

# Washington, D.C., May Still Have Time To Head Off Race Troubles

Editor's note: Washington, D.C., is a city in trouble. This is the first of three dispatches reporting on the racial tensions, rising crime rate, school problems and governmental confusion that have contributed to what President Kennedy calls "a very bad situation" in the capital city that belongs to all Americans.

**By LOUIS CASSELS**  
Washington — (AP) — Last Thanksgiving Day, more than 50,000 football fans crowded into the District of Columbia's new stadium to watch two high school teams battle for the city championship. One team represented a predominantly white Catholic school, the other a predominantly Negro public school. During the closing minutes of the game, which the Catholic school won, 20-7, a fight broke out on the playing field. Tension quickly spread to the crowd in the stands. Sensing trouble, many parents bundled up their children and headed for the exits. But it was too late. Violence erupted in the stadium the moment the game was over. Roaming gangs of Negro youths attacked white spectators in the stands, at the exits and in the streets outside the stadium. More than 300 persons were injured before police were able to restore order. The stadium melee was the nearest thing to a race riot

which Washington has experienced in many years. It threw a profound scare into residents of the community, both Negro and white. They recognized that it was not just a fight after a football game, but a symptom of ugly social tensions which have built up in this outwardly calm capital.

**President Notes Situation**  
President Kennedy spoke the mind of many Washington residents when he told a news conference on Jan. 24 that the stadium riot "highlighted a very bad situation in the District of Columbia."

There are, as the President noted, many contributing factors. Like nearly all big cities, Washington is plagued by a rising crime rate, traffic congestion, overcrowded schools and inadequate housing for low-income families.

Unlike any other city in America, however, Washington is handicapped in coping effectively with its own municipal problems. Although it is the capital of the world's greatest democracy, its citizens do not have the right of self-government. For its laws, taxes and appropriations, Washington must look to a U. S. Congress which has not always been particularly sympathetic to its needs, and to the executive branch of the federal government, which in the past has tended to pay more attention to crises in far corners of the globe than to the explosive problems accumulating around its own door-step.

**Fastest Growing City**  
Underlying and complicating all of Washington's problems is the rapid growth and unusual racial distribution of its population. Washington is by a wide margin the fastest-growing city in the East. Its metropolitan area population has doubled since 1940. It stands today at about 2,200,000, which makes it the nation's 10th largest urban center.

The 69-square-mile District of Columbia, which many Americans think of as being synonymous with the city of Washington, actually constitutes only the inner city of the metropolitan area. Nearly two-thirds of the population now lives outside the District of Columbia in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. The racial composition of the total metropolitan area has undergone little change in the past 10 years. It is three-fourths white, one-fourth Negro, approximately the same as in 1920.

But the white population is now heavily concentrated in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs, while the Negro population is confined largely to the inner city. As a result, the District of Columbia has become the only major U.S. city with a Negro majority. Its population is 54 per cent Negro, 46 per cent white. If present trends continue, the District of Columbia population will be 72 per cent Negro by 1970.

Because white families with school-age children have moved to the suburbs in dispropor-

tionate numbers, the racial imbalance of the district's public schools is even greater than that of its general population. About 85 per cent of the students enrolled in D.C. public schools this year are Negroes.

**Shifts Segregate Schools**  
The Washington schools, which were desegregated by Supreme Court order in 1954, have been virtually "re-segregated" by population shifts.

Washington's Negro community includes many middle and upper-class families who live in handsome homes and

send their children to the best private schools and colleges. But it also includes a vastly larger number of poor, uneducated and unskilled people who have moved from rural areas of the South into an urban environment with whose complexities they are ill-equipped to cope.

Census studies show that 75 per cent of the Negro adults in the District of Columbia have less than a high school education. One out of ten is illiterate. One-fourth of the Negro families live on incomes of less than \$60 a week.

Social unrest among the newly urbanized Negroes has been heightened by resentment of racial barriers. Although all of Washington's public facilities—schools, buses, restaurants and theaters—are desegregated, Negroes still encounter "white only" policies in many sectors of private employment and housing. "Some progress has been made in recent years in opening job opportunities for Negroes, especially in retail and service trades," said Sterling Tucker, executive director of the Washington Urban

League. "But qualified Negro job-seekers still are being turned down by many private employers. And Negro youths find it impossible to get into the apprenticeship programs of many skilled trades in the building industry and elsewhere."

**Can't Get Decent Housing**  
In their search for decent housing, Tucker said, Negroes are "hemmed in" by their inability to obtain homes or apartments in the rigorously segregated suburbs, and are forced to pay "outrageous" prices for the housing that is

available to them in the black ghettos of the inner city.

While frustrations and resentments have built up on one side of the color line, fear and suspicion have been at work on the other side. Many Washington whites are terrified by the steady increase in the inner city's Negro majority. They blame Negroes for the rising wave of yokings, muggings and other assaults that have made it unsafe to walk the streets of the capital at night. They regard the stadium riot as a warning that serious racial distur-

ances may break out at any time.

The consensus of more than two dozen Negro and white leaders interviewed in the preparation of these dispatches was that Washington is not trembling on the verge of a major race riot. It still has time—although perhaps not a great deal of time—to alleviate the social pressures that are building toward an explosion.

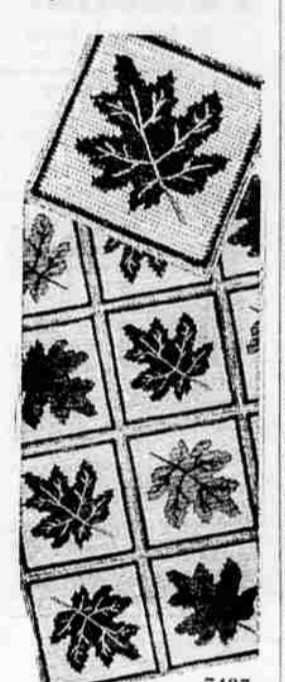
But there are few people in Washington who would quarrel with President Kennedy's solemn warning in a special

message to Congress last month that "the problems of the district have become so critical as to challenge the national government to redouble its understanding of and interest in its capital city."

Next: Washington's crime problem.

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## Veterans Council Elects Officers

Wendell J. Frank, Jacksonville post, American Legion, was elected president of the Veterans Allied Council of Jackson County during its Thursday meeting. Other officers elected were Ray Lawless, Veteran of Foreign Wars post, vice president; Vaughn Beer, American Legion, Jacksonville, sergeant at arms; Edward Smith, VFW, treasurer; and Pat Graham, Disabled American Veterans, secretary.

Veterans voted to write a letter to Congressman Robert Duncan (D-Ore.) thanking him for his efforts in obtaining a medical and surgical center at the Veterans Administration domiciliary, White City. The council also passed a resolution favoring property tax exemption for Veterans of World War I without stipulation of disability certification.

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Vim	Detergent Tablets 40-oz. pkg.	69 <sup>C</sup>
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