

Detroit Drives the Nation

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How fitting it seems now, looking back three hundred years, that the city of Detroit would have been founded by an explorer named Cadillac, a moniker so completely synonymous with one of America's most iconic automobiles. From 1694 until 1710, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, an officer in the French Navy, was entrusted with providing security for French fur traders in the New World, and for keeping the peace with native tribes, especially the Iroquois. In 1701, he and 51 French settlers established Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit, named partly in honor of Cadillac's benefactor, and also taken from the phrase *le détroit du lac Érié* (the strait of Lake Erie) that described the nearby river system that links Lake Erie with Lake Huron.

By 1750, forty years after Cadillac's departure, Detroit was still a frontier outpost of only 2,500 inhabitants. The British would soon displace the French in the region, as per the 1763 Treaty of Paris that ceded to England all of France's land claims east of the Mississippi River. Fifty years later, once General William Harrison retook the city after its fall the year before in the Siege of Detroit, the British were finally expelled for good.

Detroit's liberation took place eight years after the fire of June, 1805, when virtually all of the city burned to the ground. Only six months before the conflagration, Detroit and its surrounding area had been reclassified by the U.S. government as the Michigan Territory.

President Thomas Jefferson appointed a governor, General William Hull, and three judges to run it, one of whom was Augustus Brevoort Woodward.

After arriving in Detroit just one day after the calamitous fire, Woodward assumed command of Detroit's reconstruction. In time he got approval from the local and federal authorities to move ahead with his ambitious master plan based on Pierre Charles L'Enfant's model for the District of Columbia. Woodward's vision was to create a great new American city consisting of, on the one hand, small hexagonally-shaped parks with streets emanating from them, and, on the other, to feature large, impressive boulevards, as one would find in Paris.

One such thoroughfare (eventually named after himself), evoking the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, was incorporated in Woodward's plan. It was designed to emerge from an impressive park area (Campus Martius), several acres in size, replete with statues and the like, built near the Detroit River. This grand boulevard (Woodward Avenue) would run due north from the base park, first to another large, majestic park four blocks away (Grand Circus Park), similar to the Place de l'Étoile, that would also contain monuments and other manifestations of a proud new city. Woodward's grand strategy was to continually expand the city, piece by piece, utilizing L'Enfant's "hub and spoke" model, in this way avoiding the humdrum grid pattern so often seen elsewhere.

For Woodward, the opportunity to build a new city from scratch was utterly beguiling. In 1805 there was no dominant city in the northwestern edge of the nation. Cleveland, Toledo and Milwaukee hadn't been founded yet and Chicago was just a handful of log cabins. Detroit, Sault Ste. Marie and Michillimackinac were deemed the best options at that point, but by virtue of its

prime location and its immediate need for reconstruction, Detroit was selected as the most sensible place to create a major city.

Apart from an initial build-out of Woodward's plan, very little of his vision for Detroit was actually realized. Woodward's brainchild ran into opposition from General Hull, who felt that Detroit was still susceptible to attack from the British, and that erecting fortifications in the frontier city were far more appropriate than building a striking cityscape. Woodward had his way for a time. Hull's trepidation, too, was realized seven years later when, during the War of 1812, he surrendered the city to British troops. After Detroit was reclaimed and peace was restored, President James Madison appointed Lewis Cass as Governor. Unlike Hull, Cass didn't contest the value of Woodward's master plan. As a practical matter, though, he initiated the future development of Detroit based on a grid, surrounding the area that Woodward oversaw and remains to this day.

Detroit would continue its expansion as a regional center, but it was the opening of the Erie Canal that spurred its rapid growth. Before the canal, commerce in the Michigan Territory was limited by the fact that Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake Michigan were closed off to the east by Niagara Falls. When the Erie Canal was dedicated in 1825, goods that used to cost a fortune to ship overseas were suddenly only pennies on the dollar. Ultimately, Detroit became a major grain depot. Detroit's mills used steamships to move grain along Lake Erie to Buffalo, where it was then transported over the canal to New York City for worldwide distribution. Thanks in large part to both the canal and the birth of the railroads, by 1860, Detroit was the nation's nineteenth largest city.

The period after the Civil War through the end of the nineteenth century saw Detroit transform itself into an industrial powerhouse. What changed things dramatically was the opening of ship traffic from Lake Superior through the port of Sault Ste. Marie. This allowed coal, iron, copper and timber from Minnesota and Michigan's Upper Peninsula to be brought south to Detroit. Finally, raw materials mined far away could be transported cheaply to America's industrial heartland, where they could be manufactured into building materials, durable goods and factory parts. To accommodate the growing supply of ore and timber, Detroit expanded its industrial base very quickly. "With the advent of heavy machinery," wrote Scott Martelle, "small craftman's shops — from cigar rollers to cobblers — were pushed aside by the new factories, which turned independent craftsmen into laborers." By 1900, Detroit had become America's thirteenth largest city and forty percent of its workforce was in manufacturing.

While this transformation was going on, in the 1890s and the first few years of the new century, "the desire to marry engine to wheel, and create a cart that would propel itself," as Martelle so aptly put it, took flight in America, as it also did in France and Germany. Ransom Olds, Henry Ford and David Buick were some of the Detroit based American entrepreneurs who understood the implications of individualized transportation. "In an amazingly short amount of time," wrote Martelle,

what had been a noisy oddity was taking root as both a major technological leap and a new industry, destined to make already wealthy local investors even richer. It was a precursor of sorts to Silicon Valley, where only a few generations later modern tinkers would find risk-taking investors to finance their experiments in

computer and software design, which — much like the automobile — transformed the way individuals engage the world. And it marked Detroit’s maturation from a gawky adolescence as a regional economic center building railroad cars, stoves, and furniture, to its future as a full-grown global industrial center.

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Although Detroit began the twentieth century as a thriving commercial hub and a fully diversified manufacturing city, by the late 1920s, when Pepper Adams’ parents lived there, it had become a one-industry town. Due to the automobile, boomtown Detroit was expanding its footprint so quickly that the city invariably began to flaunt its newfound wealth. By 1920, the downtown area between Campus Martius and Grand Circus Park was filling in with businesses of all kinds, and America’s most impressive array of Art Deco skyscrapers were being built, only rivaled by those in New York and Chicago.

Some of Detroit’s residential areas were equally imposing. “The Detroit of automobile company executives, bankers, lawyers, and doctors,” wrote Sugrue, “could be found in neighborhoods like Boston-Edison, where cathedral-like stands of elm trees towered over staid boulevards lined with ten- to twenty-room mansions, and Palmer Woods and Rosedale Park, whose curvilinear streets passed through a Romantic landscape of mock-French chateaux, Tudor-style mansions, formal Georgian estates, and stately New England-style colonials.”

On Detroit’s Northeast Side, some eight miles from Paradise Valley, was Conant Gardens, the city’s most affluent black community. Established in the late 1920s, and named

after abolitionist Shubael Conant who originally owned the land, Conant Gardens attracted successful African-American lawyers, ministers, businessmen and educators. Some of Detroit's finest musicians, such as Donald Byrd and Tommy Flanagan, were raised there among its tree-lined streets, manicured lawns and open fields.

Many of the city's white, mid-level workers lived in the large brick houses that were clustered in the Chalmers Park, Russell Woods and West Outer Drive neighborhoods in the northwest and far northeast sections of Detroit. The vast remainder of white Detroit resided in countless blue-collar neighborhoods; mostly tidy, wooden-framed bungalows, one after the other, each on small rectangular lots. With so few apartment buildings, and with housing developments reaching out for many miles in almost all directions, Detroit's sprawling metropolis was, as Sugrue points out, perhaps the prototypical twentieth-century American city.

Apart from the downtown commercial district and some of its tony neighborhoods, much of early twentieth-century Detroit was a "total industrial landscape," as historian Olivier Zunz characterized it. According to Sugrue, Detroit at that time had

factories, shops, and neighborhoods blurred together indistinguishably, enmeshed in a relentless grid of streets and a complex web of train lines. To the casual observer, the design of Detroit seemed anarchic. The city's sprawling form and its vast array of manufactories made little sense. But Detroit's industrial geography had a logic that defied common observation. Rail lines formed the threads that tied the city's industries together. Automobile manufacturing and railroad transportation were inseparably bound in a symbiotic relationship. Every major

automobile factory had its own rail yard. Plants were, in the eyes of one observer, “ringed round with . . . snarls and tangles of railroad tracks.” Trains brought raw materials and parts to the auto plants and carried the finished products to distributors throughout the country.

The city’s network of roads and the Detroit River were equally important aspects of its industrial makeup. Detroit’s boulevards — especially Woodward, Gratiot, Michigan, Grand River, and Jefferson that were vestiges of Woodward’s grand vision for Detroit — helped move supplies from small manufacturers to its hungry factories. The river, for its part, accommodated large steel and chemical plants that needed access to water in order to cool its machinery, rid its effluent and solid waste, and receive deliveries (by barge) of raw materials.

In order to keep its factories operating at peak efficiency during World War I, ownership, under pressure to maintain its labor pool, had no choice but to integrate their workforce. Because so many white workers had been conscripted, and foreign-born laborers could no longer gain access to the U.S., the vacuum attracted many indigent blacks who were living in rural areas of the American south. “As blacks moved north,” wrote Scott Martelle, “some of the old hatreds followed, and new ones arose among the established immigrant communities in Detroit and elsewhere, where Europeans, particularly the Polish and German working class, freighted existing white-black racism with fears that adding poor rural blacks to the urban labor pool would drive down wages and job opportunities.”

Starting in 1910 and ending in 1970, the Great Migration of 6.5 million African-Americans to the north and west (five million after 1940) was, according to the historian

Nicholas Lemann, one of most sizable exoduses in history. “In sheer numbers it outranks the migration of any other ethnic group — Italians or Irish or Jews or Poles — to this country.” By the 1930s, Detroit had the largest concentration of black industrial workers in America.

Besides migrants (both black and white) from the U.S. rural south, the auto industry also drew white immigrants galore — Scots, Poles, Czechs, Greeks, Russians, Syrians, Lebanese, Italians, Hungarians — and the texture of the city’s population was a true American mosaic. In 1930, the year of Pepper Adams’ birth, Detroit’s foreign-born population was 25 percent of its total, approximately equal to Chicago and only exceeded by New York City. When Adams moved back to Detroit seventeen years later and began working in the auto factories, the city still retained its multi-ethnic, international flavor.

To feed the insatiable American demand for automobiles, Detroit’s population had doubled between 1910 and 1920, hitting almost one million inhabitants. Then it almost doubled again by the time of the Stock Market Crash of 1929, making it the nation’s fourth largest city. Because Detroit’s auto industry had attracted men from around the world to staff its factories, the city had become a male dominated place. Many who worked the industry’s ten-month season left town at its conclusion, taking their earnings with them. In the 1920s, the waves of transient male workers became so prevalent that the termed “suitcase brigade” was coined to describe them.

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In 1927, Henry Ford’s dream of a building a facility that could convert raw materials into a finished product in one continual process was finally realized. For almost ten years he had

invested hundreds of millions of dollars to create the world's largest manufacturing complex, one that could transform ore and wood and rubber into a finished automobile in a little more than one day. The monumental scale of Ford's River Rouge plant, downriver in neighboring Dearborn, had never been attempted. With 93 buildings and ninety miles of rail lines on 2,000 acres along the Detroit River and its Rouge River tributary, it employed more than 75,000 workers. It had its own mills, foundries, and a massive powerhouse.

Although many before him regarded autos as a luxury item, it was Ford who grasped the concept of the automobile as a mass-produced, affordable machine. To bring it to the marketplace, Ford popularized the automated assembly line. At "The Rouge," workers took their position besides a conveyor belt. As parts rolled by, they performed the exact same task for their entire shift instead of being part of a crew that built something from beginning to end. Ford's new and highly efficient approach changed manufacturing and was copied throughout the world, just as surely as it was lampooned in films by Charlie Chaplin (such as *Modern Times*) and others as a paragon of man's inhumanity to man. Starting in 1947, Pepper Adams would be working on "the line" at various Detroit manufacturing plants.

The Rouge became yet another glaring example of Detroit's extraordinary success. But just as high as Detroit's fortunes were in the 1920s, so too was its fall after the Crash of 1929. Between the end of 1929 and 1933, one-half of all auto jobs vanished, auto production dropped by two-thirds, and the statewide jobless rate hit forty percent. Many Detroiters, including Pepper Adams' parents, lost everything. "The shacks and hovels of the vagrant and evicted," wrote the historian Nelson Lichtenstein, "mushroomed along rail lines and highways and in vacant lots. Meanwhile, the city juggled its books to put even the small sum of \$3.75 a week into the hands

of those on relief, but as tax receipts plummeted, that effort courted municipal bankruptcy. By 1932, city employees were being paid in script and the Detroit banks tottered on the verge of collapse.”

Detroit had established its own banking oligarchy in the late 1920s. Whereas much of the early capital to build out the automobile industry was supplied by New York and Chicago firms, Detroit industrialists in the 1920s believed that they should establish their own financial institutions to better play to its specific needs. In 1927, the Guardian Bank was created, followed by the Detroit Bankers Company. Each enterprise swallowed up more than twenty regional banks, becoming competing financial goliaths (not unlike Detroit’s biggest auto manufacturers), and executives at the large automakers manned both banks’ boardrooms.

Despite their heft, by 1933 Guardian was on its knees begging for a bailout from the federal government due to the nation’s deepening economic crisis. At the time, any loans issued by the U.S. government’s Reconstruction Finance Corporation to domestic lending institutions required that a matching amount of money be deposited in those banks as collateral. Guardian, without the necessary resources, turned to Detroit’s “Big Three” owners for help. Both Alfred Sloan of General Motors and Walter Chrysler agreed to deposit \$1 million to prop up the bank but Henry Ford balked. Believing that guarantees about the safety of his funds weren’t assured, he refused to keep his \$7.5 million in the bank, despite U.S. President Herbert Hoover’s personal appeal for reconsideration. Ford further complicated negotiations by threatening to withdraw \$20 million from the rival Detroit Bankers Company, jeopardizing the future of both institutions.

To avoid utter collapse, on Valentine’s Day, 1933, Michigan’s governor, William Comstock, declared a one-week bank holiday to avoid statewide panic and allow some time to

figure a way out of the morass. While they deliberated, Michigan's 550 banks were shuttered, denying nearly a million residents access to their money. If Comstock thought that his action would create a sense of calm among his citizens while matters were sorted out, the effect throughout the country was quite the opposite. Upon learning that neither Ford's money nor the riches of his ilk were enough to avert Detroit's banks from insolvency, the public deduced that they could hardly trust the deposits in their own bank. Ford's anti-bank stance and the events in Michigan set off a national panic, a run on the banks, that was allayed in March by the newly sworn-in President Franklin D. Roosevelt. One of the first acts of his administration was to reign in the nation's banks with a set of sweeping reforms.

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Henry Ford was one of the darlings of Detroit in the early part of the century. Some even tried to draft him for president of the United States, overlooking his inveterate reclusiveness. But despite all that he did for Detroit and the nation's economic well-being, Ford's business practices and its owner's personal attributes by the 1930s were coming under intense scrutiny. The public was concerned about his company's very harsh treatment of its workers, the brutal way that trade unionists were beaten on the job, his massive layoffs during the early years of the Depression, his refusal to donate *anything* to local relief organizations, and his anti-Semitic rants that were published in the column "Mr. Ford's Page" in the *Dearborn Independent*. No longer were his business achievements and enormous wealth universally admired while so many suffered, some directly at his company's expense.

By the early 1930s, ninety percent of American auto workers still had absolutely no rights, and unionization hadn't made much progress. Risking your job in the Depression was bad enough. To be followed home by a band of company goons for "agitating" on the shop floor was equally frightening. Nevertheless, the courageous Reuther brothers — Walter, Roy and Victor — who first arrived in Detroit from Wheeling, West Virginia in the late 1920s, were determined to change the auto industry's power structure.

Pepper Adams knew about the Reuthers and the social unionist struggle for workers' rights since he was a boy. In around 1945 he observed his mother participate in a lengthy and bitterly fought teachers strike in New York State when Thomas E. Dewey was its governor. As a confirmed socialist, who felt throughout his life that the American system was intrinsically unjust, Adams revered the Reuthers' work to bring economic justice and a real sense of hope to so many Americans. One indication of his unalloyed admiration was the black-tie "Equal Opportunity Day Dinner" that Adams attended at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on November 17, 1964, sponsored by the National Urban League, that honored Walter Reuther's lifetime of achievement.

Pepper "didn't like the system in this country," remembered saxophonist Ron Kolber.

He thought it was unfair. I used to call him "the great socialist." He said, "there's too many people that don't have things that they should have in this country, and they can't get them because of what they are." He was very adamant about that. . . . I think that deep down in his heart he was a rabid socialist. With those kind of wry witticisms that he had, he always sort of made fun of the system here. He'd

always make some kind of remark like, “Oh, yeah, it’s ‘the land of the free and the home of the brave’ if you happen to be free and brave.”

Walter Reuther, both a gifted tool and die maker with a passion for advancing social justice, and like Pepper Adams a working-class intellectual, was the most gifted orator of the three brothers. He began his career in Detroit as a United Auto Workers union organizer after returning in 1935 with his brother Victor from a two-year trip to Gorky, Russia. There they observed how the Ford-sponsored auto plant functioned and treated its workers. In their absence, poverty and desperation among America’s dispossessed persisted, creating a real environment for social change. Since sixty percent of Detroit’s workforce toiled in the auto plants, the Reuthers believed that collectivizing them into a major force was possible. They knew that it would take several years of persistent organizing and a courageous sense of daring to achieve their goals.

Two pieces of federal legislation had already changed the landscape for the unionist cause in the 1930s. The Wagner Act, signed into law on July 5, 1935, guaranteed private-sector workers the right to unionize and strike. It emboldened socialists, communists and labor sympathizers of all stripes to find ways to fight back against the auto factory’s tyrannical rule. The second was the National Industrial Recovery Act, enacted in June 1933.

When Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), with its famous section 7(a) which guaranteed workers the right to organize and bargain collectively, both liberals and radicals had come to see the revival of trade

unionism as essential, not only to the protection of workers against autocratic employers, but also for a more equitable redistribution of national income and the increase in working-class purchasing power essential to a consumption-driven economy. This difficult and sometimes contradictory linkage between industrial democracy in the shop and mass purchasing power in the paycheck proved an enormously powerful idea that virtually defined the social agenda of the New Deal — and the politics of Walter Reuther — for more than a generation.

To that aim, the Reuthers' first success was in December, 1936, when they organized the successful sit-down strike at Kelsey-Hayes Wheel, a major Ford parts supplier. Led by Victor Reuther, the brothers' philosophical leader, a deal was struck on Christmas Eve for better working conditions, equal pay for men and women, and the doubling of its workers' salary. Just a few days later, a sit-down strike at the General Motors' Fisher Body and Chevrolet plants in Flint, Michigan, spearheaded by Roy Reuther, the brothers' most skillful tactician, was their next target. "This was a one-corporation town, you see," remembered Roy Reuther. "The sheriff and the police and everyone were bought and sold, really, over the years by General Motors." "There was this tenseness in the air," added his brother Victor, "that climate of opinion, deliberately built up by the corporation, of bitterness and hatred against the union as an institution: 'They're outside agitators, they're communists, they're intruders bringing strife and discord to our peaceful, happy community.'" On February 11, 1937, after 44 days, General Motors and the UAW came to an agreement that immeasurably upgraded conditions for GM's workers, in no small way giving dignity to the powerless. The strike, too, was a watershed event for the union,

changing the UAW from a group of small, like-minded factions into a major political force, eventually leading to the unionization of the entire auto industry.

After Chrysler's capitulation, Ford Motor Company was the Reuthers' ultimate prize. Henry Ford resisted for as long as possible, clinging to his enormous power and wealth until anti-unionization was untenable. Ford ran his company, said labor historian Kevin Boyle, "as a kind of personal fiefdom. It was literally his and his alone. It wasn't a public company." To prevent unionization, Ford hired Henry Bennett to build and oversee Ford's private army of 5,000 men, largely menacing types from the underworld, many of whom carried guns inside the Ford plants, to help enforce their will. Bennett employed various strategies to keep Ford a non-union shop. First, he fired anyone suspected of being a union sympathizer, or bloodied them with gang beatings if they functioned as a union organizer. Such activity, in the wake of federal legislation enforced by the National Labor Relations Board, led to numerous grievances and legal proceedings against the company. Next, he struck deals with the Detroit mob, permitting them to control gambling in Ford's factories, embezzle membership dues, and steal merchandise in return for intimidating members of the public on Ford's behalf, and as a renewable source of henchmen for Bennett's private army. Lastly, he paid off Homer Martin, UAW's president, in lump sums of \$50,000 in return for guarantees that his union wouldn't strike at Ford.

But on May 26, 1937 the tide turned against Ford. Walter Reuther gathered with some colleagues and a group of ministers on public property in front of the River Rouge plant to distribute leaflets critical of the automaker. Intended as a photo shoot, Reuther invited the press. On a pedestrian overpass above Miller Road at Gate No. 4, Reuther and his party were badly beaten by Ford's security detail. A *Detroit News* photographer captured graphic images of the

attack, and they were published on the front page of newspapers across the U.S. the following day. Much like the iconic footage that was taken of John F. Kennedy's motorcade in Dallas on November 22, 1963, the May 4, 1970 photographs of the Kent State Massacre, or of nine-year-old Kim Phuc (and her family) running naked on a road in Vietnam after being burned in a June 4, 1972 napalm attack, the photos of the "Battle of the Overpass" at Ford defined its era, galvanizing public opinion in favor of the union and workers' rights, causing irreparable damage to Ford's reputation.

In April, 1941, after the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the NLRB's rulings that Ford must adhere to federal law, 50,000 Ford workers struck. Finally at the UAW's mercy, Ford sanctioned the union. According to Lichtenstein, "the modern civil rights movement arose out of the proletarianization and unionization of black Americans. . . . A key moment in the transformation of African-American consciousness came in 1941 when the UAW finally broke the back of Ford paternalism; overnight, black workers became among the most steadfast of UAW members. For all its limitations, the union offered African-American workers a sense of rights-conscious entitlement and a new focus for their collective empowerment."

The civil rights struggle, as led by the Rev. Martin Luther King, would borrow many of the non-violent tools from the Reuther playbook to advance their cause in the 1950s and '60s, such as bus boycotts and lunch-counter sit-ins. The Reuthers regarded civil rights as a logical extension of everything that they fought for, and were as vigorously involved in the civil rights struggle as they were in the labor movement or in Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers union's struggle to advance Latino-American rights.

In 1946, the charismatic Walter Reuther assumed the presidency of the UAW, and he enjoyed the widespread support of Detroit's workers for many years. Thanks to the Reuthers, in roughly a decade the relationship between labor and the auto companies had been transformed. Because of labor's hard-fought victories, the economic stability of Michigan's middle class would improve dramatically over the next twenty years, and what the UAW achieved in those heady days would become the standard that was pursued by blue-collar workers throughout the country.

The Detroit that Pepper Adams returned to was immeasurably enhanced by what the Reuthers accomplished. Adams and other musicians, who needed even temporary work when gigs were sparse, could find employment in the auto plants, and avoid harassment on the shop floor by overbearing or menacing, armed foremen. The nature of the work, while still physically demanding, would have safeguards built in to protect them from injury. Pay levels were vastly improved and work shifts weren't as inhumane. Auto workers finally had rights.

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By the time of America's entry into World War II, the Great Depression had ended. U.S. industry was running at peak efficiency, led by Detroit, the "Arsenal of Democracy," whose auto factories rapidly retooled to manufacture tanks, trucks, airplanes, and other armaments for the war effort. Due to federal largesse, Detroit's economy went from one of the nation's most depressed back to its 1920's boomtown days. The war effort once again attracted workers as it

did in the early part of the century, and by 1943 Detroit's unemployment rate was statistically insignificant.

Detroit's full-employment scenario, and a society unified in the war effort, wasn't enough to allay the day-to-day, grinding social problems that were festering in the black community, nor the racist impulses that were held by those whites who were inspired by the incendiary demagoguery of radio clergymen such as Father Charles Coughlin. On June 19, 1943, a few isolated, racially-motivated fist fights throughout Detroit escalated into a brawl on Belle Isle that involved several hundred blacks and whites. "There was a rumor that some white sailor threw a black baby off of the Belle Isle Bridge," remembered the saxophonist Yusef Lateef. "Rumors like that start riots, whether they're true or false." By early morning, tensions had escalated. Angry mobs roamed Woodward Avenue and Hastings Street, attacking innocent people of the opposite race. As Lateef recalled,

West of Woodward Avenue was mostly white, east of Woodward were the blacks.

. . . The blacks were lined up on John R, which is one block from Woodward, and the whites were lined up on John R facing east. The blacks were facing west.

That's the way that sickness was. . . . A lot of innocent people were hurt and died.

After three days of brawls, fires and looting, the Detroit police were overwhelmed and the National Guard was mobilized to squash the uprising. "When confronting white mobs, the police routinely — if they interfered at all — just urged the crowd to go home," wrote Scott Martelle. "When confronting black mobs, they turned to truncheons and guns." Subsequent inquiries found

that of the 34 who died in the riot, most were blacks, many of them shot in the back by white police officers.

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Conceptually, automakers after the war could either remain as military contractors or revert back to making autos. The Pentagon came to the conclusion that it was better for national security if armament manufacturing was not concentrated in any one city. Spreading it out, it reasoned, would be safer in case of attack. So Ford, Chrysler, General Motors and other Detroit auto firms returned to their former incarnation as car and truck manufacturers, and the military-industrial complex, begun in large part in Detroit, moved elsewhere.

Detroit's automakers moved quickly to convert their factories back to the juggernauts that they were before 1941, realizing that they could sell to an eager public as many vehicles as they could fabricate. In 1948, American automakers produced 5.3 million vehicles, eighty percent of them cars, almost matching the all-time production record from 1929. In 1949, 6.6 million vehicles were built, and in 1950 the eight million mark was surpassed. For a time, Detroit's economy looked robust, and the future seemed promising.

On June 5, 1947, a little more than two years after the war in Europe officially ended with Germany's surrender, Secretary of State George C. Marshall, on the occasion of him accepting an honorary degree at Harvard University, announced in an address to 15,000 people in attendance the broad strokes of a five-year, \$17 billion aid package for the postwar reconstruction of Western Europe. Soon known as "The Marshall Plan," his speech signaled

America's intent to bring the war-torn area firmly within its geopolitical compass. "When the Soviet Union made rejection of the program a central tenet of its ideological counteroffensive," Lichtenstein wrote, "the Cold War was well and truly launched." Two months after Marshall's speech, Pepper Adams moved back to the city of his birth.

