Environment & Society Portal

Multimedia Library Collection: Environment and History (journal)

"Subterranean Bodies: Mining the Large Lakes of North-west Canada, 1921–1960"

Piper, Liza

Piper, Liza. "Subterranean Bodies: Mining the Large Lakes of North-west Canada, 1921–1960." *Environment and History* 13, no. 2 (May, 2007): 155–86. doi:10.3197/096734007780473500 . This paper examines the history of hard rock mining on the large lakes of north-west Canada (Athabasca, Great Slave and Great Bear) from 1921 to 1960. It is based on the records of the three largest mining companies, Eldorado Mining and Refining, Cominco, and Giant Mines as well as government documents, oral histories and published geological and technical reports. The paper opens by assessing the historiography of mines in relation to nature and presents an overview of the regional geology and mine operations. The analysis considers the character of 'subterranean bodies' and how they reveal the physical engagement of miners with nature. It assesses how geology in conjunction with the creation of habitable mine environments animated these bodies. The final section moves into the surface mills where ores were metaphorically and physically digested as part of a larger metabolic process. The manuscript argues that the perception of subterranean bodies masked the negative consequences of mine operations by presenting minerals as renewable resources, by presenting the large lakes as physical rather than cultural landscapes, and by separating ores from their larger environmental contexts even as miners integrated industrial operations into the large lake ecosystems. All rights reserved. © 2007 The White Horse Press

Download:
PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/piper-13-2.pdf

Related links:

- *Environment and History* at The White Horse Press
  http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EH.html

Websites linked in this text:

- http://dx.doi.org/10.3197/096734007780473500

Environment and History (journal) Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
"Subterranean Bodies: Mining the Large Lakes of North-west Canada, 1921–1960"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/3293
Print date: 10 November 2026 13:26:48