



Urban Transformation and Civil Disorder Baltimore 1968 Riots - Why Was There No Rioting in Cherry Hill?

John BREIHAN, Prof.
Loyola University Maryland, United States
breihan@loyola.edu

In 1968, the American industrial city of Baltimore was undergoing economic and social changes that were most visible in the city's segregated African-American neighborhoods. These districts were being both rebuilt with high-density high-rise towers and extended into vacant land on the urban periphery, in the shape of a garden suburb given the bucolic title of Cherry Hill. In April 1968, in the wake of the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Baltimore's urban transformations in planning, design, and social/racial structure were put to test. Rioting broke out in most of the city's African American neighborhoods, provoking a military response that had important effects on national politics. Forty years later, a scholarly conference on the 1968 riots returned again and again to the question posed by this paper: why was Cherry Hill exempt from the disorder that gripped much of the rest of the city? This paper assesses various explanations: physical isolation, garden-city planning, mix of public and private housing, and community leadership.

KEY WORDS: Civil disorder, garden-city planning, Baltimore 1968.