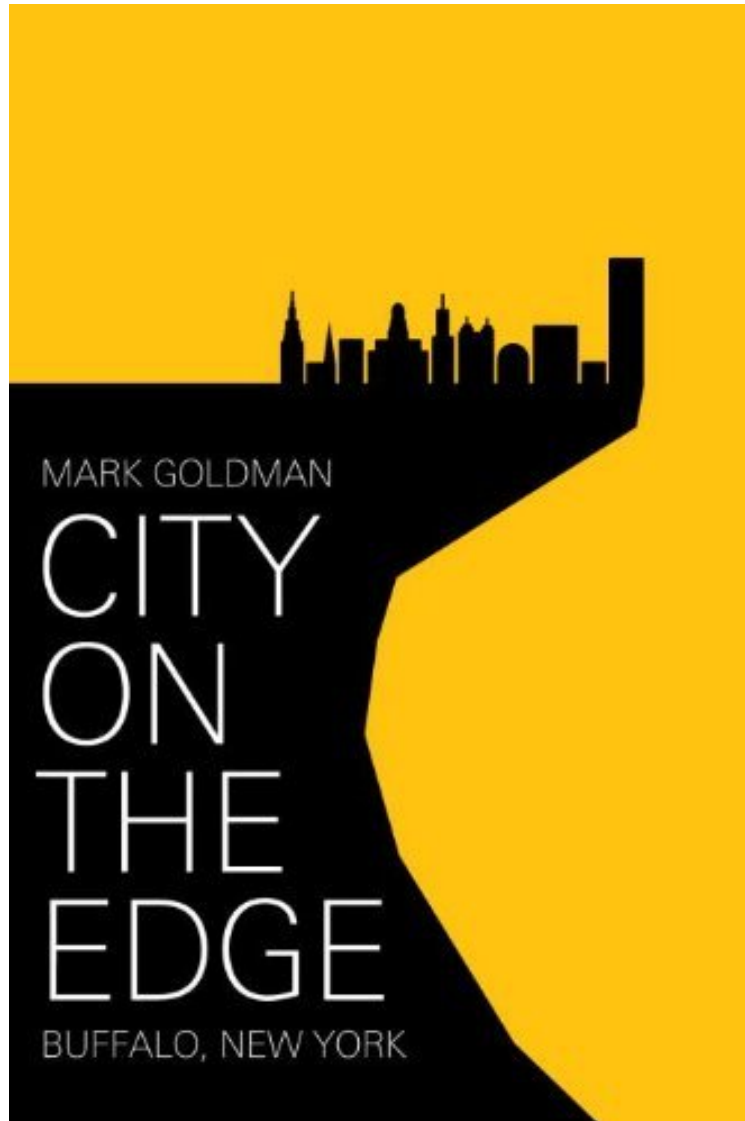


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Mark Goldman

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Mark Goldman : City on the Edge: Buffalo, New York, 1900 - present before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised City on the Edge: Buffalo, New York, 1900 - present:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Good Primer in Buffalo HistoryBy RDDMark Goldman's "City on the Edge: Buffalo, New York" tracks the history of the titular city from the Pan-American Exposition and arrival of Lackawanna Steel Company at the dawn of the twentieth century through the early twenty-first century and the blizzard of 2006. Of the city's history he argues, "Like so many other like-minded people, I was becoming increasingly frustrated and disappointed by public officials who, distracted by the lure of big-money, 'silver-bullet' projects, failed

to recognize the incredible power that local people working on small, local projects can have on the life of a community" (pg. 11). Indeed, several of his chapters compare some public initiative against the everyday struggles of people living in Buffalo to get by. While the level of detail in this book and its use of local geography will make it appeal mostly to those in or from Buffalo, Goldman's chapters (complete with notes at the end) would work well as readings for teaching an upper-level high school or college freshman class. The city of Buffalo and Goldman's examples work well as a case study for twentieth-century American politics. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Notes from a Buffalo Exile By Ronald E. Robinson Mark Goodman provides valuable information and insight on Buffalo's decline. I was born and raised in the Allentown Section and my family still owns a home there. I attended Our Lady of Lourdes, Fallon High School, and Canisius College. So, I found Goodman's insights on Allentown and Buffalo in general to be informative, well-researched, and reasonably thorough. Goodman rightly notes that the serial big-government, high cost, schemes for reviving the Downtown section were disastrous. Goodman rightly contrasts the promises of "Urban Renewal" schemes with the damage they caused to Buffalo's social fabric. Nevertheless, Goodman never seems to connect other, important, dots in Buffalo's decline including how New York State's and Buffalo's high tax rates drove businesses away. Goodman seems to admire Judge John Curtin. Yet, it was Curtin's edicts that accelerated the exodus from Buffalo and gave its citizens a sense that they did not control their own destiny. Nor does Goodman ever consider conservative critics, many whom shared observations similar to Goodman, but came to somewhat different conclusions including Alfreda Slominski, John Otto, Jack Kemp, or even Jane Jacobs. It is an excellent book, but it is written from a limited frame of reference. 18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. A city facing many challenges By Steven Peterson Mark Goldman's "City on the Edge" is a history of the past and a look at the possible future of Buffalo, New York. As such, this is a book of real interest to me. I spent four years in Buffalo, studying for my Ph. D. at the (then) State University of New York at Buffalo. For the next twenty plus years, I taught at a university in Western New York and often visited friends in Buffalo or just went there for mini vacations. I start off by saying that I thought that Buffalo had many attractions--but obviously faced many challenges. I loved wandering around Delaware Park, driving along the Niagara River, going to the Anchor Bar for chicken wings and jazz. . . . Goldman is also a resident of Buffalo and also a real booster for the city. This book takes a look at how Buffalo has come to be where it is now. The history really starts at the Pan-American Exposition in 1901. At that time, the future looked good for Buffalo. Manufacturing and shipping were mainstays of the economy; the Exposition promised a great deal of visibility. But, as with later events, the promise had counterpoint in misfortune, such as President McKinley's assassination, the economic failure of the Exposition, and so on. The book spends time on the growth and glory days of Buffalo. But the current realities are set in motion later on, in the 1960s, 1970s, and thereafter. Key problems facing Buffalo were a set of ethnic political leaders who played by "old politics," the politics of favoritism, of patronage. I don't know how true this is, but a friend of mine once worked for the city at a club for kids. As part of her purview, she was responsible for a swimming pool. The local political "boss" made sure that sons and daughters of party favorites got jobs as lifeguards, some of whom could not swim. True? I don't know, but it represents the mindset of the old style politics current in Buffalo then. Challenges faced Buffalo, such as the decline of the steel industry (the old Lackawanna steel facility was awesome to drive past! It seemed to stretch forever, but it just about dies out in the few years that I was in graduate school. . . .), the decline of the auto industry and its local subsidiaries, and the challenges created by racially segregated schools. Buffalo's leaders were not a sterling lot (to put it mildly). This book is pretty hard on a mediocre lot of mayors and other local politicians, who dithered and tried to stay in power by the politics of favoritism. Federal funds were used to try to prevent the downtown from deteriorating, but tons of money were lost as projects often did not come close to achieving their goals. The book ends by looking toward the future; there is hope in that glimpse--but the book itself provides precious little reason for that hope. There are some questions that I have about the book. The author at one point speaks positively of one mayor, but goes negative later. Sometimes he seems to change his mind about the value of some of the actors in a space of twenty pages. Nonetheless, this is an interesting book on the challenges facing a lot of older urban areas. Why do some succeed in addressing those challenges? And others fail? This book is worth considering as adding to that dialogue.

In a sweeping narrative that speaks to the serious student of urban studies as well as the general reader, Mark Goldman tells the story of twentieth-century Buffalo, New York. Goldman covers all of the major developments: bull; The rise and decline of the city's downtown and ethnic neighborhoods bull; The impact of racial change and suburbanization bull; The role and function of the arts in the life of the community bull; Urban politics, urban design, and city planning While describing the changes that so drastically altered the form, function, and character of the city, Goldman, through detailed descriptions of special people and special places, gives a sense of intimacy and immediacy to these otherwise impersonal historical forces. *City on the Edge* unflinchingly documents and describes how Buffalo has been battered by the tides of history. But it also describes the unique characteristics that have encouraged an innovative cultural climate, including Buffalo's dynamic survival instinct that continues to lead to a surprisingly and inspiring high quality of community life. Finally, it offers a road map, which—if followed—could point the way to a new and exciting future for this long-troubled city.

About the AuthorMark Goldman (Buffalo, NY), a successful entrepreneur who has played a major role in revitalizing the cultural life of downtown Buffalo, is the author of *City on the Lake: The Challenge of Change in Buffalo, New York*.