

# **Come Hell or High Water**

**Identity and Resilience in a Mining Town**

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# Context

- Mining dependent communities
- Impermanence
  - Why put down roots?
- Can there be survival after mining?



# Methodology

- Oral histories
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews (36 participants)
  - Miners, local residents, community leaders, informed parties
- Two eras: ASARCO/Post-ASARCO
- Thematic analysis
- Two major themes
  - Identity/Sense of community
  - Resilience
  - Paternalism as overarching theme



# Buchans, NL

- 1905 discovery
- ASARCO
- 1927-1984/5 mines
- Deindustrialization
- 2007 – Duck Pond mine



Carpentry shop men. Author photo



# Findings

Identity/Sense of Community  Resilience



The Deckhead stands illuminated atop Main Street, Buchans.  
Photo courtesy of Pauline Dean

# Identity/Sense of Community

*"Well I'll tell you, if that's true for most mining towns, then it's a thousand times truer for Buchans"*

*-Graham Flight, August 2013*

- Service, amenities, facilities
- Union solidarity & labour disputes
- Isolation



"Four wheels up in the air".  
Photo courtesy of Danielle Coombs



# Moving Forward

- 1984 closure
- Links between identity and resilience
  - Leadership (union, municipal)
  - Actions (TV program, BDC)
  - Receptiveness to new mining



Former mayor Sean Power  
during the Transmitter Program



# Community Support and Social Capital

- Three-dimensional action plan (Development group, MILAP, Penitentiary)

“I often said if Buchans' future is uncertain, our history demands that we fight for a future. I felt an obligation to those people who had come before me to try and carry on their legacy.” – Former mayor Sean Power

# Means, Meaning and Municipal Realities

- Limits to identity?
- Vast changes in community since mine closure
- Community facing same challenges as other rural NL towns
- Means and Meaning (Marsh, 1987)





# Lessons

- Hope
- Community/Identity
- Role of Leadership



Resilience



Steelcor Industries, former ASARCO property. Photo credit Renee Harris



Ivan Hodder, Don Head, and Arch Stacey – Labour Day. Photo credit Junior Pinsent



# January 24, 2014

NEWFOUNDLAND NEWS

## UPDATED | Duck Pond Mine shutting down, says mayor

Copper and zinc mine opened in 2007, 300 will lose jobs

CBC News Posted: Jan 24, 2014 2:37 PM NT | Last Updated: Jan 24, 2014 4:18 PM NT



The Duck Pond Mine, located near Millertown in central Newfoundland, will shut down in the spring of 2015. (CBC)

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## Copper and Zinc Mine Closing in Central

Friday, January 24 2014 / 3:49:10 PM

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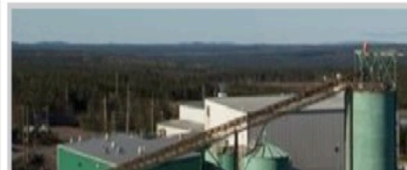
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Teck Duck Pond has announced it will not be extending the life of its copper and zinc mine in central Newfoundland. Operations will shut down in the spring of 2015.

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# Teck Duck Pond shutting down

Andrea Gunn

Published on January 24, 2014

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## 300 employees will lose their jobs

# Thank you!

- Questions?
- Comments?