

# THIS LEAD

A HISTORY OF CITIZENS FIGHTING LEAD POISONING IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

# IS KILLING US

[www.nlm.nih.gov/thisleadiskillingus](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/thisleadiskillingus)

Residents from the Bedford-Stuyvesant community attend a seminar with Dr. Dorothy Trice, sponsored by the Brooklyn Subcommittee on Lead Poisoning, *New York Amsterdam News*, May 9, 1970

Courtesy Division of Rare Manuscript Collection, Cornell University Library

## Toxic dumping in an African American neighborhood caused a public health crisis.

In December 1959, the Bruco Battery Company illegally dumped 500 used battery casings in an African American neighborhood in Chicago's Near West Side. Unaware of the dangers, residents retrieved the casings and burned them for fuel. This released a toxic cloud of lead sulphate that poisoned the unsuspecting families. Children died, and people were hospitalized.

Courtesy University of Illinois at Chicago, Special Collections  
Courtesy Winterthur Library

## Civil rights activists mobilized in response to the lead poisoning crisis in Chicago.

The Student Organization for Urban Leadership, formed in 1964, to combat lead poisoning. Members distributed pamphlets, gathered paint samples, and collected urine of children for testing.

*Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, March 26, 1966  
Courtesy The Chicago Defender



 U.S. National Library of Medicine

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The U.S. National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition.

Guest curator: Richard Mizelle, PhD  
Designer: HealyKohler Design

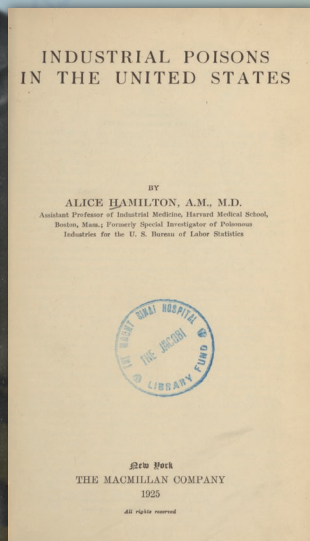
For over a century, citizens have confronted lead industries, housing authorities, and elected officials to protect their health against the dangers of lead poisoning.

## Workers' exposure to industrial poisons spurred research into lead poisoning.

Activist physician Alice Hamilton studied workplace hazards that included lead poisoning.

Alice Hamilton, ca. early 1900s  
Courtesy U.S. National Library of Medicine

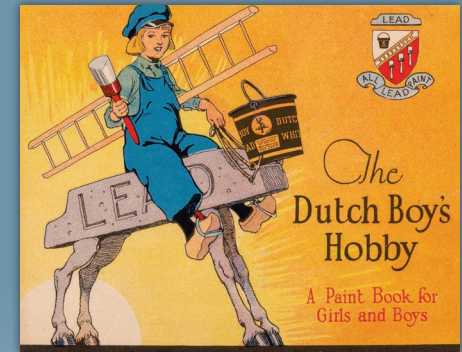
*Industrial Poisons in the United States*, Alice Hamilton, 1925  
Courtesy U.S. National Library of Medicine



## Advertisements falsely reassured parents that lead paint was safe for children and families.

In 1907, the National Lead company, a major manufacturer of lead paint, created the Dutch Boy advertising logo which would later target children with friendly coloring paint books.

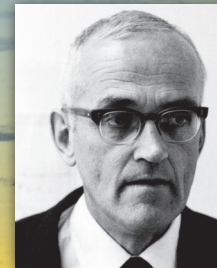
Cover of *The Dutch Boy's Hobby: A Paint Book for Girls and Boys*, National Lead Company, 1926  
Courtesy Winterthur Library



## Lead in gasoline contributed to pervasive lead contamination.

On a mountain, in a corner of Yosemite National Park, Clair Patterson measures the accumulation of lead from gasoline exhausts from neighboring cities, *Engineering and Science Magazine*, February-March 1975

Courtesy The Archives, California Institute of Technology



Clair Patterson, ca. 1960s  
Courtesy of the Archives, California Institute of Technology

