



# Timeline of Events at Love Canal

## Author(s)

Mark A. Zaremba

## Year

2006

## Abstract

A timeline of events from when chemical waste was dumped at Love Canal until the final settlement was reached.

## Body

- 1942 -- Hooker Chemical Company begins dumping of chemical wastes at Love Canal
- 1947 -- Hooker Corporation buys the 16-acre dump site
- 1952 -- City of Niagara Falls disposes of municipal wastes at the site
- 1953 -- Hooker Corporation fills the canal and sells the land to Niagara Falls Board of Education
- 1955 -- Elementary school (99th Street) opens
- 1959 -- Chemical seepage into basement is reported
- 1974 -- Surface of dump begins to collapse and barrels of chemicals are exposed
- 1976 -- NYDEC documents widespread contamination of sewers and sumps in the neighborhood
- 1977 --
  - Local reporter begins investigating possible links of contamination to illness

- City's consultant reports contamination
- City contacts U.S. Congressman LaFalce
- Regional USEPA visits site with Congressman LaFalce
- 1978 --
  - USEPA samples air in basements, while NYDEC personnel sample sump pumps and storm sewers
  - Dr. Robert Whalen, NY Commissioner of Health, visits Love Canal and issues an order to county health officials to reduce accessibility to the site and to begin health studies
  - NYSDH officials meet with Love Canal residents to ask for their cooperation in studies
  - New York legislature authorizes health studies
  - NYSDH conducts pilot study
  - New York legislature gives NYDEC full regulatory authority over hazardous wastes in the state
  - Dr. Whalen convenes Blue-Ribbon Panel
  - Dr. Whalen declares health emergency and orders extension of health studies, relocation of women and children living in first and second rings, and closing of 99th Street School
  - Governor Carey appoints Love Canal interagency task force
  - Love Canal Homeowners Association (LCHA) is formed
  - President Carter declares a "state of emergency" and approves emergency financial aid
  - Blood samples are taken from second ring and beyond
  - Access to site is further restricted; remedial plans are developed
  - Paigen and LCHA conduct pilot study
  - NYSDH initiates daily monitoring of the chemical exposure of workers hired to clean the site
  - NYSDH expands study population
  - Blue-Ribbon panel reviews Paigen's preliminary results of wet versus dry homes
  - Axelrod replaces Whalen as State Commissioner of Health
  - NYSDH reevaluates its data on adverse reproductive effects
- 1979 --
  - NYSDH expands study population north of Colvin Boulevard
  - NYSDH reports increased frequencies of adverse reproductive effects for women in wet homes and recommends all pregnant women and children

- less than two years of age evacuate
- U.S. Congress holds Joint Hearings on hazardous wastes problem
- DHEW and USEPA recommend additional studies and minimization of exposure for residents
- USEPA contracts for a pilot study of chromosomal damage
- Love Canal Inter-Agency Task Force is dissolved
- U.S. Justice Department files a lawsuit against Hooker Chemical Corporation
- 1980 --
  - New York State Attorney files a lawsuit against Hooker Corporation and Occidental Petroleum
  - USEPA reports Picciano results
  - LCHA holds two USEPA officials hostage
  - President Carter declares a second federal emergency in the Love Canal area
  - Love Canal Revitalization Agency is created
  - Governor issues an executive order to create a review panel
  - Governor's Panel issues its "Thomas Report" on health studies
  - CERCLA (Superfund) is enacted
- 1981 --
  - NYSDH publishes results of a study of cancer rates
  - Federal government closes its on-site office in Niagara Falls
  - CDC initiates cytotoxicity study
- 1983 -- Former residents and Occidental settle lawsuits
- 1984 -- New clay cap is installed over canal
- 1985 -- Some former residents receive compensation from settled lawsuits
- 1987 -- USEPA decides to burn soil contaminated with dioxin
- 1988 -- Occidental Petroleum Company is found liable for cleanup costs
- 1989 -- Consent agreement is reached between the U.S. government and Occidental

## **Rights**

Use of Materials on the OEC

## **Resource Type**

Case Study / Scenario

## **Parent Collection**

Love Canal Collection

### **Topics**

Public Health and Safety

Public Well-being

Environmental Justice

### **Discipline(s)**

Engineering

Civil Engineering