**US Environmental Racism - Classic Examples**:

**2014:** **Flint, Michigan, Water Management**

|  |
| --- |
| Thousands of Flint’s residents (mainly poor and black) have been exposed to lead and other pollutants in their drinking water. In April 2014, the Republican Governor Richard Snyder switched the city's main water source from the Detroit Water and Sewage Department (sourced from Lake Huron and the Detroit river) to the Flint River. The main rationale for Flint terminating its water service contract with the city of Detroit was to reduce cost, in anticipation of building a new pipeline to deliver water from Lake Huron to Flint. However, as construction of the pipeline was delayed, the water source switched to the Flint River, a contaminated river that has long been a repository for industrial waste.  According to a 2015 scientific analysis, Flint River water had 10 times more lead than Detroit water (Edwards et al 2015). Since 2014, Flint River consumption has created a severe public health threat, especially for vulnerable populations such as children.  In February 2015, a Flint resident contacted the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the extremely high levels of lead in her water, In September, a doctor from Hurley Hospital found very high lead levels in children. In reaction in 2015, the Governor created the Flint Water Advisory Task Force and on December 14, 2015 Flint was declared in a state of emergency. Also during 2015, activists and clergy groups filed lawsuits and staged protests against the city. After the cases were dismissed, in April 2016, 514 residents filed a class action lawsuit. The plaintiffs alleged negligence and demanded more than $220 million in damages for the EPA's role in the water crisis. An environmental justice platform of Flint activists announced the formation of a new initiative, the Community Development Organization. As a temporary action, water filters, bottled water and at-home water test kits were provided to Flint residents; four government officials left their positions as a result of their mismanagement of the water crisis, and Governor Snyder issued an apology to citizens while promising money to Flint residents for medical care and infrastructure improvement. The long-term health effects of that poisoning will not be fully understood for years. (<https://ejatlas.org/conflict/water-crisis-in-flint-michigan>). |

#### **1945: Chicago, Illinois**

Altgeld Gardens is a housing community located in South Chicago that was built in 1945 on an abandoned landfill to accommodate African-American World War II veterans. Surrounded by 53 toxic facilities and 90% of the city's landfills, the Altgeld Gardens area became known as a "toxic doughnut." With 90% of its population African-American, and 65% below the poverty level, Altgeld Gardens is considered a classic example of environmental racism. The known toxins and pollutants affecting the Altgeld Gardens area included mercury, ammonia gas, lead, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), heavy metals, and xylene.

The residents of Altgeld Gardens were surrounded by landfills, a chemical waste incinerator, and piles of loose trash. In 1984, a study by the Illinois Public Health Sector revealed excessive rates of prostate, bladder, and lung cancer. Additionally, medical records have indicated (1) high rates of children born with brain tumors, (2) high rates of fetuses that had to be aborted after tests revealed that the brains were developing outside the skull, and (3) higher rates of asthma, ringworm, and other ailments. Despite evidence of health problems, the residents of Altgeld Gardens have not been relocated to another public housing project (<https://ejatlas.org/conflict/water-crisis-in-flint-michigan>). Read more: <http://www.pollutionissues.com/knowledge/Environmental_racism.html#ixzz4iDBnL0GP>