
Readings on Racism and Segregation in Buffalo



Intersection of Jefferson & Woodlawn Avenue, October 1963. Collection of The Buffalo History Museum.

[Additional pictures of Jefferson Avenue are in our Picture Store.](#)

The targeted mass shooting in Tops supermarket on May 14, 2022, allegedly by a white supremacist, exposed the reality of a predominantly Black neighborhood made vulnerable by decades of disinvestment, deindustrialization, redlining, racism, and segregation. This bibliography features scholarship on the history of Buffalo's East side.

Some of these works are online in full text at no charge; some can be borrowed short-term as e-books from Archive.org; some are available in hard copy through public and academic libraries. All can be viewed in hard copy in our own library.

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Dedicated to the memory of:

Celestine Chaney, 65
Roberta Drury, 32
Andre Mackniel, 53
Katherine "Kat" Massey, 72
Marcus D. Morrison, 52

Heyward Patterson, 67
Aaron Salter Jr., 55
Geraldine Talley, 62
Ruth Whitfield, 86
Pearl Young, 77

Cover & Link(s)

Description

“They Aren’t Going to Listen to Anything But Violence”: African Americans and the 1967 Buffalo Riot

Rowena I. Alfonso¹

On Monday, 26 June 1967, a riot broke out in the city of Buffalo, New York, when two white police officers intervened in an altercation between two male African American teenagers. The riot erupted when a crowd of approximately two hundred African Americans, many of whom were residents of the Lakeview Projects, a public housing facility, responded to the perception that the police used excessive force in attempting to subdue the two youths. The rioting continued intermittently until Saturday, 1 July 1967.² On the first night of the riot, reports estimated that the crowd swelled from about 200 to 350 people. By the second night of the riot, approximately 1500 African Americans were involved, throwing stones and bricks at police officers who attempted to subdue the crowds with teargas.³ The five-night riot resulted in about sixty injuries, over 180 arrests, and approximately \$250,000 worth of property damage done to stores and homes.⁴

The Buffalo riot was part of a wave of riots that swept across urban areas of the North in the late 1960s. In spite of the gains made by the Civil Rights movement in the South, the quality of life for African Americans in Northern cities in

Alfonso, Rowena (1978-2016)

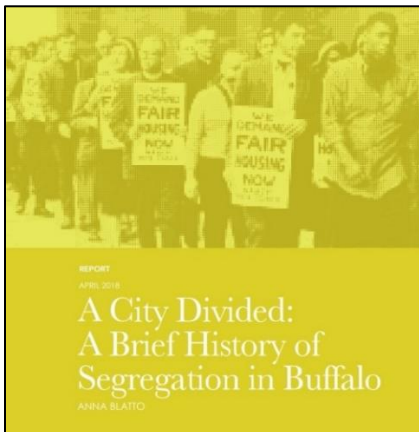
“They Aren’t Going to Listen to Anything but Violence:” African-Americans and the 1967 Buffalo Riot

Afro-Americans in New York Life and History, v. 38, no. 1, 2014

“On Monday, 26 June 1967, a riot broke out in the city of Buffalo, New York, when two white police officers intervened in an altercation between two male African American teenagers. The riot erupted when a crowd of approximately two hundred African Americans, many of whom were residents of the Lakeview Projects, a public housing facility, responded to the perception that the police used excessive force in attempting to subdue the two youths. The rioting continued intermittently until Saturday, 1 July 1967.”

--Rowena Alfonso

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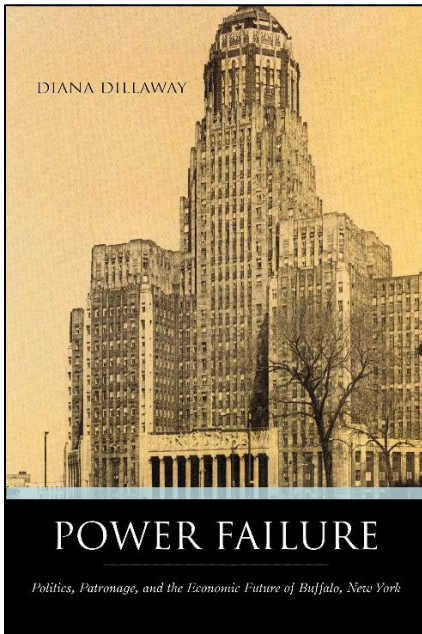
Blatto, Anna

City Divided: A Brief History of Segregation in Buffalo
Partnership for the Public Good, 2018

“Buffalo-Niagara is one of the most racially segregated metropolitan regions in the nation. While racial segregation has declined slightly in recent years, economic segregation has increased, resulting in neighborhood conditions growing worse – not better – for most people of color in the region. Segregation imposes a wide range of costs on people of color, impairing their health, education, job access, and wealth. Individuals living in segregated neighborhoods tend to have less access to services that allow adequate standards of living, and their economic mobility is severely impaired.”

--Partnership for the Public Good

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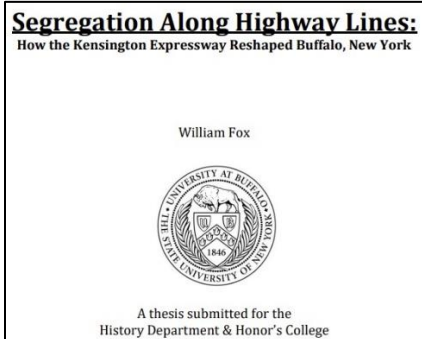
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Dillaway, Diana
Power Failure: Politics, Patronage, and the Economic Future of Buffalo, New York
Prometheus Books, 2006

“At the turn of the 20th century, Buffalo, NY, was one of the world's great industrial cities. In 1901, it played host to the prestigious Pan American Exhibition, which attracted millions of visitors to the city; its thriving downtown area was graced by buildings and mansions designed by some of the country's best architects; the city was the third largest producer of steel and, with the largest inland port, was a hub of commerce at the end of the Erie Canal. Today, due to financial distress and decades of mismanagement, the city has been put under the supervision of a financial control board. Population drain and an inability to attract new business have brought the city to the brink of financial collapse. The question on everyone's lips is, 'What went wrong?' Community development expert and Buffalo native Diana Dillaway analyzes the history of planning and decision making in Buffalo that led to the current malaise.”

--Amazon.com



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Fox, William
Segregation Along Highway Lines: How the Kensington Expressway Reshaped Buffalo, New York
University at Buffalo honors thesis, 2017

“In Buffalo, New York, the Kensington Expressway cut directly through the city’s East Side, isolating the growing African American community there. Once home to a healthy community of Polish, German, and Italian immigrants, the construction of the Kensington Expressway gave way to a new type of neighborhood: the urban ghetto. Like many urban highways, the Kensington Expressway, accelerated the process of segregation in Buffalo.”

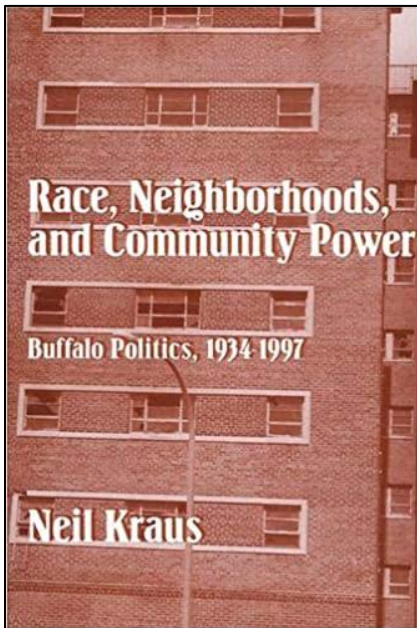
--William Fox

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Griffin, Domonique
They Were Never Silent, You Just Weren't Listening: Buffalo's Black Activists in the Age of Urban Renewal
 Trinity College senior thesis, 2017

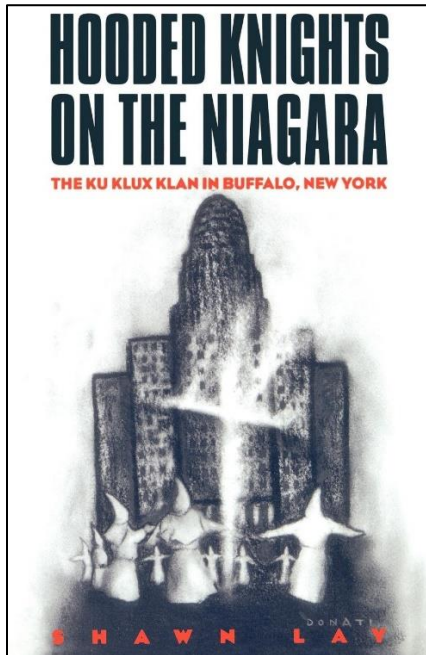
“While playing basketball with friends, two young residents got into a physical altercation. Once cops arrived on the scene to break up the disturbance, one of the young men informed the cops that there was no need to intervene. “We fight every day and we would be friends the next day,” explained the young man. Despite his attempts to de-escalate what he believed to be a nonthreatening situation, the cops soon spiraled out of control. Two cops quickly multiplied to thirty as residents gathered around the unfolding scene. At one point, an officer even drove his motorcycle through the crowd of boys as the remaining cops ordered the by-standers to return to their homes. Irate that the reckless officer had hit their sons, two mothers and a reverend approached the officers. Unfortunately, they had underestimated the hostility of the police.”
 --Domonique Griffin



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Kraus, Neil
Race, Neighborhoods, and Community Power: Buffalo Politics, 1934-1997
 State University of New York Press, 2000

"Desegregation in Boston and Buffalo examines how the citizens and the political leadership of the two cities dealt with controversial court orders to end the segregation of public schools. Although the cities shared many similarities, they witnessed very dissimilar outcomes. Taylor covers key factors such as inter-ethnic relations and the struggle of various ethnic groups for political empowerment, and focuses on the political development of African American communities in urban environments and the role of Black elected leadership in helping to diffuse potentially volatile situations."
 --SUNY Press

Cover & Link(s)**Description****Lay, Shawn****Hooded Knights on the Niagara: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo, New York****NYU Press, 1995**

"Shawn Lay here provides a riveting portrayal of how the Klan established itself in Buffalo. Most chillingly, he explains how otherwise ordinary, well-established citizens, caught up in a complex set of circumstances, were persuaded to join a notorious secret society that pandered to the darkest impulses in American society."

--Amazon.com

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- [List of Buffalo KKK members](#)

**THE HARDER WE RUN**

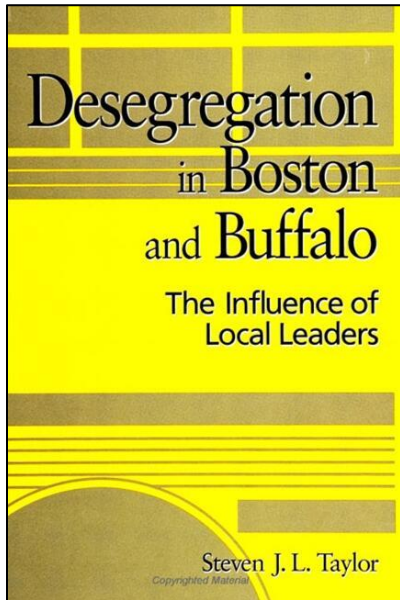
The State of Black Buffalo in 1990 and the Present
Henry-Louis Taylor, Jr., Jin-Kyu Jung, and Evan Dash
a Report to the Buffalo Center for Health Equity
September 2021

Taylor, Henry Louis**The Harder We Run: The State of Black Buffalo in 1990 and the Present****University at Buffalo Center for Urban Studies, 2021**

"This report uses the State of Black Buffalo Project as a reference point to determine if African Americans have made progress over the past thirty-one years. It aims to determine if the Black socioeconomic trajectory is trending upward or downward. "Progress" is a shadowy term that requires careful definition. This report defines it as the movement of Blacks in Buffalo toward a status where most African Americans receive a good education and have jobs that pay a livable wage. Such wages will enable Blacks to live in high-quality and affordable houses in safe and vibrant East Side neighborhoods, attend and graduate on time from excellent neighborhood-based schools, and experience social well-being, joyfulness, love, and support."

--Henry Louis Taylor

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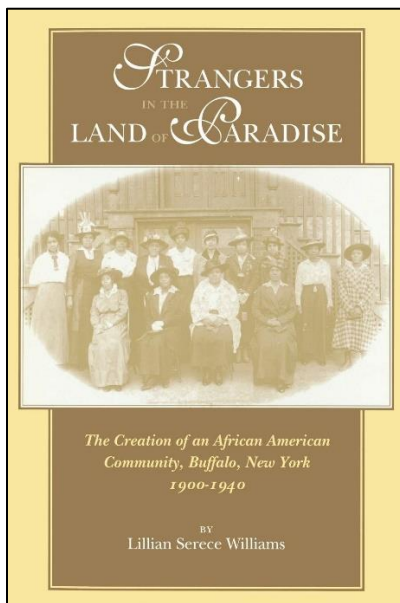
Cover & Link(s)**Description**

Taylor, Stephen J.L.
Desegregation in Boston and Buffalo: The Influence of Local Leaders
State University of New York Press, 1998

"Desegregation in Boston and Buffalo examines how the citizens and the political leadership of the two cities dealt with controversial court orders to end the segregation of public schools. Although the cities shared many similarities, they witnessed very dissimilar outcomes. Taylor covers key factors such as inter-ethnic relations and the struggle of various ethnic groups for political empowerment, and focuses on the political development of African American communities in urban environments and the role of Black elected leadership in helping to diffuse potentially volatile situations."

--SUNY Press

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Williams, Lillian Serece
Strangers in the Land of Paradise: The Creation of an African American Community, Buffalo, New York, 1900-1940
Indiana University Press, ©1999

"Strangers in the Land of Paradise discusses the creation of an African American community as a distinct cultural entity. It describes values and institutions that Black migrants from the South brought with them, as well as those that evolved as a result of their interaction with Blacks native to the city and the city itself. Through an examination of work, family, community organizations, and political actions, Lillian Williams explores the process by which the migrants adapted to their new environment."

--Indiana University Press

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- [Black History in the Buffalo Area:](#) A lengthy bibliography of additional works in our library