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"Newspapers; 1990-02-22; Families Key to Revival of City Neighborhoods." Newspapers. Monroe Fordham Regional History Center. Archives & Special Collections Department, E. H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State.

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Catherine Collins, with her son Clyde, feels loyalty to Buffalo.

Families key to revival of city neighborhoods

Stable middle class vital, study says

By IRENE LIGUORI
News Staff Reporter

If Buffalo is to rebound from its smokestack days, the city must somehow hang on to families such as Clyde and Catherine Collins.

Luckily, the Collins family feels a strong loyalty to Buffalo.

"I'll drive outside the city to work," said Mrs. Collins, assistant academic dean at Erie Community College's North Campus, "but I would never move out of the city."

She has lived in Buffalo all her life, growing up in a lower East Side neighborhood where today the frames of attractive, city-subsidized, middle-class homes rise against the city skyline.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Collins has watched talented childhood friends leave Buffalo and make good elsewhere. Job opportunities either did not exist for them here, or else the subtle forms of racism that keep black Buffalonians out of corporate boardrooms were at work, she says.

Mrs. Collins also has watched young black professionals move into the Buffalo area from elsewhere.

"There is an influx," she said, "but the real estate agents show them other sections of our county — not our city. They are never shown the beautiful sections of Buffalo we have."

That troubles Mrs. Collins, whose strong feelings about Buffalo are as much philosophical as they are sen-

timental. If families like hers keep leaving the city, she says, who will be left?

That was the same conclusion reached by University at Buffalo researcher Henry Louis Taylor Jr., who released a major study on Buffalo's black community Monday.

Taylor's report said that unless Buffalo can maintain its middle-class black population while simultaneously working to lessen poverty and joblessness among the underclass, the city will find itself plagued with super-ghettos like those found in Chicago and Detroit.

The study pointed to the growing disaffection and crime rate among young blacks in Buffalo, the widening gap between the black and white income, and a dropping black participation rate in the city's labor force.

The Collins family does not fit into this grim picture.

Mrs. Collins and her husband live with their 10-year-old son in the northeast quadrant of the city, an area where a smattering of other black professional families have migrated. A daughter teaches elementary children in the Buffalo public schools.

One of the strengths cited in Taylor's report is the vast variety of social and civic clubs and organizations the black community maintains in Buffalo.

Because Mrs. Collins is very con-

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Hopes for East Side hinge on white attitudes, activist says

By ANTHONY CARDINALE
New Staff Reporter

A major study released Monday on Buffalo's black community can only bear fruit if the white community has made progress in accepting racial equality, says black civil rights activist Jesse Nash.



Buffalo, Nash said:

"I have to be. You believe that it's worth it, and you do it. He's a young man, and he needs a lot of encouragement. I think the effort has been

that the social crisis of the black ghettos in such cities as Detroit, Chicago and New York City will be repeated soon in Buffalo unless the city's leaders mount an all-out assault to save the East Side.

Taylor recommends that the East Side, where 84 percent of Buffalo's 94,262 black residents live,