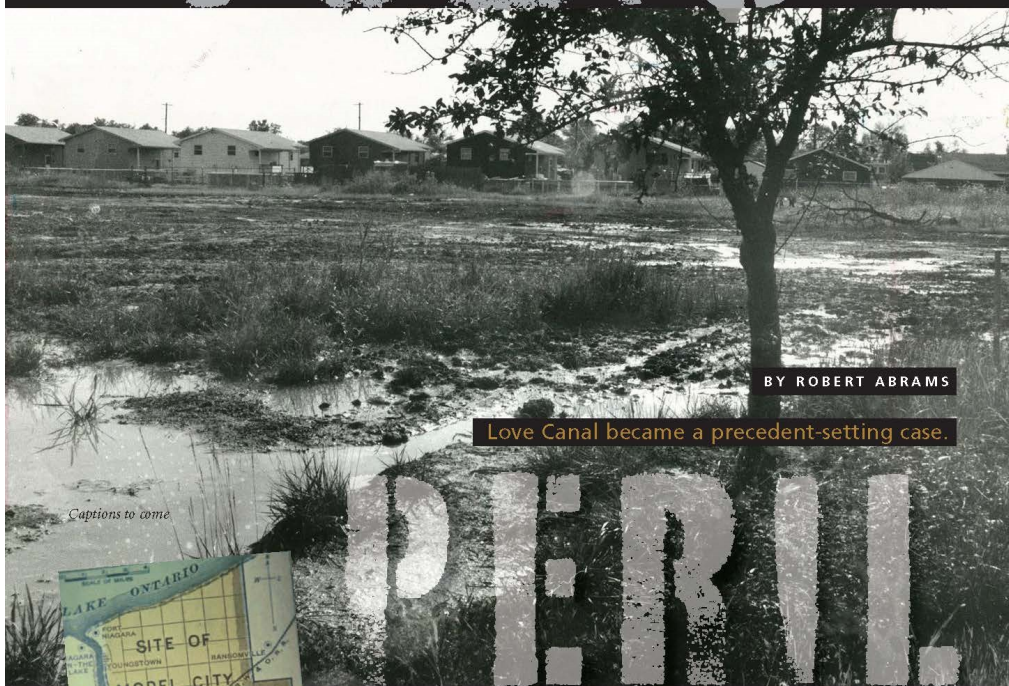


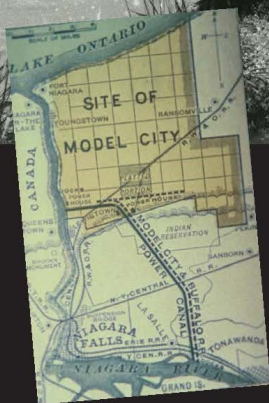
TOXIC



BY ROBERT ABRAMS

Love Canal became a precedent-setting case.

Captions to come



Love Canal was a neighborhood in the city of Niagara Falls named for William T. Love, a late nineteenth century entrepreneur. Love devised a plan for a model community including the creation of factories and the construction of a canal. The water flowing through the canal would be used by those factories to generate their own electricity, a standard practice at the time. But once George Westinghouse and others solved the problem of transmitting electricity over significant distances, there was no longer a need for a local power source and on-site generation. The planned community was abandoned.

NEW YORK
archives

Educator Guide

Summer 2021



The Power to Create Change

Robert Abrams was Attorney General of the State of New York from 1979 to 1993. During his time in office he filed over 60 lawsuits against companies accused of polluting the environment. One of the most famous cases is the Love Canal. In his article, [*Toxic Peril*](#), Abrams gives the historical background of this case, describes his role in holding the companies accountable for their actions, and explains how these lawsuits help to protect the rights of New York's citizens.

[Link to Interview with the Author about Citizen Action](#)

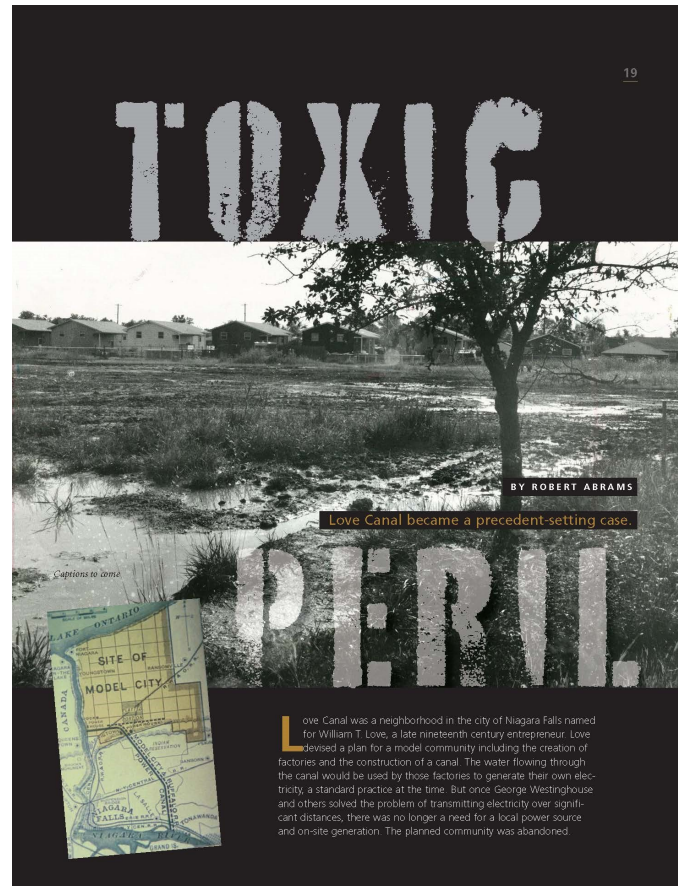
Compelling Question: How does government work with citizens to protect their rights?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- create meaningful and persuasive understandings of the past by fusing disparate and relevant evidence from primary and secondary sources and drawing connections to the present

New York Archives magazine is a donor-funded educational product published quarterly by the NYS Archives Partnership Trust. A discounted subscription rate for educators is available. For more information, please visit us at www.nysarchivestrust.org.



This guide includes supporting questions to aid students in the reading of the article and analysis questions for understanding the primary sources. All educational materials are aligned to the New York State Social Studies Framework. The learning objectives are taken directly from the Social Studies Practices and the content fits within the framework.

Link to Full Article

<https://www.nysarchivestrust.org/new-york-archives-magazine/magazine-highlights/summer-2021-volume-21-number-1>

TOXIC PERIL

Setting the Stage

Show this video from [pbslearningmedia.org](https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/aml15.sci.env.pollution/pollution-and-the-environmental-movement/) to begin a discussion about pollution and the environment.

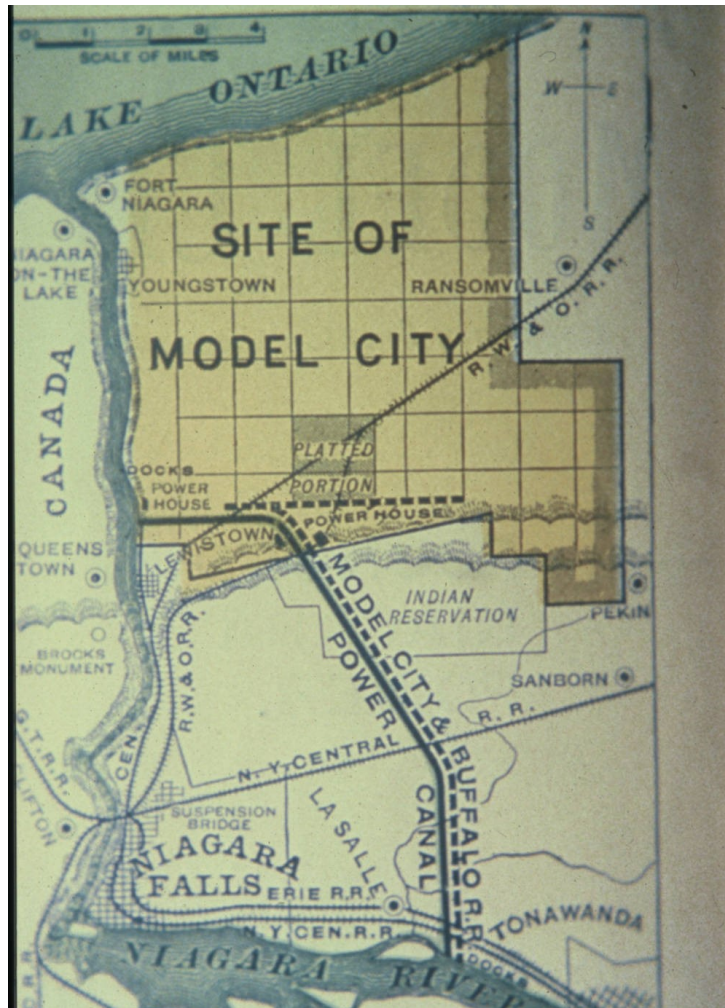
<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/aml15.sci.env.pollution/pollution-and-the-environmental-movement/>



Guided Reading Questions

1. What role did Robert Abrams serve in New York government?
2. What was the original plan for Love Canal?
3. Why was this plan abandoned?
4. What did Hooker Chemical and Plastics Corporation do with the area known as Love Canal?
5. Who purchased the Love Canal property from Hooker Chemical and Plastics?
6. What deal did Hooker Chemical make with the new owner?
7. What did the new owner do with the property?
8. What warning signs did the residents of Love Canal see?
9. How were Love Canal's problems found?
10. What did the door-to-door survey reveal about the residents of Love Canal?
11. What role did the Love Canal Homeowners Association play in uncovering the problems in the community?
12. What was the job of the attorney general in the Love Canal case?
13. What legal argument was used in the Love Canal case?
14. What is a superfund?
15. How long did the Love Canal legal battle last?
16. What is the lasting legacy of the Love Canal case?

Document Analysis



*Courtesy: University of Buffalo. Document can be found on New York Heritage.
<https://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16694coll1/id/1357/rec/40>*

Analysis Questions

1. What type of document is this?
2. When was it created?
3. Why was it created?
4. List four items you see on this document that would make this an ideal location for families to live.
5. List two reasons why this location may not be the ideal place for families.
6. List four items you see on this document that would make this an ideal location for a corporation to build a factory.
7. Using evidence from this document and the article, explain why building a community on this property after a corporation had built a factory would result in the types of problems experienced by the Love Canal residents.