

# The Segregation of America During the Great Depression

The Great Depression was a time of great hardship for all Americans, but it was especially difficult for African Americans. They faced discrimination in all aspects of life, from housing and employment to education and healthcare. This article tells the story of how segregation impacted the lives of African Americans during the Great Depression and how they fought to overcome it.

## Housing

One of the most visible ways that segregation impacted African Americans during the Great Depression was in housing. In many cities, African Americans were forced to live in segregated neighborhoods known as "ghettos" or "slums." These neighborhoods were often overcrowded and lacked basic amenities such as running water, indoor plumbing, and electricity. They were also often located in areas that were prone to flooding and other natural disasters.



## If the Fire Comes: A Story of Segregation during the Great Depression (I Am America (Set of 2))

by Matthew Burgess

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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The housing crisis that hit America during the Great Depression made matters even worse for African Americans. As white families lost their homes and were forced to move into slums, the demand for housing in black neighborhoods increased. This led to overcrowding and rent increases, making it even more difficult for African Americans to find decent housing.

## **Employment**

African Americans also faced discrimination in employment during the Great Depression. They were often the last to be hired and the first to be fired. They were also often paid less than white workers for the same work. In some cases, African Americans were even denied jobs altogether.

The unemployment rate among African Americans during the Great Depression was much higher than the unemployment rate among white Americans. In 1933, the unemployment rate among African Americans was 24.7%, while the unemployment rate among white Americans was 15.9%.

## **Education**

African Americans also faced discrimination in education during the Great Depression. In many states, African American children were forced to attend segregated schools that were often inferior to white schools. These schools were often overcrowded and lacked basic resources such as books, supplies, and qualified teachers.

The quality of education that African American children received during the Great Depression had a lasting impact on their lives. They were less likely to graduate from high school and go on to college. They were also less likely to get good jobs and earn high incomes.

## **Healthcare**

African Americans also faced discrimination in healthcare during the Great Depression. They were often denied access to hospitals and clinics and were often treated by doctors who were not qualified to care for them. As a result, African Americans were more likely to die from preventable diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia.

The lack of access to healthcare had a devastating impact on the health of African Americans during the Great Depression. In 1930, the life expectancy of African Americans was 46 years, while the life expectancy of white Americans was 60 years.

## **The Fight for Equality**

Despite the many challenges they faced, African Americans continued to fight for equality during the Great Depression. They organized protests and boycotts and lobbied for legislation to end segregation and discrimination. They also formed their own businesses and institutions to provide themselves with the services that they were denied by the white community.

The struggle for equality was a long and difficult one, but African Americans eventually made progress. In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which prohibited discrimination in employment by

federal contractors. This was a major victory for African Americans, and it helped to pave the way for civil rights legislation in the years to come.

The Great Depression was a time of great hardship for African Americans, but it also helped to galvanize the civil rights movement. African Americans emerged from the Depression more determined than ever to fight for equality and justice.

The legacy of the Great Depression is still felt today. African Americans continue to face discrimination in housing, employment, education, and healthcare. However, they have made great progress since the 1930s, and they continue to fight for the day when all Americans will be treated equally.



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