

# The Rankin Inlet Nickel Mine Research Project

## Part of the Abandoned Mines Project at Memorial University of Newfoundland

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## What is the Rankin Inlet Nickel Mine Research Project?

**We are a team of researchers, students, and Inuit participants studying the history of the Rankin Inlet mine. We are interested in learning about Inuit memories of work and life in the community of Rankin Inlet in the 1950s and 1960s.**

## Abandoned mines in Northern Canada

**Our research into the history of the Rankin Inlet mine is part of a larger project looking at the history of abandoned mines in Northern Canada. The map below (Fig. 5) shows some of the mines and communities we are studying.**

Hard-rock mining brought industrial development to Northern Canada in the mid-twentieth century. Although the mines brought investment and jobs to supposedly underdeveloped regions, the costs of such development have become increasingly evident in recent decades.

Many former mine sites left behind not only environmental legacies, like tailings ponds and waste rock dumps, but also a history of social and economic disruption that continues to affect northern indigenous communities. We are studying these mines in order to learn about these issues, as well as how indigenous people responded to these changes.

## The Rankin Inlet Nickel Mine

**Operating from 1957-1962, the North Rankin Nickel Mine (NRNM) was the first Arctic mining operation to employ Inuit labour. Inuit families moved to the new town of Rankin Inlet from around the Kivalliq (Keewatin) Region to work in the mine. However, the mine closed after just five years of operation. The community had a difficult adjustment to life after mining. Some former miners left the community to seek work in other northern mines. Other families left Rankin Inlet permanently.**

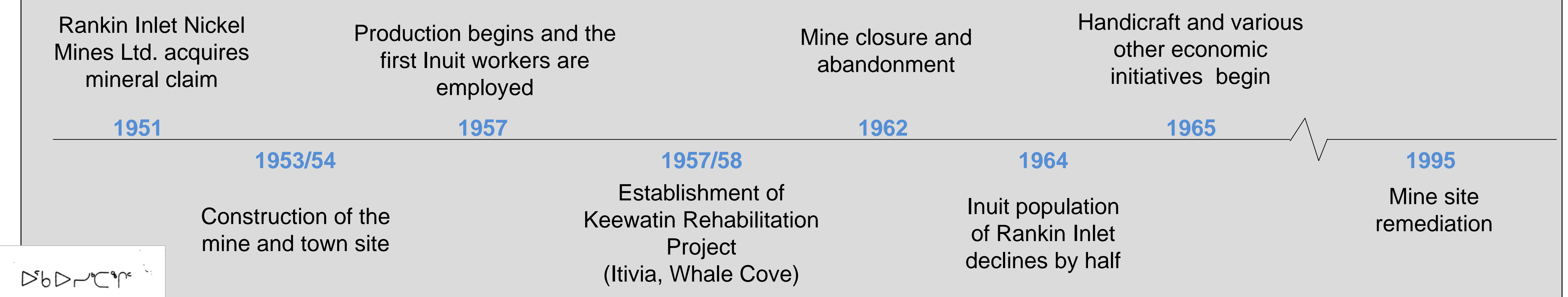
## Doing the research

Our research team has collected thousands of archival documents, to learn about the government's role in the mine's history. We are visiting Rankin Inlet to conduct interviews with elders about their memories of the mine and the town, with the help of Inuit students and Peter Irniq.

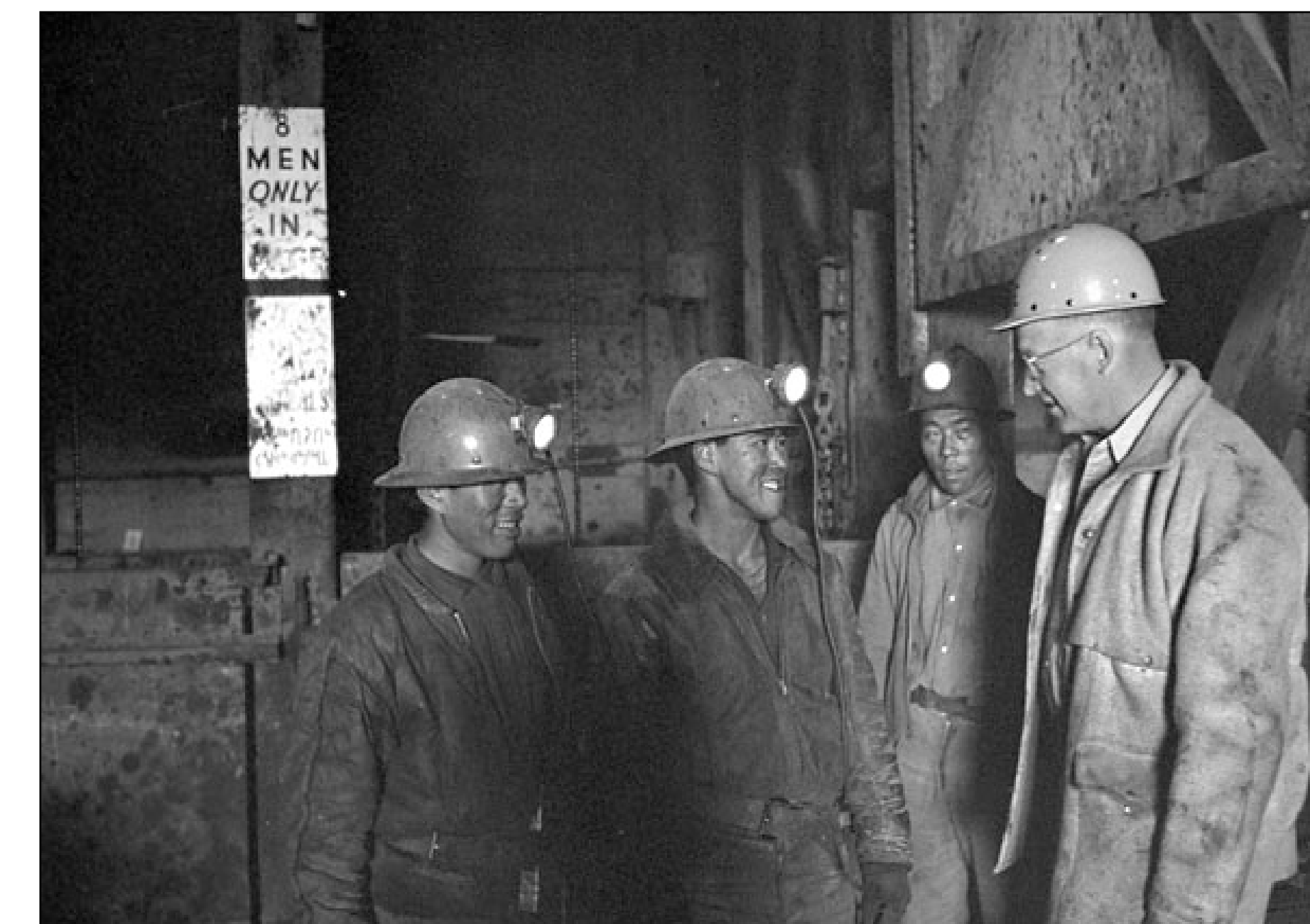
## What's next

**We hope to use this research to better understand how mining has affected Inuit lives. We intend to leave information and interviews in the community, for the use of local students and researchers. Any ideas you have about important questions or uses of this research are very welcome. Mutna!**

**Figure 1: Timeline of the development of the North Rankin Nickel Mine**



**Figure 2: “Rankin Miner” newsletter, July 25, 1959.**



**Figure 3: “Workers joking with a supervisor at the nickel mine [Harry Liberal, Titi Kudlu, Noah Kumakjuaq and Andy Easton],” 1961. Photo by: Kryn Taconis. Library and Archives Canada photo: R3555-1-8-E PA-175565 item #13.**



**Figure 4: Abandoned Rankin Inlet Mine, 1978. Photo by: Yvon Maurice.**



**Figure 6: Post-remediation tailings at Rankin Inlet, 2010.  
Photo by: Arn Keeling.**



**Figure 5: Location of Rankin Inlet and other major pre-1970s mineral development sites in Arctic and Subarctic Canada. Map by Charlie Conway.**

## Thank You!

**We appreciate the support and guidance of the following people and organizations in our research so far: Peter Irniq, Kivalliq Inuit Association, Nunavut Research Institute, the Nanisiniq Arviat History Project, Frank Tester, April Dutheil, Pallulaq Friesen, Jordan Konek, and Amy Owingayak.**