



Back issues of and single articles published in *New York Folklore Quarterly*, *New York Folklore*, and *Voices* are available for purchase. Check the tables of contents for availability and titles. To request an article for purchase, contact us at info@nyfolklore.org. Please be aware that some issues are sold out, but most articles are still available.

Copyright of NEW YORK FOLKLORE. Further reproduction prohibited without permission of copyright holder. This PDF or any part of its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv or website without the copyright holder's express permission. Users may print or download article for individual use.

NEW YORK FOLKLORE
129 Jay Street
Schenectady, NY 12305
518/346-7008
Fax 518/346-6617
Email: info@nyfolklore.org
<http://www.nyfolklore.org>

Good Read BY CHRIS LINENDOLL

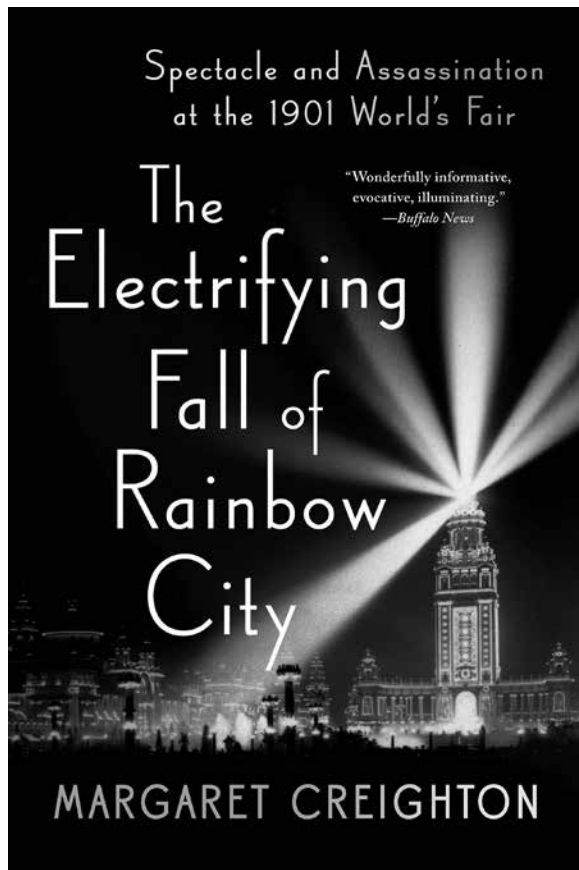
The Electrifying Fall of Rainbow City: Spectacle and Assassination at the 1901 World's Fair

By Margaret Creighton. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 352 pages, November 2017. 5.6 x 8.3 in. ISBN 978-0-393-35479-9, \$16.95, paperback.

Buffalo, New York, has always been something of an anomaly. It is the second most populated city in New York, but it has never quite prospered in mainstream popular culture quite the same way that Toronto, just across Lake Ontario, has. Although it does claim professional sports teams in nearly all the major leagues, and the birthplace of the ubiquitous Buffalo Wing, the city itself has struggled in modern times to compete as a major economic hub, or a tantalizing tourism destination.

That was not the case in the early 20th century, however, as the city hosted the Pan-American Exposition, a major World's Fair that covered 350 acres of land. Due to the city's proximity to the famous Niagara Falls, as well as the ease of travel due to nearby railroad lines, Buffalo was seen as an ideal location to host this wonder of wonders. No one could have foreseen the tragedy that was about to strike.

Today, the Pan-Am Expo is mostly remembered as the site of the assassination of our 25th president, William McKinley. The doomed president was always reluctant to surround himself with muscled guards and genuinely enjoyed meeting the public and shaking hands with the average working man. It was the lax security that led to his being shot twice by Leon Czolgosz while in the Temple of Music, a concert hall built specifically for the Pan-American Expo. McKinley would die of in-



fection eight days after suffering these wounds.

This dreadful murder was not the only storyline of the exposition. Annie Edson Taylor, turning 63 years old, sought to become rich and famous as the first woman to survive a plunge over Niagara Falls. Despite all odds, she survived her trip over the falls in a custom-made barrel, with only minor injuries. As one might expect, she was never quite able to translate this experience into much financial gain, though.

One of the darker chapters in Buffalo history also occurred at the Fair's close in late 1901. After being attacked by his performing elephant, Jumbo II, Frank Bostock decided that he would execute his prized elephant in front of a sold-out

crowd. What he did not expect was that the thick hide of an elephant would not conduct the electricity he had planned to use in killing Jumbo II, and was laughed out of the arena and forced to provide refunds in the thousands.

All of these tales and more are recounted in Margaret Creighton's *The Electrifying Fall of Rainbow City: Spectacle and Assassination at the 1901 World's Fair*. This is an incredibly well researched portrait of a time when all the wonders of the modern age seemed like magic and of a brief time in which the city of Buffalo was the center of the universe. Highly recommended.

—Chris Linendoll
Northshire Bookstore, Saratoga Springs, NY
Follow us on Twitter @TogaNorthshire



Join or Renew your New York Folklore Membership to Receive *Voices* and other Member Benefits

For the General Public

Voices is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, published twice annually. Join New York Folklore and become part of a community that will deepen your involvement with folklore, folklife, the traditional arts, and contemporary culture. As a member, you'll have early notice of Gallery special exhibits and NYF-sponsored key events. Members receive a discount on NYF Gallery items.

For Artists and Professionals

Become a member and learn about technical assistance programs that will get you the help you may need in your work:

Mentoring and Professional Development
Folk Artists Self-Management Project
Folk Archives Project
Consulting and Referral
Advocacy
A Public Voice

Membership Levels

Individual

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| \$ 50.00 | Basic Membership |
| \$100.00 | Harold W. Thompson Circle |
| \$150.00 | Edith Cutting Folklore in Education |

Organizations/Institutions

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| \$ 75.00 | Subscriber |
| \$100.00 | Partner |
| \$150.00 | Edith Cutting Folklore in Education |

Please add \$20.00 for non-US addresses.

For payment, choose the option that works best for you:

Use our website, www.nyfolklore.org

or mail a check to us at 129 Jay St., Schenectady NY 12305;

or call the NYF business office, 518-346-7008, to pay with a credit card over the phone.