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[Environment](#), [Nature](#)



The Love Canal, an area near Niagara Falls in New York, was excavated around the turn of the century by a company which was headed by William T. Love. After Love went broke, the canal was put up for auction and was eventually bought by Hooker Chemicals. In the forties, Hooker Chemicals began dumping thousands upon thousands of toxic chemicals into the canal and the surrounding land. Hooker then sold the canal and the surrounding land to a school company for one dollar. The company proceeded to build a school on top of the waste site, and soon a neighborhood also arose.

After heavy rainfall in the seventies, much of the waste came up from the ground. Many health problems especially in children were soon reported. Later that decade, two evacuations of the area were made due to unsafe living conditions. The governmental agency known as the Environmental Protection Agency then began cleanup of the area. Instead of removing the chemicals, the agency contained the main portion of the chemicals by placing them under a large clay cap. In the nineties, the EPA declared the area habitable once again and allowed residents to move back to the Love Canal under the new name of Black Creek Village. Why would these people move into an area that was once so unsafe after the government did not even fully test the site for human safety? The Love Canal was apparently unsafe at one time and still could be. By allowing people to return to the Love Canal, the government is allowing people to make a very unwise decision.

Houses in the Love Canal are now back on the market. Sure, these houses are going for a significantly lower price than most homes in the New York

area, but they are built on top of a huge cap that contains thousands of different chemicals beneath it. People are putting a money in front of their family and personal health. People see a nice, quiet neighborhood on the outside and do not notice what is beneath the Love Canal could hurt them. The people who are now moving into the Love Canal must not realize how serious this is. New residents notice that some of the people that even stayed at the Love Canal were never affected by any chemicals, but it appears that chemicals do not usually affect the actual person exposed, but instead they hurt the next generation. In the late seventies and early eighties, many people who lived in the Love Canal were evacuated due to problems in pregnant mothers such as miscarriages and birth defects, increases in chromosome breakage which cause problems in the second generation, many disorders in children, and problems with mental anguish (Gibbs 5). This also shows that sometimes the problems were not physical but emotional and in the mind. Young couples who are now moving into the Love Canal must constantly be afraid of having deformed children.

Also, the newcomers will have to realize that they live on a chemical waste site and could possibly be hurting themselves. There is no way that they can be totally assured that they will not be exposed to the any toxic chemicals. Being reminded of this would be a serious burden to ones mind.

Apparently, the new residents of Black Creek Village are not seeing the danger that they might be putting themselves in.

Obviously, the people of Black Creek Village must trust the governments word that Love Canal is now habitable. The residents of Black Creek Village should be very alarmed when listening to what the government is saying about the area. The city government already had the chance to stop the problem from ever occurring. The city decided to build on the site even after being warned of waste that could physically harm or kill a person from Hooker Chemicals (Gibbs 3). In the sixties, reports of odors and visible chemicals were made, yet nothing was done until the late seventies (EPA 1). Even recently the government has failed to act sufficiently. The EPA states that the area has had many cleanups which eliminated the most crucial contamination exposure so the site is now habitable for humans (EPA 5). Hearing this statement about the area being habitable may make the residents feel comfortable; however, the EPA is the one defining habitable in this case. They are basing this statement on their own findings. The only problem is that very few studies have even been performed.

In fact, a standard risk assessment test was never even performed. This test would give the most accurate information on how safe the Love Canal really is for humans. The EPA did not perform this test because many of the chemicals at the Love Canal are unknown, a future risk assessment test would have to be performed anyway as technology increased, and the data is not reliable since the EPA only knows how a chemical alone can affect a person and not how thousands of chemicals mixed together can hurt someone (Hoffman 5). The government does not even know what could happen if a natural disaster hit the area because the EPA never performed

the assessment test. This governmental procedure of not running standard tests and then declaring the area habitable seems very questionable. It is hard to figure out how the people of Black Creek Village can feel secure with governmental findings.

The EPA is the main organization in charge of the cleanup and future concerns of the Love Canal. However, the EPA is running out of funding money and might not be around for too long. Possibly, the reason why the EPA declared the area of the Love Canal habitable so easily is so that they would receive much needed publicity and Congress would continue to fund their program. In addition to declaring the area habitable, the EPA decided to tag a new name on to the Love Canal. Was this to draw people away from the old name that most people were familiar with? The name Love Canal which made people immediately think of chemical wastes and danger. Also, the cap covering the chemicals only has a twenty year guaranty attached to it (Hoffman 5). What will happen once twenty years elapses? Hopefully, for the people of Black Creek Village, the EPA is still around. However, if the EPA does go under no one is really left in charge. The people of Black Creek Village will then be left to fight the problem alone. Fighting such a huge problem would be practically impossible. The new residents to the Love Canal are not realizing that there could be dangers arising in their future.

In conclusion, newcomers to the Love Canal are not seeing the whole picture. They are seeing a cute, little neighborhood with inexpensive houses. No one should take a chance on their health because they found a nice place to live that is not that costly. Also, residents feel that not many people have

really been harmed. Elderly residents may feel that they are truly not in danger since most symptoms were found in pregnant women and children. This can not be assumed; however, due to the slack testing done by the government. The government simply left the chemicals at the site and did not even run the most important assessment test. No one really knows what these chemicals could do if combined and a natural disaster could cause severe damage to the area as well. The EPA might not be around when the warranty of the cap wears off. The residents would surely be in trouble if the cap were to break. With all of these minuses and so few pluses, it is very hard to figure out why anyone would want to move back to the Love Canal. The government is allowing people to make a bad decision. As long as the government is properly warning these people of the possible current and future dangers of this area, the buyers can make their own choice. I just hope their are very large signs on each house reading Caveat Emptor.