Mining

Social and Environmental Upheaval
Upheaval

• Mining & resource development provokes upheaval in the social and physical environments
• In boom and bust
• **Routinely not well managed**
Uranium City

• Mines ripped out of the bush
• Tailings dumped in lakes, allowed to pollute Lake Athabaska
• Old mines abandoned without cleanup
  • Belated and expensive taxpayer-funded cleanup under way
• Wood Buffalo National Park logged for mine timber
Uranium City

• SK government tried to create a planned urban settlement (Uranium City) to replace male-dominated bunkhouse life
  • “A community born in an atomic test tube”
  • Regina Leader-Post 1953
• 1960
Uranium City

• Developed class segregation
  • Workers vs. Management
Eldorado Townsite
Uranium City

• Planning challenged by continued staking rush, squatter camps, aboriginal migrants
  • 450 aboriginal ‘squatters’ by 1955
  • Mines employed few aboriginals except in menial roles
• Uranium City deployed a racialised economy
  • Mining was for white folk
Elliot Lake ON

• Another uranium mining boomtown
• Boomed in the 1950s, overwhelmed efforts at planning
  • US nuclear weapons demand
Elliot Lake 1957
US ends uranium acquisition - 1963

ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER...
WORLD'S MOST MODERN GHOST TOWN!
Elliot Lake 1968

• Booms again thanks to demand from Ontario Hydro for nuclear power
• Uranium cost inflated by illegal price fixing by Ottawa
Elliot Lake

- Illegal price cartel for uranium collapses c 1983
- Ontario Hydro able to go to Saskatchewan to get uranium cheaper
- Elliot Lake mines face closure
1983
Elliot Lake

- Able to reinvent itself in 1990s as a retirement destination
  - Sell your Toronto home for $400K
  - Buy a summer home in Elliot Lake for $40K
  - Buy a condo in Florida for $100K
  - Bank the rest and retire
Elliot Lake ON

- Town built around a defective shopping mall which collapsed in 2012.
Labrador Trough

• Mont Wright QC is an active ArcelorMittal/China Steel iron ore mine
• With an active community, Fermont, nearby
• Heavy rail shipping of the ore to Port Cartier
Labrador Trough

• But other iron ore mining centres have boomed and busted:
  • Schefferville QC
  • Gagnon mine site
  • Gagnon town site
Bell Island, Newfoundland

• Mined Iron Ore for the steel works in Sydney NS
• Mines closed in the 1960s
• Community remains
Sudbury Basin

- Earliest smelting used local firewood and drove off the sulphides in open roast beds
- Devastated the local vegetation
- Created the black rock
- By the 1910s the place was a moonscape
Ore roast yards, Garson
Roasting ore 1890
O’Donnell Roasting yards
Copper Cliff
Community

- Mining drew in Canadians, immigrants
- Open roasting beds deadly
  - Those jobs went to the more outcaste
- Historic Italian Town, Copper Cliff
  - Right around the smelter
Slag pour: daytime
Slag pour at night
Creighton ON
Sudbury Basin

• Tailings being re-used and rehabilitated, or so we are told.
• Mines still operating
• Some ghost towns
• Smelters still running, with improved pollution controls
• Laurentian University helping with remediation of mine and smelter pollution
Oil Sands

• Mildred Lake Mine
• The largest open pit mine in Canada
• *Easily visible from space*
• Oil sands tailings ponds require $27 billion in clean-up costs
  • Which the Alberta Government has allowed the companies to defer