

The Tampa Riot of 1967

By Scott Fields

I. Lesson Summary

Summary

In the summer of 1967, after two previous summers of racial violence and riots in large urban centers like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and Cleveland, community leaders in Tampa breathed a collective sigh of relief. They thought that they had weathered the storm. Confident that racial harmony was the norm on Florida's Gulf Coast, city politicians became complacent, not recognizing the undercurrent of anger and unrest that was rising to the surface in Tampa's black neighborhoods. Finally, on the night of June 11, 1967, one incident unleashed a wave of violence that lasted less than two days, but changed Tampa forever.

Objectives

Students will:

- 1.) Describe the "Black Power" movement, the beliefs of its adherents, and the differences between "Black Power" and the more traditional methods of the Civil Rights Movement;
- 2.) Understand how a more militant "Black Power" approach for equality combined with the attitudes of complacent white leadership to create a tense situation in Tampa in 1967; and
- 3.) Compare the events of the Tampa riot of 1967 with other instances of unrest in major American urban centers in the US in the mid-1960s.

U.S. History Event or Era

This lesson can be used with any unit on the Civil Rights Movement or the turmoil of the 1960s.

Grade Level

This lesson is designed for use in middle school or high school American history classes.

Materials

Overhead projector, Overhead Transparency F-9-1, and copies of all three readings and discussion questions for each student ("Introduction: The Summer of 1967", "The Riot Begins", and "The Riot and Its Effects."

Lesson Time

This lesson can be completed in one class period.

II. Lesson Procedures

Procedures

- 1.) As students enter the classroom, have Overhead Transparency F-9-1 projected on a screen at the front of the classroom. Students should view the two pictures and answer the discussion questions on both pictures.
- 2.) After 5-7 minutes, discuss the events of both pictures with students. Briefly explain to students that in the summers of 1965, '66, and '67, many major American cities were rocked by riots brought on by unequal social and economic conditions suffered by African-Americans. After the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 had passed, change was slowly implemented, if at all, in many areas of America, and many African-Americans simply lost patience with the peaceful integration methods of black leaders such as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 3.) Tell students that in this lesson, they will learn about a largely unknown event in Florida history: the Tampa riot of 1967. Pass out the readings, pair students if you wish, and have them read the passages and answer the discussion questions at the end of every reading passage.
- 4.) Allow students ample time to discuss their findings after each allotted amount of time for each reading passage.
- 5.) Optional: For a Processing assignment, have students read "What Has Happened to America?", an article written for *Reader's Digest* by Richard Nixon, who in 1967 had already served as Vice-President of the United States under Dwight D. Eisenhower in the 1950's, unsuccessfully ran for President in 1960 (barely losing to John F. Kennedy), and who would win the presidential election in 1968. In this article, Nixon speaks to the growing violence that had occurred and spread in America's cities for the three summers prior to this October 1967 issue. As students read the article, have them compare the written words of Richard Nixon to the realities of life in the inner city as an African-American growing up in the 1960s. Ask students for their thoughts on the piece; what do they agree with in the article, and what do they disagree with? Do they feel that Nixon's supposed solutions to the problem of urban violence and riots would work, or only serve to aggravate alreadyexisting conditions?
*The article can be found at http://www.wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/ext/ap/chapter29/29.4.nixon.html, but can also be printed from the Activities section in this lesson.



Picture F-9-1: National Guardsman and child in an unidentified 1960s riot.

(http://www.wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/ext/ap/chapter29/29.1.NationalGuard.html)

What do you see in the picture to the left? How would you describe the boy? Does he look excited or frightened? What about the soldier? Do you notice anything unusual about the building behind them?



Picture F-9-2: Disorder and destruction in a Detroit riot during the summer of 1967 (http://www.wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/ext/ap/chapter29/29.1.Detroit.html)

What do you see in the picture above? What do you think that these people are doing? What evidence in the picture suggests your conclusion? How are these two pictures related?

Introduction: The Summer of 1967

In the summer of 1967, the entire country seemed to be a giant powder keg, ready for one spark to set it off. There was friction between the old and the young; long hair, bell-bottomed jeans, peace signs, and the Rolling Stones butted heads with flattops, chino slacks, the American flag, and Nat King Cole. War in Vietnam had split the generations in America. The body count was growing, and no one really had a clear idea about the war's objectives. A young man of eighteen faced agonizing choices, ones that could split his neighborhood or his family right down the middle. Was protesting the war and refusing to be drafted the highest form of patriotic and moral protest, or merely the act of a coward? For tens of thousands of teenagers, who should have been deciding what color tuxedo to rent for the senior prom, those weren't conflicting positions in a philosophical debate. Questions like those, and the answers they arrived at, shaped the lives of a generation.

Other issues clouded the cultural landscape of America as well. Still smoldering was the issue of racial equality. Broad legislative measures, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, only served to beat down the fires that threatened to break out in every major urban center in America. In Tampa, complacent city politicians had ignored the warning signs. After all, Tampa had a progressive recent history in terms of racial affairs: a local black minister's son had been admitted to a previously all-white school in 1961; in 1964, a young black man had been admitted to the University of Tampa; and in the autumn of 1966, a black woman had joined the faculty of the University of South Florida. To Tampa's civic leaders, these events showed how reasonable the area had been concerning racial matters. They gazed out at the downtown restaurants and the integrated lunch counters with satisfaction. Tampa, in their eyes, had weathered the storm.



Picture F-9-3: Stokely Carmichael, one of the early founders of the "Black Power" movement, addresses a group of students while standing on a car's hood at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, 1967.

http://www.wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/ext/ap/chapter29/images/carmichael.jpg

And what a storm it had been that struck urban centers across the nation in the two previous summers before June 1967. Many African-Americans had grown impatient with the slow pace of integration and equality throughout America. Stokely Carmichael, convinced that the NAACP and other black leaders had made too many compromises with white leaders, advanced the idea of "Black Power." This was a philosophy of racial pride that called on self-respecting African-Americans to become more militant (vigorously support the cause of racial equality) and to create their own culture; instead of continued efforts aimed at black integration into white culture, Carmichael (who would later change his name to Kwame Toure) and his followers called for a cultural revolution, a complete transformation of society. Angry that southern politicians did little to prosecute racists involved in lynchings and bombings or to stop police brutality against protestors, Carmichael called on blacks across the

country to arm themselves for self-defense and guard their churches and communities against nighttime attacks. Many African-Americans agreed with Carmichael that the struggle for equality needed to move beyond a strictly nonviolent stance and began to consider self-defense as an appropriate response to racist attacks.

Carmichael's persistence and anger at injustice led to the forming of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California. The Panthers symbolized the growing tension between African-Americans and urban police. Large numbers of African-Americans in large American cities felt frustrated by poverty and unemployment. The Black Panthers demanded reforms and armed themselves in opposition to the police. Several armed clashes with law enforcement occurred as the Black Panther movement spread.

In the summer of 1965 in the Watts section of Los Angeles, a week-long major urban riot broke out. Before it ended, 34 people had been killed and much of the predominately African-American community of Watts had burnt to the ground. National Guard troops were called in to end the uprising. The Watts riot was the first of a series of racial disorders that hit cities in the summers of 1965 and 1966. In the summer of 1966 alone, rioting occurred in more than 40 cities across the North and West, including San Francisco, Chicago, and Cleveland.

But in Tampa, everything looked peaceful. As events would soon prove, though, that image was as false as the old plantation owner's vision of happy slaves laboring cheerfully under the hot sun in the cotton fields, singing their spirituals on Sundays. Unemployment among young blacks in Tampa was depressingly high. The basic institutions of government that were supposed to represent the ideal of equality and justice for all—the city government, courts, and law enforcement—were blatantly tilted in favor of the white power structure.

In the poor black sections of town, dilapidated homes with inferior plumbing stood on streets that were inadequately lighted and rutted with potholes that remained on the bottom of the Public Works Department's priority list. In Central Park Village, near the heart of downtown Tampa, blacks were wedged into a racially isolated subsection. By 1967 nearly 85 percent of those living in the neighborhood were non-white, in a city where the non-white population was only 16.9 percent. The 2,500 residents of Central Park Village also contended with one of the lowest overall income rates in the Bay Area. Those jammed-together government-provided apartments barely concealed the grinding poverty and despair.

Tempers were short. Like a pool of spilled gasoline, the African-American neighborhoods lay baking in the hot Florida sun, with waves of shimmering distortions masking the true nature of the unstable fuel underneath. When a City of Tampa policeman fired his .38 caliber revolver on the sweltering Sunday night of June 11, 1967, he did more than kill a fleeing suspect. He tossed a lit match into a lake of gasoline.

Discussion Questions

1. What were some of the reasons given in the first two paragraphs for the tensions that existed in America in the summer of '67?
2. Who was Stokely Carmichael, and how did his beliefs differ from earlier Civil Rights pioneers like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?
3. Why did Tampa's civic leaders feel secure in their beliefs that their city would not experience the rioting and violence that had occurred in many other cities across America prior to June 1967? Using evidence from the reading, state your opinion as to whether or not Tampa's leaders should have been concerned.

The Riot Begins

The routine call to investigate a burglary at the Tampa Photo Supply Company was just that to Patrolman J.R. Calvert—routine. A passing motorist had reported three black teenagers fleeing the store. Around 6:30 p.m. Calvert saw the three near the intersection of Cass and Nebraska. According to him, their arms were filled with stolen goods. He and his partner, Patrolman Bob Oates, ordered the three to halt, but the youths ran instead. The two cops chased the suspects as Calvert shouted twice more to stop. The three didn't even slow down, so Calvert drew his weapon on the run, stopped to aim, and fired a single shot. The bullet hit 19-year-old Martin Chambers in the back. Half an hour later, Chambers died at Tampa General Hospital, only minutes after arriving.

Chambers was certainly no angel, if his previous arrest record was any indication. He had already been charged with two other street crimes, pleading guilty to lesser charges and serving two short prison sentences. But word of Chambers' death spread like wildfire in his neighborhood, and within an hour an angry crowd of outraged African-Americans roamed the streets bordering downtown, furious that a young black man had been shot in the back over a cheap stolen camera. The crowd continued to grow into the night, and within several hours, the neighborhood simply exploded.

Archie Blount, a sports reporter for *The Tampa Times* at the time, had spent that whole Sunday at the Unlimited Hydrofoil boat races off the Courtney Campbell Causeway, the bridge over Tampa Bay that connects Clearwater and Tampa. Having already dealt with death and destruction that day (the brand-new Miss Budweiser had flipped, killing driver Bill Brow), Blount was working late into the evening finishing his story when a phone rang in the *Times* office at 11 p.m. Soon after, another phone rang, followed by another. "The phones started ringing off the hook," Blount later recalled. "There was no one in the newsroom...I was the only person there. I picked up one of the phones and somebody was yelling that there was a riot downtown, that buildings were burning. I grabbed my notebook and ran out the door, headed for downtown."

Blount arrived in minutes, racing down the streets as police cars zoomed by. He could see the fires, and he soon reached the perimeter of an approximately eight-block-square area of town roughly bordered by Nebraska Avenue and Cass and Orange Streets. Inside this area was chaos. Before he could really grasp what was going on, he had followed a group of police into the fringes of the mess, and the



Picture F-9-4: Archie Blount had already had a long day when the riots started.



Picture F-9-5: A house goes up in flames, one of the many buildings that burned down during the June 1967 riots in Tampa.

situation was getting worse by the minute. The sight of a dead deputy only reinforced the fact that the whole group was in way over their heads.

Hillsborough County Sheriff's Deputy Don Williams had been one of the first policemen on the scene, and during the first frenzied moments after realizing he was being shot at, had collapsed suddenly. He fell lifeless to the street in the darkness, noise, and confusion. The officers assumed that he had been killed by gunfire. Actually, the 52-year-old deputy had suffered a fatal heart attack, but that wouldn't be known until hours later when his body was removed to Tampa General Hospital and examined. There were gunshots heard from all around the area, and as far as law enforcement was concerned, one of their own had been gunned down. The police scrambled for cover. Archie Blount dove right in there with them. "I was huddled behind these garbage cans, big metal ones, and I could see that policeman lying on the street, not 20 feet away. There were crowds of people running in and out of stores, carrying shoes and things. On the roofs of some of the buildings that weren't on fire you could see people silhouetted against the flames and some of them had rifles. We kept hearing gunshots and rounds fly by," Blount later recalled. Later, some out-of-town advocates of black militancy claimed that the

shots being fired were only firecrackers. When asked about that, Blount remarked, "A gun shop down the street had been cleaned out. I've spent a lot of time outdoors, and I know what gunshots sound like, and I can tell what muzzle flashes look like in the dark. You could hear the shots go by. You'd look up on those roofs and see guys with rifles—you could see them."

Blount gradually worked his way back to the edges of the crisis unfolding in front of him. Spotting an open phone booth, he ran to it and placed a call to the home of the *Times* managing editor, Doyle Harvill, at 1:30 in the morning. Harvill said later, "I answered the phone, and I heard Archie yelling, 'It's a Watts, it's a Watts, it's a

Watts!’ And I said, ‘Who is this, and what’re you talking about?’ He yelled, ‘This is Archie...it’s a Watts, it’s a Watts!’”

However disastrous, what was tearing up a relatively small part of Tampa could hardly compare to the devastation that had consumed the Watts area of Los Angeles in the summer of 1965. Of course, spending an hour or more hunkered down behind the uncertain protection of garbage cans, only a few feet away from the body of a dead police officer, while gunfire erupted all around had given Blount a slightly tilted perspective. He could certainly be excused for unintentionally exaggerating the events around him amid the crackle of gunfire, police radios, wailing sirens, and roaring flames. It wasn’t Watts, or Detroit, or Newark—not by a mile. But as Blount had made clear to Harvill on the phone, it sure wasn’t the Unlimited Hydrofoil races, either.

Discussion Questions

1. In your opinion, did the police officer who shot 19-year-old Martin Chambers “do his duty” to enforce the law, or was there a better option? Explain your answer. How would a modern police officer have handled this situation?
2. How did the actions of Officer Calvert provide the “spark” that ignited the Tampa riot of 1967? Was his choice to shoot Chambers the only cause of the riots? Explain, using your knowledge of the Introduction.
3. Why would supporters of black militancy insist that the sound of gunfire present during the rioting was due to firecrackers? Who do you think is a more reliable source of information pertaining to whether or not guns were used by rioters: Archie Blount or out-of-town supporters of the rioters?
4. What did Blount mean when he told his editor, “It’s a Watts, it’s a Watts!”? Was he accurate? If not, do you think that an underlying urge to sell more newspapers was the reason for his exaggeration, or did Blount have other more-pressing concerns?

The Riot and Its Effects

In order to get a jump on that morning's early edition of *The Tampa Times*, Doyle Harvill mobilized a team of reporters to head downtown and to the hospital. One reporter, 19-year-old USF freshman Judy Redfern Hamilton, interviewed a white couple at Tampa General that had survived the first harrowing hours of the riots.

Their story began with a terrible judgment call: spotting the fires of downtown Tampa from Interstate 4, Carl and Joyce Dewitt decided on a whim to investigate and satisfy their curiosity. The Dewitts pulled off of the expressway at the Central Avenue exit and were immediately confronted by a street-wide mob of people. The mob forced the car to a stop, pulled the couple out of the vehicle, and began to beat them mercilessly. Some in the crowd tore off parts of Joyce Dewitt's clothing, while others punched and kicked Carl Dewitt repeatedly. The very ugliest aspect of racism—violence caused by the color of one's skin—was being shoved into their faces. But in the middle of the swirling mob, a man shoved Joyce Dewitt back into the car and shouted, "Get out of here!" She punched the accelerator and sped away, sobbing and hysterical because of what had happened and because she had no idea about the fate of her husband.

Meanwhile, Carl was lying face down on the street having the stuffing kicked out of him. He then heard the hammer of a pistol being pulled back and a voice saying that it was time to kill him. Another voice said, "No, man. We don't want that kind of trouble." Instead, his pockets were emptied as he heard another man whisper in his ear, "Play dead, fellow." Carl Dewitt wisely decided to follow this advice. Moments later, he was jerked to his feet, shoved away from the crowd, and another faceless, courageous voice told him to get out of there before the gunman changed his mind. He stumbled down the street until he found medical help.

Husband and wife were later reunited at Tampa General Hospital, much to their relief. They had made it out of their nightmarish brush with the riot because of the kindness and bravery of several unidentified black men who had rose above the ugliness. It is a shame that these men were never known. Their efforts were probably the only part of the two days and two nights of rioting and looting that weren't negative.

A Tampa fire chief and his driver, heading for the intersection of Central Avenue and Scott Street, got a rude indication of just how nasty the events had turned when they stopped to observe firefighting efforts. Out of nowhere a young African-American man stepped out from the shadows and fired through the open car windows, barely missing both men. The two firemen quickly ducked and drove off. The fire chief later said, "I kinda hate to go back without something to shoot back with." That kind of firepower was right around the corner.

Florida governor Claude Kirk activated the National Guard, and then toured the area on Monday, June 12th. Local papers carried pictures of armed soldiers with automatic weapons and fixed bayonets patrolling the streets of Tampa. It spoke volumes about the state of the nation that pictures of soldiers in combat formation deployed on American streets were not all that unusual.

Picture F-9-6: The headline says it all... "New Violence Breaks Out After Night of Race Riots"

Monday night was a repeat of the previous night, although the number of people injured decreased, and the number of arrests was way up. Law enforcement began to gain some control over the area through the use of police dogs, car-mounted loudspeakers, and the intimidating presence of National Guard jeeps with mounted machine guns. Gun-store owners throughout Hillsborough County reported that they couldn't keep up with the demand as nervous white homeowners, preparing for a racial war, bought all available weapons and ammunition. More buildings were torched, and several innocent people were hurt when bricks or rocks crashed through their car windows. Under the watchful eyes of gun-toting soldiers, firefighters dealt with the blazes more effectively without the added hindrance of people shooting at them. By Tuesday morning, tensions had eased enough to allow the costs of the riot to be assessed.

The property damages alone would run into the millions, but something far more significant had happened. Tampa had sailed on through the great social changes of the turbulent 1960s convinced that troubles experienced in other large cities could never happen in the Bay Area. The token gestures made in the interest of racial equality were, in the eyes of many whites, more than enough to contain growing unrest among Tampa's African-American community. It was impossible for most whites, especially Tampa's leaders, to realize that black Americans would not be content with just a place in a restaurant or a seat in the front of the bus. They wanted to be treated the same as their fellow white citizens. They wanted the same opportunities, the same jobs, and the

same rate of pay. They wanted to be viewed the same by law enforcement officers, by the courts, by the public service agencies. They wanted streets that were as nice as those of their white neighbors; they wanted schools and parks that were just as good. It wasn't going to be enough to talk about fairness and equality anymore. Americans everywhere were actually going to have to practice it. When Patrolman Calvert's shooting of 19-year-old Martin Chambers in the back was ruled "justifiable homicide" by the State Attorney's office on June 15th, it merely highlighted how far apart the two sides actually were.

Of course, compared to the two days of violence and destruction that occurred in June 1967, relations between Tampa's white leadership and African-American community could only improve, and they slowly did well into the next decade. Hillsborough County public schools became officially integrated in 1971, and the city's minority populations shared in the successes brought on by the rush of growth in Tampa in the 1970s. There would soon be a brand-new, glittering stadium that would have an NFL team, the Buccaneers, playing in it by 1976. A new international airport near the stadium was being built, and the skyline would change with the addition of buildings that would include, for a time, the tallest skyscraper in Florida. Thousands of new residents sparked a building boom that transformed cow pastures and orange groves into sprawling subdivisions and shopping malls. But while new highways, airports, and shopping malls made it easy to look past the problems that still remained beneath the surface, they could not become the cure-all for the social and economic ills that had partly led to the riot in 1967.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think that the Dewitts made an error in judgment by trying to investigate the cause of the fires seen in downtown Tampa? What would you have done?
2. What does the following statement mean: "It spoke volumes about the state of the nation that pictures of soldiers in combat formation deployed on American streets were not all that unusual."?
3. Why were white residents of Tampa nervously buying guns and ammunition? Do you think that their reasons were justified?
4. How do you think that the black community of Tampa reacted to the news that the police officer who shot and killed Martin Chambers was ruled to have used justifiable force? How did it show that Tampa's white leaders still had a long way to go to fully treat the African-American population equally and fairly?

Richard Nixon, "What Has Happened to America?" (From the October 1967 issue of *Reader's Digest*)

Just three years ago this nation seemed to be completing its greatest decade of racial progress and entering one of the most hopeful periods in American History. Twenty million Negroes were at last being admitted to full membership in the society, and this social miracle was being performed with a minimum friction and without loss of our freedom or tranquility.

With this star of racial peace and progress before us, how did it happen that last summer saw the United States blazing in an inferno of urban anarchy?

In more than 20 cities police and mayors were unable to cope with armed insurrection. Central cities were abandoned to snipers, looters and arsonists. Only the state militia or federal soldiers could regain the city and restore peace. . . .

Why is it that in a few short years a nation which enjoys the freedom and material abundance of America has become among the most lawless and violent in the history of the free peoples?

There has been a tendency in this country to charge off the violence and the rioting of the past summer solely to the deep racial division between Negro and white. Certainly racial animosities--and agonies--were the most visible causes. But riots were also the most visible causes; riots were also the most virulent symptoms to date of another, and in some ways graver, national disorder--the decline in respect for public authority and the rule of law in America. Far from being a great society, ours is becoming a lawless society.

Slipping Standards The symptoms are everywhere manifest: in the public attitude toward police, in the mounting traffic in illicit drugs, in the volume of teen-age arrests, in campus disorders and the growth of white-collar crime. The fact that whites looted happily along with Negroes in Detroit is ample proof that the affliction is not confined to one race.

The shocking crime and disorder in American life today flow in large measure from two fundamental changes that have occurred in the attitudes on many Americans.

First, there is the permissiveness toward violation of the law and public order by those who agree with the cause in question. Second, there is the indulgence of crime because of sympathy for the past grievances of those who have become criminals.

Our judges have gone too far in weakening the peace forces as against the criminal forces. Our opinion-makers have gone too far in promoting the doctrine that when a law is broken, society, not the criminal is to blame. Our teachers, preachers, and politicians have gone too far in advocating the idea that each individual should determine what laws are good and what laws are bad, and that he then should obey the law he likes and disobey the law he dislikes. Thus we find that many who oppose the war in Vietnam excuse or ignore or even applaud those who protest that war by disrupting parades, invading government offices, burning draft cards, blocking troop trains or desecrating the American flag.

The same permissiveness is applied to those who defy the law in pursuit of civil rights. This trend has gone so far in America that there is not only a growing tolerance of lawlessness but an increasing public acceptance of civil disobedience. Men of intellectual and moral eminence who encourage public disobedience of the law are responsible for the acts of those who inevitably follow their counsel: the poor, the ignorant and the impressionable. For example, to the professor objecting to de facto segregation, it may be crystal clear where civil disobedience may begin and where it must end. But the boundaries have become fluid to his students and other listeners. Today in the urban slums, the limits of responsible action are all but invisible. . . .

There is little question that our judicial and legal system provides more safeguards against the concoction of an innocent man than any other legal system on earth. We should view this accomplishment with pride, and we must preserve it. But the first responsibility of government and a primary responsibility of the judicial system is to guarantee to each citizen his *primary* civil right--the right to be protected from domestic violence. In recent years our system has failed dismally in this responsibility--and it cannot redeem itself by pointing to the conscientious manner in which it treats suspected criminals. . . .

Any system that fashions its safe-guards for the innocent so broadly and haphazardly that they also provide haven from punishment for uncounted thousands of the guilty is a failure--an indictment, not an adornment, of a free society. No need is more urgent today than the need to strengthen the peace forces as against the criminal forces that are at large in America.

Midsummer Madness The nationwide deterioration of respect for authority, the law and civil order reached its peak this past summer when mobs in 100 cities burned and looted and killed in a senseless attack upon their society, its agents and its law.

We should make no mistake. This country cannot temporize or equivocate in this showdown with anarchy; to do so is to risk our freedoms first and then our society and nation as we know it. . . .

The problems of our great cities were decades in building; they will be decades in their solution. While attacking the problems with urgency we must await the results with patience. But we cannot have patience with urban violence. Immediate and decisive force must be the first response. For there can be no progress unless there is an end to violence and unless there is respect for the rule of law. To ensure the success of long-range programs, we must first deal with the immediate crisis--the riots.

An End to Violence How are riots to be prevented? The first step is better pay and better training and higher standards for police; we must attract the highest caliber of individual to the force. . . .

Second, there must be a substantial upgrading in the *number* of police. The first purpose of the added manpower is to bring the physical presence of the law into those communities where the writ of authority has ceased to run.

The responsibility of the police in these areas is not only to maintain the peace but to protect life and property. It is the Negro citizens who suffer most from radical violence. When police and firemen retreat under sniper fire from riot-torn districts to let them "burn out," it is the Negro's district that is burned out. . . .

There can be no right to revolt in this society; no right to demonstrate outside the law, and, in Lincoln's words, "no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law." In a civilized nation no man can excuse his crime against the person or property of another by claiming that he, too, has been a victim of injustice. To tolerate that is to invite anarchy. . . .

To heal the wounds that have torn the nation to asunder, to re-establish respect for law and the principles that have been the source of America's growth and greatness will require the example of leaders in every walk of American life. More important than that, it will require the wisdom, the patience and the personal commitment of every American.

-From *The Reader's Digest*. October 1967, pages 49-54.

IV. Assessment

1. True or false. African-Americans throughout the United States were generally pleased with the rapid implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the subsequent equality and fairness that accompanied it.
2. Tampa's civic leaders felt that they had been progressive in reaching racial equality because:
 - a. a few token African-Americans had been allowed to integrate schools and local colleges;
 - b. buses had begun bringing white children to inner-city black schools, and vice versa;
 - c. they were paying equal salaries to black civil workers when compared to white civil workers;
or
 - d. a massive renovation was being planned for the largely African-American community of Central Park Village in downtown Tampa.
3. Though the issues of racial inequality and the complacency of Tampa's civic leaders had combined to create a frustrating situation for most of Tampa's black residents, the event that provided the spark for the Tampa riot of 1967 was:
 - a. when the Buccaneers won the Super Bowl and hundreds of Tampa's downtown residents went on a rampage;
 - b. the Unlimited Hydrofoil races in Tampa Bay;
 - c. the shooting death of 19-year-old Martin Chambers by a City of Tampa police officer; or
 - d. the calling up of several young Tampa men to serve a one-year tour of duty in Vietnam.
4. Order was soon restored in downtown Tampa after:
 - a. a personal plea for understanding and cooperation was made by President Lyndon B. Johnson;
 - b. Florida governor Claude Kirk visited the city to inspect the damage, then called in the National Guard;
 - c. Stokely Carmichael traveled to Tampa to negotiate a settlement with city leadership;
 - d. the Apollo 11 moon landing.
5. What are your thoughts on the statement, "It spoke volumes about the state of the nation that pictures of soldiers in combat formation deployed on American streets were not all that unusual," and how it reflects on life in America during the 1960's? What comparisons can you draw between America in the summer of 1967 and America today?

V. Resources

Orrick, Bentley, and Crumpacker, Harry L. The Tampa Tribune: A Century of Florida Journalism. University of Tampa Press: Tampa, FL. 1998.

Appleby, Joyce, Ph.D., et al. The American Journey. Glencoe McGraw-Hill: New York, NY. 2003.

Teachers' Curriculum Institute's "Creating Interactive Monuments to Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement" Lesson in the 20th-Century United States History Program's "The Civil Rights Movement" Unit.

http://www.wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/ext/ap/MainAP/welcome.html -"American Passages: A History of the United States"