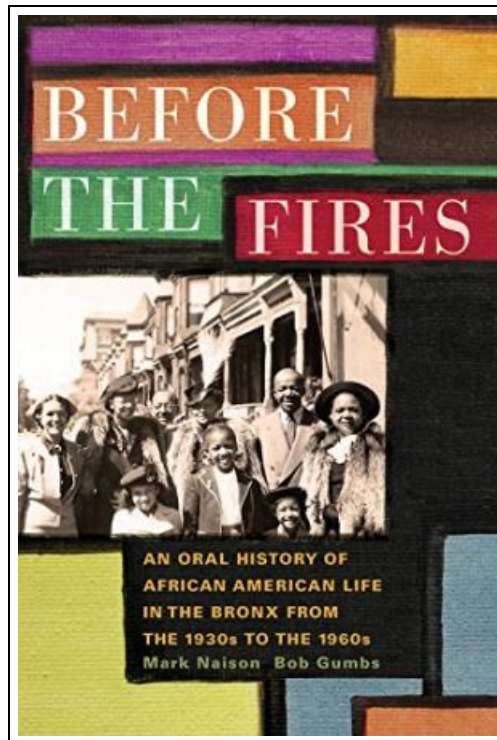


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Fordham University Press, United States, 2016. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English. Brand new Book. People associate the South Bronx with gangs, violence, drugs, crime, burned-out buildings, and poverty. This is the message that has been driven into their heads over the years by the media. As Howard Cosell famously said during the 1977 World's Series at Yankee Stadium, "There it is, ladies and gentlemen, the Bronx is burning." In this new book, Naison and Gumbs provide a completely different picture of the South Bronx through interviews with residents who lived here from the 1930s to the 1960s. In the early 1930s, word began to spread among economically secure black families in Harlem that there were spacious apartments for rent in the Morrisania section of the Bronx. Landlords in that community, desperate to fill their rent rolls and avoid foreclosure, began putting up signs in their windows and in advertisements in New York's black newspapers that said, "We rent to select colored families," by which they meant families with a securely employed wage earner and light complexions. Black families who fit these criteria began renting apartments by the score. Thus began a period of about twenty years during which the Bronx served as a borough of hope and unlimited possibilities for upwardly mobile black families. Chronicling a time when African Americans were suspended between the best and worst possibilities of New York City, *Before the Fires* tells the personal stories of seventeen men and women who lived in the South Bronx before the social and economic decline of the area that began in the late 1960s. Located on a hill hovering over one of the borough's largest industrial districts, Morrisania offered black migrants from Harlem, the South, and the Caribbean an opportunity to raise children in a neighborhood that had better schools, strong churches,...

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