

#1 History and Historiography of Natural Resource Development in the Arctic

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Historians use documents and records from the past to find patterns and add to political, legal, and economic discussions in the present. In the past, historians who have studied the North did most of their work on the fur trade. The Hudson Bay Company produced excellent records. This has added a lot to our understanding of social and economic development of the North. Mining and oil resource activity in the North has not been studied with this level of detail.



Areas that need further study:

Impacts of resource development on Indigenous communities

- ⇒ How has moving people in and out of communities affected the North?
- ⇒ How do indigenous value systems shape their views of resource development?
- ⇒ How has indigenous participation shaped resource development over time?
- ⇒ How have investments in infrastructure (roads, railways, airports, etc.) affected Northern communities?
- ⇒ How have land claims and land claim settlements changed resource development in the North?
- ⇒ How have environmental concerns and priorities changed resource activities?

Impacts on Non-Indigenous communities

- ⇒ Scholars have not studied labourers who come North to work, even though these people make up the majority of the resource development workforce.
- ⇒ Workers and unions have not been studied extensively, even though they have been an important part of the development process after World War II in the Arctic.
- ⇒ How have fly-in, fly-out camps shaped northern development and North-South relationships?
- ⇒ How do newcomers, governments, and southerners view resource development?

Gaps in the historical timeline

- ⇒ Except for the Klondike Gold Rush, studies of mining and oil camps in the North have focused on the years after World War II. Little is known about the resource sector before World War II.
- ⇒ Most historical research on resource development has focused on the middle North regions (the northern parts of the provinces). High Arctic activity, such as oil and gas exploration, needs more study.
- ⇒ More research is needed on how federal, provincial and territorial government policy has shaped resource development and resource communities.
- ⇒ Specific projects, like the Pine Point Mine, Faro, Eldorado, Norman Wells, and Clinton Creek, need to be studied in greater depth.
- ⇒ Military investments often have a significant impact on resource development. Most studies of military activity in the North focus on international relations.
- ⇒ Environmental impacts and remediation efforts remain poorly understood. More historical work is required on the short and long-term environmental effects of resource development.



If we can understand the experiences
of the past, it will help us understand
modern challenges and help us plan
for the future.

