unfortunately, we became very comfortable and didn't reach out to other people outside our circle. It was a real eye opener ... almost embarrassing to learn that people living within our vicinity were suffering," Cutler said.

"Unfortunately, this kind of civil disobedience is not what you want. You want change done by laws and acts of Congress. But I guess it was the only way they could get people in the community to sit up and listen to them." □

