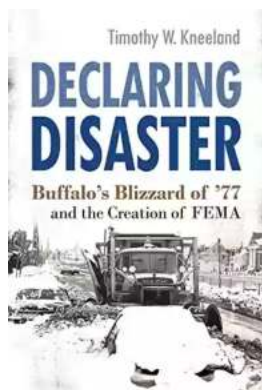


# The Untold Story: Buffalo Blizzard of '77 and the Creation of FEMA New York State Series

On January 28, 1977, a fierce snowstorm hit Buffalo, New York, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. The Buffalo Blizzard of '77, as it came to be known, was one of the deadliest blizzards in U.S. history, and it prompted the creation of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) as we know it today.

With winds reaching 69 miles per hour and snowfall rates of 4 inches per hour, this blizzard paralyzed the city and its surrounding areas. For several days, Buffalo residents found themselves trapped in their homes, buried under more than 100 inches of snow. The city's infrastructure collapsed, with transportation systems, power lines, and communication networks all rendered useless.

As the situation worsened, then-New York Governor Hugh Carey realized the urgent need for a coordinated response to handle the emergency. He reached out to the federal government, requesting assistance to manage the crisis. In response, President Jimmy Carter declared a state of emergency in Buffalo and activated the National Guard.



## Declaring Disaster: Buffalo's Blizzard of '77 and the Creation of FEMA (New York State Series)

by Timothy W. Kneeland (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 244 pages

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The Buffalo Blizzard of '77 highlighted the shortcomings of the existing disaster response mechanisms. The lack of central coordination and communication led to delays in providing aid and exacerbated the suffering of the affected population. This disaster served as a wake-up call for the nation, leading to the development of FEMA.

## **The Birth of FEMA**

In the aftermath of the blizzard, the need for a federal agency dedicated to coordinating disaster response became evident. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, was established on April 1, 1979, under Executive Order 12127 by President Jimmy Carter.

FEMA's mission was to "reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters." The agency serves as the central point of coordination for emergency response and recovery efforts, working closely with state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as nonprofit organizations and the private sector.

The blizzard of '77 highlighted the importance of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, and FEMA was built to enhance the nation's ability to respond to emergencies effectively.

## **FEMA New York State Series**

Recognizing the significance of the Buffalo Blizzard of '77 and its role in FEMA's establishment, New York State created a series of events and initiatives to

commemorate the disaster and educate the public about emergency preparedness.

The FEMA New York State Series is a comprehensive program designed to engage communities, schools, and organizations in understanding the importance of disaster preparedness and response. It consists of various events, exhibitions, and educational programs held throughout the state.

One of the program's highlights is an exhibition featuring photographs, eyewitness accounts, and artifacts from the Buffalo Blizzard of '77. This exhibition aims to create a visual narrative of the disaster, reminding visitors of the extreme weather conditions and the resilience of the community in the face of adversity.

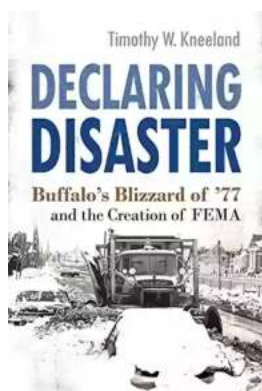
Additionally, FEMA organizes workshops and training sessions in collaboration with local emergency management agencies. These workshops equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to respond effectively during emergencies, including severe weather events.

The FEMA New York State Series is not only an opportunity to reflect on a significant historical event but also serves as a reminder that disaster preparedness is crucial for every community. Through these events, FEMA aims to empower individuals, schools, and organizations to take proactive measures in building a resilient society.

The Buffalo Blizzard of '77 was a catastrophic event that served as the catalyst for the creation of FEMA. This blizzard exposed the weaknesses in disaster response systems and led to the recognition of the need for a centralized federal agency.

Since its establishment, FEMA has played a crucial role in responding to and mitigating the impact of various disasters, ranging from hurricanes to terrorist attacks. The agency's commitment to preparedness and collaboration with local authorities has helped save countless lives and ensure a swift recovery.

Through the FEMA New York State Series, the memory of the Buffalo Blizzard of '77 lives on, reminding us of the importance of preparedness and resilience. It serves as a constant reminder that no matter how severe the storm, we have the capacity to weather it together.



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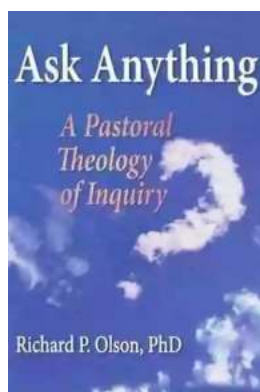
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On Friday, January 28, 1977, it began to snow in Buffalo. The second largest city in New York State, located directly in line with the Great Lakes' snowbelt, was no stranger to this kind of winter weather. With their city averaging ninety-four inches of snow per year, the citizens of Buffalo knew how to survive a snowstorm. But the blizzard that engulfed the city for the next four days was about to make history.

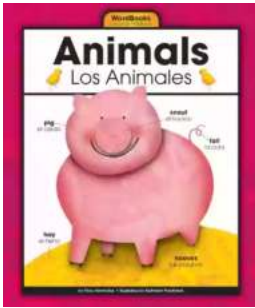
Between the subzero wind chill and whiteout conditions, hundreds of people were trapped when the snow began to fall. Twenty- to thirty-foot-high snow drifts isolated residents in their offices and homes, and even in their cars on the highway. With a dependency on rubber-tire vehicles, which lost all traction in the heavily blanketed urban streets, they were cut off from food, fuel, and even electricity. This one unexpected snow disaster stranded tens of thousands of people, froze public utilities and transportation, and cost Buffalo hundreds of millions of dollars in economic losses and property damages.

The destruction wrought by this snowstorm, like the destruction brought on by other natural disasters, was from a combination of weather-related hazards and the public policies meant to mitigate them. Buffalo's 1977 blizzard, the first snowstorm to be declared a disaster in US history, came after a century of automobility, suburbanization, and snow removal guidelines like the bare-pavement policy. Kneeland offers a compelling examination of whether the 1977 storm was an anomaly or the inevitable outcome of years of city planning. From the local to the state and federal levels, Kneeland discusses governmental response and disaster relief, showing how this regional event had national implications for environmental policy and how its effects have resounded through the complexities of disaster politics long after the snow fell.



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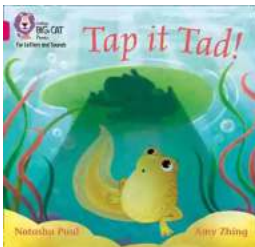
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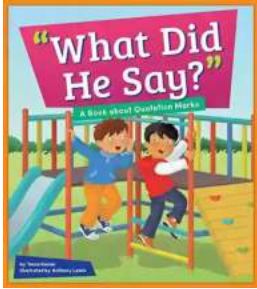
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