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# Elyria residents troubled

ELYRIA, Ohio (AP) — Why did it happen?

Residents of this normally peaceful suburban city are asking themselves the question in the aftermath of racial unrest that by Thursday seemed to have subsided.

Ohio Highway Patrolmen continued to join city police in patrolling trouble areas which erupted Wednesday and Tuesday with firebombings, assaults and gunfire.

Elyria Mayor Leonard P. Reichlin has blamed the trouble, which resulted in injury to at least 24 persons, on radical blacks and radical whites.

At least 13 blazes were reported, mostly in the city's southwest corner where a 19-year-old black Daryl Maxwell was shot by a white policeman Tuesday night. Police say the youth was seen climbing out of a bar and ignored police warnings to stop.

Although that was the spark that ignited the trouble, residents and city officials also cite other causes.

Charles Hopkins, the executive director of the Elyria-Community Action Agency, noted that many black men in the 16-25 age group have never been able to get a job and have dropped out of the employment market.

While the city's overall unemployment rate is 9.2 per cent, the jobless rate among blacks is between 40 and 45 per cent, according to William Ogle, Elyria affirmative action director and the city's only black official.

I.C. Chapman, president of Elyria's chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said he has been frustrated in getting a hearing on black problems in the city.

"When officials here say they don't know what the con-

ditions are, they are telling a lie. I have been trying to tell them for years," he said.

Chapman and other black leaders organized a team of observers to walk through the riot area Thursday night and try to keep the peace.

Mayor Reichlin defended the city's posture towards blacks. "It is not a matter of not paying attention to the black community. In three years, we won't have a slum here, but urban renewal takes a long time to complete... Everybody is entitled to a decent, safe and sanitary home, but then it is up to them to keep it that way," he said.

Elyria Police Chief Maurice C. Flood denied the black community's charge of discrimination on the force.

"We have tried to hire and we have made progress. We have one black officer," Flood said.

Elyria, which has about 53,000 residents, has a black population of 13 per cent. The police force is 1.03 per cent black, according to public records.

Two young men who witnessed some of the unrest also had their views.

Lawrence Tinsey, 18, is a black cook.

"I just mind my own business," Tinsey said. "But the whites and the police, they won't leave us alone in this. You got to be with your brothers in a thing like this."

Lee Spurlock, 25, is a white golf course worker.

"This is the only thing we got, this neighborhood," Spurlock said. "Nobody really wants a race war. That's suicide. But damn it, you got to draw the line somewhere. I'm going to protect my car and my home and my life."