

# Excelsior: New York State Library/Archives /Museum Catalog

User ID:

PIN:

[Login to My Account](#)

**Library Info**  
[Using the New York State Library](#)  
[Using the New York State Archives](#)  
[Hours](#)  
[Contact Us](#)

[Search/Home](#) [I Need Material](#) [Knowledge Portal](#) [My Account](#) [NYSL Digital Collection](#)

[Go Back](#) [Help](#) [New Search](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) [Change Display](#) [Kept](#) [Logout](#)

record 1 of 128 for search words or phrase "manhattan project"

[Keep](#)

[Find more by this author](#)  
[Find more on these topics](#)  
[Nearby items on shelf](#)

**Continue search in**  
[Google](#)

## You Found Titles in Categories

[Academies and Learned Societies \(General\)](#)  
[Chemical Technology](#)  
[Chemistry](#)  
[Environmental Sciences](#)  
[General Engineering, General Civil Engineering](#)  
[General Geography, Atlases, Maps](#)  
[General Medicine](#)  
[General Science](#)  
[General Sociology](#)  
[General World History](#)  
[Gynecology, Obstetrics](#)  
[History: America and United States](#)  
[Internal Medicine](#)  
[Law \(General\)](#)  
[Military Science \(General\)](#)  
[Mining, Metallurgy](#)  
[Natural History, Biology](#)  
[Photography](#)  
[Physics](#)

[Item Information](#)

[Catalog Record](#)

### Assembly Task Force on Toxic Substances Sub-agency history record

[Change Catalog Display](#)

New York (State). Legislature. Assembly. Task Force on Toxic Substances.

**Local system #** (N-Ar)NYSV88-A285

**Corp/Agency author** [New York \(State\). Legislature. Assembly. Task Force on Toxic Substances.](#)

**Title** [Assembly Task Force on Toxic Substances Sub-agency history record.](#)

**Historical/biog note** The 20-month investigation by the Assembly Task Force on Toxic Substances is an important chapter in the story of one of the worst environmental tragedies in United States history. On June 1, 1979, Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink formed the Task Force to investigate allegations that the United States Army and various military contractors beginning in the 1940's had dumped toxic wastes in the Love Canal without proper safeguards or monitoring. The investigation was to focus on the broad question of responsibility for this dumping and to gather all available information regarding the ownership and use of the Love Canal and the nature of the environmental threat to residents of the area.

**Historical/biog note** The Task Force came under the supervision of the Assembly Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation. Assemblyman Maurice Hinchey, Chairman of this Committee, headed the Task Force. Other members of the Task Force were Assemblymen Alexander Grannis, Joseph Pillittere, and Matthew Murphy.

**Historical/biog note** BACKGROUND: The Love Canal is a 16-acre below ground landfill located within the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County. The canal takes its name from William T. Love, an entrepreneur in the 1890's who began constructing a power canal to connect the upper and lower portions of the Niagara River to provide hydroelectric power for a planned model city. The economic depression of the mid-1890's doomed Love's project and by the 1940's the abandoned trench had become a large scale dump site for many disposed materials including toxic chemicals from the nearby Hooker Chemical Company.

**Historical/biog note** The residential section of Niagara Falls soon expanded into the Love Canal area and by the late 1960's over 700 homes had been built near the dump sites. By the 1970's, drums holding chemical wastes had corroded and the existence of widespread contamination became apparent. Many area residents began experiencing health problems and New York and federal government agencies began extensive testing for contamination in the area. In 1978, the New York State Health Commissioner declared a health emergency in the area and special state programs were established to assist residents of the Love Canal area.

[Political Institutions & Public Administration](#)

[Public Aspects of Medicine](#)

[Societies and Clubs](#)

[United States Law](#)

[Natural Sciences](#)

[More categories](#)

**Historical/biog note** TASK FORCE INVESTIGATION: Task Force investigators initially collected a large number of defense-related documents and conducted private interviews with eyewitnesses to Army dumping of contaminated materials. Their preliminary findings were contained in a report submitted to Speaker Fink on May 29, 1980. Three major conclusions were reached: 1) the federal government was engaged in extensive wartime and post-wartime production of chemicals and munitions in the Niagara-Erie County Region; 2) the federal government improperly disposed of chemical wastes from these projects; and 3) the federal government had transferred to private industry property used in wartime projects that had not been adequately decontaminated.

**Historical/biog note** These conclusions led the Task Force to expand its investigation to consider the broader history of the use and misuse of the Love Canal and to undertake a comprehensive review of defense-related activities in the entire Niagara-Erie County Region. The Assembly Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation was authorized to conduct formal hearings with full subpoena power to further explore the question of federal involvement in toxic contamination.

**Historical/biog note** The Task Force undertook an extensive search and review of documentation pertaining to defense-related activity in the area. The Task Force's investigation centered on the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW), Lewiston, used by the Army for storage of radioactive refinery residues. These residues were from the Army's Manhattan Project uranium processing complex in the Buffalo Niagara Falls area. Major contractors working for the Army included Linde Air Products, Tonawanda, Electrometallurgical Company, Niagara Falls, and the Hooker Chemicals and Plastics Corporation, Niagara Falls.

**Historical/biog note** After World War II, the Atomic Energy Commission operated most of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works and used it to store a variety of contaminated materials from decommissioned wartime plants. The Atomic Energy Commission (later the Department of Energy) and the Air Force retained ownership to part of the LOOW facility but by 1970 most of the land was transferred to private ownership, the majority to the Fort Conti Corporation. In 1978 and 1979, the Army had conducted its own studies of toxic contamination and the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency had done testing in the region. In addition, a New York State Interagency Task Force on Hazardous Wastes had examined documents provided by the federal government relating to the contamination. The present Task Force, however, concluded that a more comprehensive and aggressive search of documentation was needed using the Freedom of Information Act where necessary.

**Historical/biog note** The most significant records examined by the Task Force were government contracts with chemical contractors, surveys of contamination, and records of army and civilian personnel. Many records were obtained from the Army directly but most were obtained from archives and records centers. These locations for documentation included: the National Archives; the National Federal Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; the Historical Archives of the Chemical Warfare Service, Aberdeen, Maryland; the General Services Administration, New York City; the City of Niagara Falls; the Environmental Protection Agency; and the Departments of Defense and Interior. 67,000 documents were obtained from the Department of Energy alone through Freedom of Information requests. In addition, records were examined from New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health, Transportation and from the New York State Archives.

**Historical/biog note** In addition to making a comprehensive review and examination of the documentary record of Army contamination of the Niagara region, the Task Force investigators conducted interviews with local residents, former Army personnel, the representatives of private industry. Investigators held private hearings with military and Army civilian personnel regarding the Army's own investigation of alleged dumping of toxic substances. The Department of Environmental Conservation also held public hearings where witnesses testified on dumping at the Love Canal site and on the nature of chemical production, storage, and disposal in the region.

**Historical/biog note** TASK FORCE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: On January 29, 1981 the Task Force submitted to Speaker Fink its interim (ultimately its final) report, The Federal Connection: A History of U.S. Military Involvement in the Toxic Contamination of Love Canal and the Niagara Frontier Region. The major findings of the report were: 1) the disposal of chemical wastes from Army and other government related chemical production in the Niagara Falls region contributed significantly to toxic contamination of Love Canal; 2) the Army's own 1978 investigation report into this contamination did not adequately examine Army involvement; 3) the Army's "Manhattan Project" disposed of 37 million gallons of radioactively contaminated chemical wastes in underground wells which were not adequately identified or monitored; 4) many workers were exposed to excessive levels of radiation; and 5) Army TNT plants were not sufficiently decontaminated.

**Historical/biog note** The three major recommendations of the report were: 1) the New York State congressional delegation should sponsor legislation providing additional federal funds for Love Canal remedial programs and for health studies of individuals whose health was affected by contamination; 2) the Department of Defense should reopen its investigation of military involvement in chemical production and disposal of wastes; and 3) the records gathered by the Task Force should be turned over to the New York State Attorney General for possible legal action against the federal government.

**Historical/biog note** The main success of the Task Force investigation was to call attention to federal government involvement in toxic dumping in the Niagara Falls region. The Task Force called on the federal government for the first time to acknowledge responsibility for dumping and to accept responsibility for further testing and cleanup. During the 1980's, the Environmental Protection Agency continued to do extensive testing and monitoring of contamination in the region. The federal government however, has not assumed responsibility for contributing to toxic contamination of the region.

**Linking entry note** Agency record NYSV86-a388 describes the history and functions of the Legislature resulting in creation of record series.

**Linking entry note** Agency record NYSV86-a994 describes the history and functions of the Assembly resulting in creation of record series.

**Subject** [Hazardous waste sites--New York \(State\)](#)

**Subject** [Radioactive waste--New York \(State\)](#)

**Geographic terms** [New York \(State\)](#)

**Geographic terms** [Love Canal Chemical Waste Landfill \(Niagara Falls, N.Y.\)](#)

**Function terms** [Environment sssal](#)

**Function terms** [Health sssal](#)

**Function terms** [Law sssal](#)

**Host item entry** (CStRLIN)NYSV86-a388 is an agency history for the Legislature.

**Host item entry** (CStRLIN)NYSV86-a994 is a sub-agency history for the Assembly.

[Go Back](#)

[Help](#)

[New Search](#)

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)

[Change Display](#)

[Kept](#)

[Logout](#)

