

Abandoned Mines in Northern Canada

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Introducing the Project

The Abandoned Mines Project was created to study the historical impacts of abandoned mines on First Nations communities in northern Canada. Our goal is to highlight the social and environmental changes that large mining projects brought to northern communities, and the ongoing impact of these mines after closure or abandonment. We have six researchers working on the project from three different universities (see p. 2).

Our work will focus on five major case studies:

- Pine Point Mine, NWT
- Giant Mine, NWT
- Port Radium, NWT
- Keno Hills Silver Mine, YK
- Labrador/Quebec Iron Ore Belt

Our work is funded through the “Northern Communities” program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSRHC).



Giant Mine Headframe (Summer 2009)

What's Been Happening?

Lots!! Although we only received funding for this project in April 2009, we have managed to publish two papers, conduct some initial field research, and visit several of the mine sites. In August we met with many groups in the Pine Point and Yellowknife area, including the Hay River Métis Council,

The North Slave Métis Council, Katlodeeche First Nation, Deninue Kué First Nation, the Dene Cultural Institute, and staff with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. We also held a community workshop on the project in Fort Resolution. We have recruited some fantastic students to work on the

project. We are working through the mountains of archival documents we have collected. Although this work is keeping us very busy, our excitement grows daily as we start to piece together the history of the individual mines. Turn the page and find out more!!



Who Are We?

John Sandlos (Memorial University, History) is principal investigator on the project. He has broad interests in the field of environmental history. In addition to mining, his research focuses on Native exclusion from national parks, and the historical impacts of wildlife conservation on Native northerners. He is the author of *Hunters at the Margin: Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (UBC Press, 2007).



Patricia Fitzpatrick (U Winnipeg, Geography) is a resource management geographer, whose research focuses on community participation in northern-based mineral and energy development. She was employed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada on the environmental assessments of the first two diamond mines in the Northwest Territories. Her doctoral research focused on organizational learning in environmental assessment, using the Snap Lake Diamonds Project as one case study.



Arn Keeling (Memorial University, Geography) is a historical-cultural geographer specializing in landscape and environmental history. He brings wide experience in archival fieldwork and landscape analysis to the project, as well as a strong knowledge of Canadian environmental and resource history.



Julia Laite (Memorial University, History) brings to the project extensive experience as a social historian. Her doctoral work at Cambridge examined the modern history of prostitution in Britain, and her current postdoctoral work investigates the historical connections between mining, gender, and sexual labour in Northern Canada.



Deborah Simmons (U Manitoba, Native Studies/Natural Resources Institute; SENES Consultants Ltd., Yellowknife, NWT) brings to the team a wealth of experience as a social scientist specializing in indigenous knowledge, cooperative resource management, political ecology, and participatory research methodologies. From 1999-2004, Dr. Simmons implemented the community research components of the Sahtu land use planning process and the Canada-Déline Uranium Table Action Plan. Dr. Simmons is currently Principal Investigator on two multi-year indigenous knowledge research programs in the NWT.



Yolanda Wiersma (Memorial University, Biology) is a landscape ecologist and conservation biologist with a NSERC-supported research program investigating the effects of anthropogenic change on the ecology of the boreal region at broad spatial scales. She brings to the team resources and expertise in GIS and spatial analytical techniques. Through her recent role as a PI on an interdisciplinary Sustainable Forest Management Network (one of the Networks of Centres of Excellence) funded project, she also brings experience collaborating with First Nations, industry, government and non-government agencies on issues around sustainable resource development.

Summer Field Research

As mentioned above, we had fantastic meetings with local First Nations and Métis Councils in the Great Slave Lake region. Thanks to everyone who participated and helped with the arrangements!!! We also toured the Pine Point and Giant Mine sites, and col-

lected hundreds of documents related to mining history at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and the Legislative Library in Yellowknife.

Further to the east, one of our graduate students, Jean-Sébastien-Boutet, has been working in Schef-

ferville since early September with the Naskapi, the Innu, and the local town council on the history of iron mining in the region. He returns to St. John's in early October, and we are looking forward to hearing more about his work.



Pine Point Tailings Pond, Summer 2009

Off the Presses

Arn Keeling and John Sandlos have published a paper examining the connections between abandoned mines in northern Canada and the environmental justice movement. You can access the paper freely at [http://](http://www.liebertonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/env.2009.0009)

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Julia Laite has published a global survey of historical works on the issue of prostitution in mining camps and mining towns. It is titled, "Historical Perspectives

on Industrial Development, Mining and Prostitution," and it appeared in volume 52, issue 3 of *The Historical Journal*. If you are interested in reading this essay, contact Julia at julia.laite@gmail.com.

"Julia Laite has published a global survey of historical works on the issue of prostitution in mining camps and mining towns."

Looking Forward

Two project team members, Deb Simmons and Julia Laite, will be presenting papers on the Abandoned Mines project, while Déline residents Edith Mackienzo and Orlena Modeste will be discussing their experience working on the impact of uranium mining in their community. The session is titled, "**Lessons from the Past: Community Governance and Abandoned Mines**" and will be held on November 5th, 1PM in Salon B of the Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife.

We are developing plans for workshops, information sessions, and oral history research in

communities close to the case study mines in the spring and summer of 2010. While much of our research has focused on the Northwest Territories and Quebec/Labrador, we are planning to extend our research to the Yukon site in 2010. Look for us to be contacting you soon!!!

We are also working with the Network in Canadian History and the Environment (NiCHE) to develop a website that will include video, photo galleries, papers and bibliographies. We will be announcing the launch of the site in the near future.



Pine Point Sidewalk,
Summer 2009

Our Students

We have several fantastic students working on this project.

Jean-Sébastien-Boutet is a Master of Arts candidate in the Memorial Geography Department who is working on a history of the iron mines at Schefferville.

Sarah Gordon, a PhD student at Indiana University, will be conducting research in Déline on storytelling traditions about caribou.

She will also be working as a research assistant on the Abandoned Mines project, drawing connections between caribou stories and environmental changes related to mining.

Amber Noeker is pursuing a Masters degree in history at Memorial, where she is planning to study the different ways that the history of the Giant Mine has been commemorated.

Jane Hammond will be writing an Honours thesis on the history of iron mining in Labrador City as she finishes her undergraduate degree in the Memorial history department.

Alexandra Winton, a Yukoner, will be joining the Memorial Geography Department in May to conduct research on the history of the Keno Hills Silver Mine

We're on the web!
www.mun.ca/geog/research/mining.php



Giant Mine Small
Head Frame, Summer
2009

Contact Us

If you have questions, comments, or ideas for the Abandoned Mines Project, we want to hear from you.

Please contact:

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