

# Detroit race riot

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



The Detroit Race Riot of 1943 Race has been an issue that America has fought and struggled with since the Founding Fathers laid down its foundation. While American soldiers were fighting in World War II, there was also fighting on American soil between different races. African Americans and whites were having confrontations all over, but Detroit happened to be one of the worst confrontations between the two races. Many African Americans began to flock to Detroit for jobs in the Motor City and this began to cause problems for the city. The Detroit Race Riots can be linked to many different causes, but three main causes are: the discrimination against African Americans in the work place, the housing opportunities for each race especially the African Americans, and the discrimination against African Americans by the police force. We are still faced with discrimination in the work place today. Sometimes people are either granted or denied jobs because of their race, gender, and personal status in the community. Work place discrimination was very evident in the Detroit Race Riot. In John Hollitz book he quotes, " Rather than integrate the workers, the companies insist in most cases in creating separate racial gangs in the factory, " (206). The factories were segregated. The African Americans were separated from working with the white workers. Although factory owners believed that separating the workers would be a good thing, it created a sense of competition between the two races. All African Americans were treated unequal in the work place, not just men. Two female workers were interviewed in Detroit during the riot time and they said they were not given the same opportunities that white women were given. African American women were hired for jobs such as elevator workers, but ended up doing the

manual work that the job had to offer. Discrimination in the workplace gave way to revolting and strikes. Fights among workers were breaking out because of the different ways they were each treated. Discrimination in the workplace added fuel to the Race Riot fire. Not only were African Americans being discriminated against in the workplace, it also began to hit home. African Americans had to live in run-down houses that costs them way more than a good white person's home would have cost them. The neighborhoods, in which some 185, 000 African Americans were crammed into, were ghetto. Detroit had its racial boundaries in just about every aspect of daily life including home life. Railroad tracks would divide the different neighborhoods between white and African American. John Hollitz describes the conditions that African Americans were packed into as " almost intolerable, " (193). Some homes did not even have indoor plumbing. The prices they paid for a roof over their head exceeded the value they should have been paying. Living conditions contributed to the Race Riot because everything was so divided. This created a " gang" for each neighborhood. Each gang protected the side of the tracks that they lived on and defended each other from other gang members who tried to invade their territory. Many teenagers and young adults were brought into the riot because of the poor living conditions which separated them from white people. White people acted like certain territories around the community were theirs so young African Americans would pick fights for them contributing to the riot. Law enforcement officers are not supposed to discriminate or choose sides, but during the Detroit Race Riot African Americans were treated differently than white people. In John Hollitz book, he uses evidence from the cases of the Detroit Race Riot

and found the the police handled they chaos by, " Beating and arresting Negroes while using more persuasion on whites, " (196). African Americans had a higher arrest rate than that of the white people. African Americans complained to the police department for the police brutality to stop, but nothing was ever done about it. During the riots, African Americans were beat and stopped, while most white people were let go with a talk and a slap on their wrist. The African Americans kept rioting and looting because they felt the way they were treated by the police was unfair. They did not stop rioting just because the police were arresting them. There were 17 African Americans killed by police and 216 arrested in all. These numbers are not comparable to the number of white people killed or arrested by police during the riots. People from all over the country were experiencing racial issues of their own. The discrimination of African Americans in the workplace, at home, and by the police were not all that was going on during the 1940s. America began to see the birth of the Civil Rights Movement as all of the riots and fighting began to surface. It was time for a change in America and the riots brought them into light.