Guide to the Michigan Governor’s Committee to Investigate the Detroit Race Riot Records 1943
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**Descriptive Summary**

**Identifier**  
ICU.SPCL.MGCIDRR

**Title**  
Michigan Governor's Committee to Investigate the Detroit Race Riot. Records

**Date**  
1943

**Size**  
0.5 linear feet (1 box)

**Repository**  
Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library  
1100 East 57th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

**Abstract**  
The Detroit riot of June 21 and 22, 1943 was one of the most violent racial upheavals to occur in the United States. The clash between white and African American residents, the worst since the Chicago riots of 1919, was finally quelled with the help of federal troops, but left 34 dead and 670 injured. Consists of a report prepared by a committee directed by Michigan governor, Harry F. Kelly, to investigate the riot that took place in Detroit on June 21, 1943. Committee members included Herbert J. Rushton, William E. Dowling, Oscar Olander, and John H. Witherspoon.

**Acknowledgments**

**Information on Use**

**Access**  
No restrictions.

**Citation**  
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Michigan Governor’s Committee to Investigate the Detroit Race Riot. Records, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

**Historical Note**  
The Detroit riot of June 21 and 22, 1943 was one of the most violent racial upheavals to occur in the United States. The clash between white and African American residents, the worst since the Chicago riots of 1919, was finally quelled with the help of federal troops, but it left 34 dead and 670 injured.

A committee composed of Herbert J. Rushton, the State's Attorney General, William E. Dowling, Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney, Oscar C. Olander, the State Police Commissioner, and John H. Witherspoon, the Commissioner of the Detroit Police Force
was charged by the Governor of Michigan, Harry F. Kelly, to investigate the circumstances of the rioting, including the possibility of enemy agitation and subversion. The committee concluded, however, that the rioting was a "spontaneous uprising resulting from long-neglected and side-tracked social problems" which could only be solved by "determined, straight-forward, sociological methods."

**Scope Note**
Consists of a report prepared by a committee directed by Michigan governor, Harry F. Kelly, to investigate the riot that took place in Detroit on June 21, 1943. Committee members included Herbert J. Rushton, William E. Dowling, Oscar C. Olander, and John H. Witherspoon.

The committee report, about 300 pages long, contains a 17 page mimeographed narrative of the riot. This narrative and the committee's subsequent findings are based upon police and hospital statistics concerning the dead and the injured, weapons confiscated, arrests, individuals tried or awaiting trial, looting and other property destruction. Photocopies of police and hospital reports, of weapon displays and police precinct maps constitute the exhibits which accompany the report. A detailed index to these exhibits can be found in Folder 3.

**Related Resources**
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

**Subject Headings**
- Dowling, William E.
- Kelly, Harry F.
- Olander, Oscar Gustav, 1899-
- Rushton, Herbert J.
- Witherspoon, John H.
- Detroit (Mich.) -- History.
- Detroit (Mich.) -- Race relations.
- Riots -- Michigan -- Detroit.

**INVENTORY**

Box 1
Folder 1
  Title page, Forward
Box 1
Folder 2
  Riot Narrative, June 20, June 21
Box 1
Folder 3
  Riot Exhibits 1-32, Index
Box 1

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Folder 4
Riot Exhibits 1-4, violent incidents on street cars, October 4, 1942-January 29, 1943; precinct maps of riot areas

Box 1
Folder 5
Riot Exhibits 5-9, violent incidents on street cars, January 2, 1943-June 20, 1943; Belle Isle disturbance, report

Box 1
Folder 6
Riot Exhibits 10-14, Detroit police, duty strength; Presidential proclamation, June 21, 1943; situation in Detroit prior to use of Federal troops, police report; arrests, arranged by precincts, by race

Box 1
Folder 7
Riot Exhibits 15-16, arrests, male juveniles, June 21-June 25, by race; arrests, investigation arrests, arranged by precinct, race, age

Box 1
Folder 8
Riot Exhibit 17, misdemeanor and felony arrests, riot, arranged by precinct

Box 1
Folder 9
Riot Exhibit 17, misdemeanor and felony arrests, pending, arranged by precinct

Box 1
Folder 10
Riot Exhibit 18, dead and injured, hospital admittances

Box 1
Folder 11
Riot Exhibit 19, dead and injured, overall statistics; deaths, synopses of incidents

Box 1
Folder 12
Riot Exhibit 19, dead and injured, police officers

Box 1
Folder 13
Riot Exhibit 19, dead and injured, June 20, 8,30 PM-June 21, 8,15 AM

Box 1
Folder 14
Riot Exhibit 19, dead and injured, June 21, 8,15 AM-June 21, 3,50 PM

Box 1
Folder 15
Riot Exhibit 19, dead and injured, June 21, 3,55 PM-June 21, 8,45 PM

Box 1
Folder 16
Riot Exhibit 19, dead and injured, June 21, 8,45 PM-June 23, 5,09 PM

Box 1
Folder 17
Riot Exhibits 20-21, property destruction, autos, buildings
Box 1
Folder 18
   Riot Exhibit 22, looting
Box 1
Folder 19
   Riot Exhibits 23-24, confiscated weapons, lists, photos; arrests, analysis summary
Box 1
Folder 20
   Riot Exhibit 25, Riot offenses, analysis and summary
Box 1
Folder 21
   Riot Exhibit 26-27, Riot arrests, investigation arrests, court cases
Box 1
Folder 22
   Riot Exhibit 28-29, Riot arrests, investigation arrests, arranged by age and race
Box 1
Folder 23
   Background of riot, report of the Committee
Box 1
Folder 24
   Background of riot, racial discrimination, photocopies of newspaper editorials, magazine articles, miscellaneous documents
Box 1
Folder 25
   Background of riot, narcotics, lists of drug stores looted