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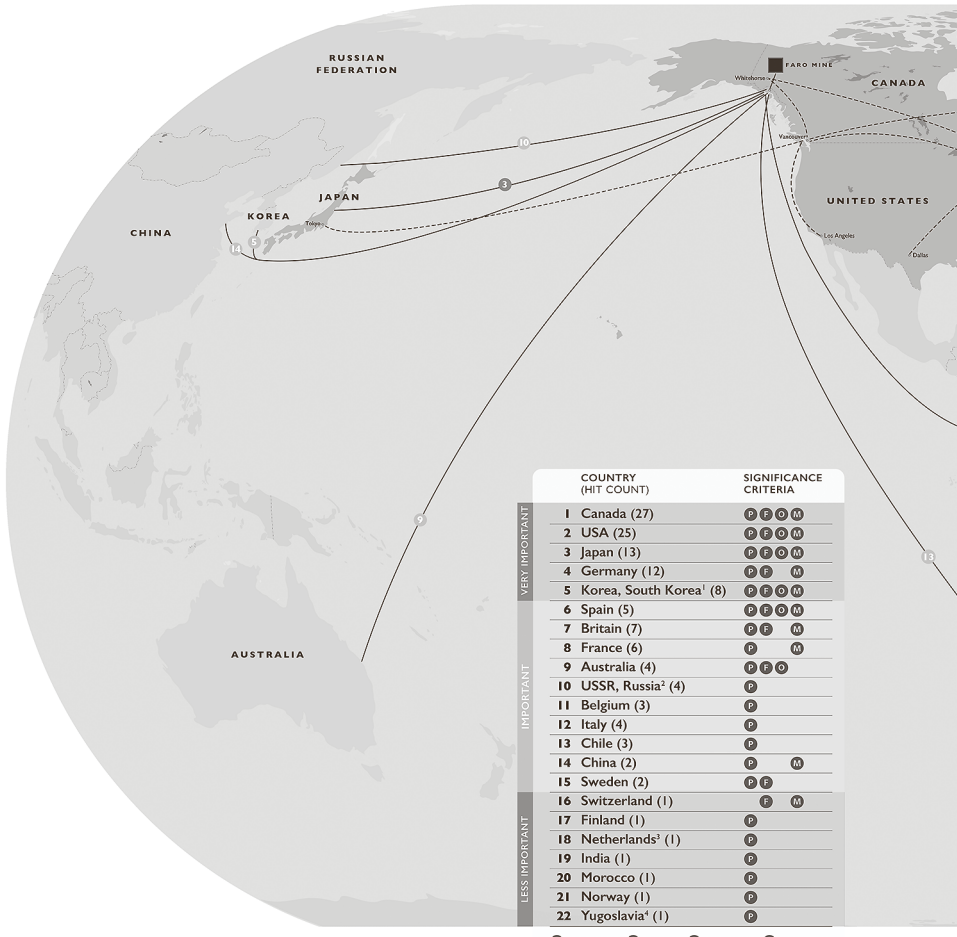
Archival Work in Extractive Projects¹

ISABEL CARLIN

ABSTRACT The Faro mine was a large resource extraction project in central Yukon that operated from 1969 to 1998. Despite its historic relevance to the world economy and significant contemporary research interest, the Faro mine's records (which at closure were contained in approximately 1,800 banker's boxes) are not well understood due to a lack of capacity to process this volume of records and complex issues regarding the application of archival theory. This article provides an overview of the hundreds of thousands of records produced by and at the Faro mine, includes a history of their creation, and uses this case study to investigate the application of archival theories of provenance, respect des fonds, and creatorship. The difficulty of applying these theories to the Faro mine records reflects a broader complexity regarding ownership and accountability in major resource extraction projects. The article concludes that the resulting lack of access to mine records hinders transparency and historical research and that further archival work is needed to ensure adequate records management in future projects.

¹ This article owes much to the support of Dr. Tony Hodge (Queen's University), who spearheaded the Faro Mine Retrospective Initiative and supported my travels to Whitehorse; Lesley Buchan and Karly Leonard at the Yukon Archives, who introduced me to the archives, shared with me the history of the Faro mine records, and provided extensive feedback and support through numerous rounds of revisions on this article; the staff at the Yukon Energy, Mines, and Resources Library who provided information about the Faro mine records in their custody; and everybody else up in Whitehorse who shared their stories and insights and made me feel very welcome.

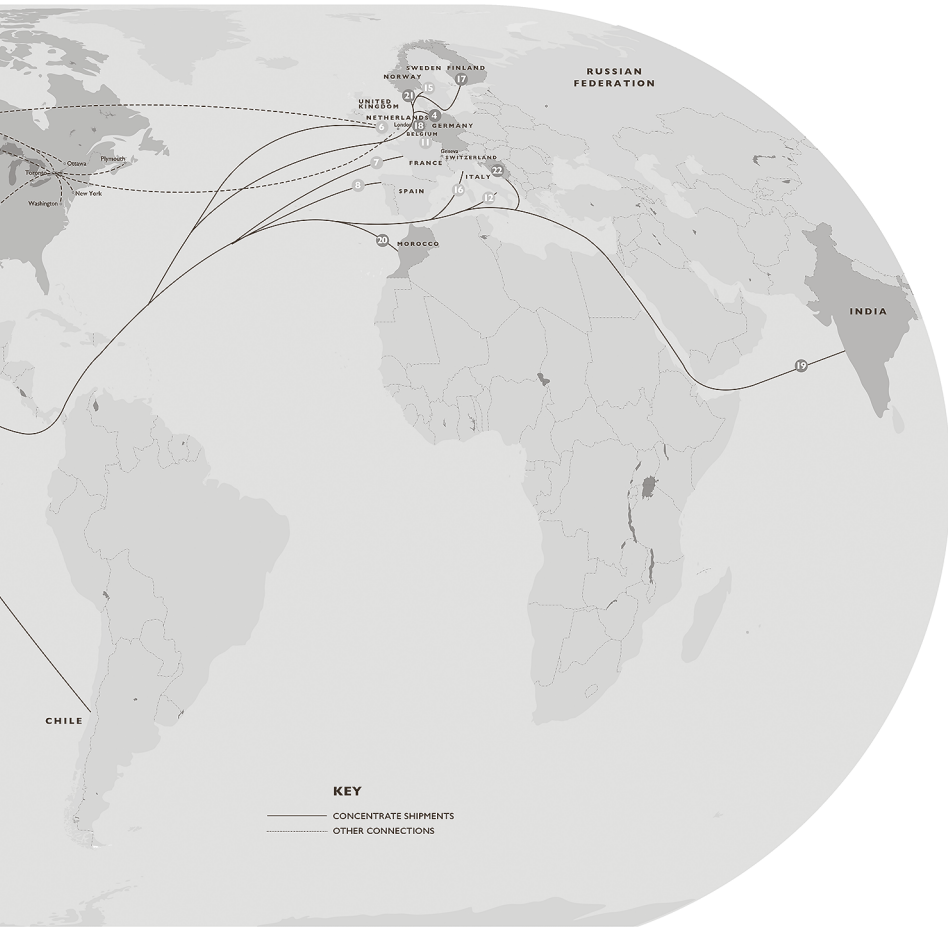
RÉSUMÉ La mine Faro, située au centre du Yukon et en activité de 1969 à 1998, représentait un projet d'envergure d'extraction de ressources. Malgré leur impact historique au niveau de l'économie mondiale et leur intérêt de recherche contemporaine marqué, les documents de la mine Faro (qui au moment de sa fermeture comprenait environ 1 800 boîtes d'archives) ne sont pas bien compris, dû au manque de ressources allouées au traitement d'un important volume de documents et aux problématiques complexes concernant l'application des théories archivistiques. Cet article offre un survol des centaines de milliers de documents produits sur les lieux par la mine Faro. Il inclut un historique de leur création et présente une étude de cas afin d'examiner l'application des théories archivistiques relatives à la provenance, au respect des fonds et de la production des archives. Les difficultés d'application de ces théories aux archives de la mine Faro reflètent une complexité plus importante qui comprend des interrogations concernant la propriété des documents et la responsabilité des projets majeurs d'extraction de ressources. L'article conclut que le manque d'accès aux archives de la mine soulève des problèmes considérables de transparence et impose des barrières à la recherche historique. Il soutient que davantage de travail archivistique est nécessaire afin d'assurer une gestion adéquate des documents pour des projets futurs.



P PROCESSING
 F FINANCE
 O OWNERSHIP
 M MARKETING

¹ Both Korea and South Korea are named in the annual report but the precise destination is not clear and could be either North or South Korea.
² Both USSR and Russia are named in the annual report reflecting the political name change that occurred in 1991.
³ Holland is named in the annual report but Netherlands is the correct country name and is listed here.
⁴ Yugoslavia received concentrate from Faro prior to the 1992 breakup of the Yugoslav Federation.

FIGURE 1 *Reach of the Faro mine: A schematic representation, 1965–1998. This map shows the 22 countries that the Faro mine operation interacted with during its life cycle from exploration through operations (mid-1960s to 1998). Countries named in the annual company reports were recorded and then classified, as best we could ascertain, by functions: processing of concentrates, provision of financing, actual ownership, or marketing. Solid lines link Faro to the countries receiving concentrates; dashed lines link to cities important for administrative purposes. Source: Figure and description courtesy of Tony Hodge, from the forthcoming report The Faro Mine Through The Prism of Time.*



Introduction

The Faro mine, located on the traditional territory of Ross River Dena in what is now known as central Yukon, Canada, was a large resource project that produced lead, zinc, and small amounts of silver during its operations from 1969 to 1998. At one point, the Faro mine was the largest open-pit zinc-lead mine in the world. The mine had a significant impact on economic, ecological, and social systems

in the Yukon and was relevant on the world stage as a base metal supplier, with products processed in Japan, the USSR, and Europe. Upon closure, the Faro mine site entered government custody, where it has become infamous for its negative impact on the environment and the technical complexity and high cost of cleanup (which is estimated to have cost the federal government over \$500 million).² In the public comments phase of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board assessment of the Faro mine site remediation proposal, one anonymous public user described the site as the “biggest mining disaster in Canada.”³

Throughout the exploration, construction, and operations phases of the mine (spanning the mid-1950s to the late 1990s), temporary closures occurred from time to time due to falling metal prices, labour disputes, and accidents. They were devastating to the local economy in Faro and the broader Yukon economy. The town of Faro, built adjacent to the mine, was where workers, their families, and tertiary service providers lived and where about 400 people live today.⁴ The Faro mine is located in the traditional territory of Ross River Dena, who have experienced significant negative social impacts resulting from the mine’s operations.⁵ The mine has also impacted other First Nations both as a result of infrastructure development (roads, hydroelectric facilities) and off-site migration

2 Dave Croft, “Massive Faro Mine Clean-up Will Begin in 2022, Two Decades after Closure,” CBC News, June 27, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/faro-mine-remediation-1.4179016>. More information about the remediation of the Faro mine site, including pictures of the site, is available at Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, “Faro Mine Remediation Project: Yukon,” Government of Canada, August 12, 2021, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1480019546952/1537554989037>.

3 Anonymous User, January 22, 2021, comment on Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, “Faro Mine Remediation Project 2019-0149,” <https://yesabregistry.ca/projects/39ca43c0-bd52-4dcd-90c7-37d55a305ebd/comments>.

4 Town of Faro Yukon, “History of Faro,” accessed April 8, 2023, <http://faro.ca/p/history-of-faro>.

5 Peter Dimitrov, Martin Weinstein, Peter J. Usher, and Ross River Indian Band, *So That the Future Will Be Ours*, 2 vols. (Ross River, YT: Ross River Indian Band, 1984); J.E. Macpherson, “The Cyprus Anvil Mine,” in *Northern Transitions: Northern Resource and Land Use Policy Study*, ed. Everett B. Peterson and Janet B. Wright, vol. 1 (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, 1978), 111–50; Robert R. Sharp, “Changes in Ross River During the Anvil Mine Development,” in *Yukon Case Studies: Alaska Highway and Ross River* (Whitehorse, YT: University of Canada North (Yukon), 1977), 45–89; Martin S. Weinstein, *Just Like People Get Lost: A Retrospective Assessment of the Impacts of the Faro Mining Development on the Land Use of the Ross River Indian People. A Report to the Ross River Dena Council* (Ross River, YT: Ross River Dena Council, 1992); Martin Weinstein, *The Ross River Dena: A Yukon Aboriginal Economy* (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Aboriginal Economy Case Study Project, M.S. Weinstein Consulting Services, Comox, BC, September 1993).

of contaminants.⁶ The scope of the Faro mine's impact on Indigenous Peoples and all other parties has yet to be fully understood or articulated in mainstream literature, especially as questions of the mine's remediation and reopening remain active and controversial.

In light of this context, the Faro mine is evidently a rich and important site of study for historians, engineers, policy-makers, community members, and others interested in issues of Indigenous sovereignty, resource extraction, and northern development. Because of its decades-long history, the Faro mine has also witnessed and catalyzed significant changes in environmental and economic regulations related to mining activities in the North. Although the mine operated only from 1969 to 1998, exploration began in the mid-1950s, and the process of closure and cleanup has continued to this day (and will likely continue in perpetuity). Faro mine records tell the story of mining regulations, social change, and economic development in the Yukon and Canada more broadly; the accessibility of these records is an important contribution to historical research and our understanding of resource projects in Canada.

While many of the records of the Faro mine are in the public domain, they are voluminous, dispersed, and minimally accessible. This article summarizes some of the key findings from the Faro mine records at Yukon Archives project, a two-month-long project I undertook with the support of the Yukon Archives and Dr. Tony Hodge (Queen's University). This project was a study of the Faro mine-related records held at the Yukon Archives and of related records and publications in other institutions. The project built on existing work by an interdisciplinary research project investigating the Faro mine, called the Faro Mine Retrospective Initiative. The initiative aims to summarize and identify the contributions of the mine – negative and positive – to people and ecosystems. Its initial discussion draft was released in January 2023, and the final report is targeted for release in January 2024.⁷ Although there is still much to learn about the numerous groups of records relating to Faro, the Faro Mine Records project has resulted in a greater understanding of the historical context of both

6 Isabel Carlin, "Appendix 9: The Impact of the Aishihik Hydroelectric Facility on the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations," in R. Anthony Hodge Nadja Kunz, Stephen Hay, Isabel Carlin, Connor Hameliy, and Bulgan Batdorj, *The Faro Mine Through the Prism of Time – Mining's Cautionary Tale: Final Report of the Faro Mine Retrospective Initiative* (Kingston, ON: Robert M. Buchan Department of Mining Engineering, Queen's University, forthcoming). This draft report is available at the Yukon Archives Library (call no. YAL 006,458).

7 Hodge et al., *The Faro Mine Through the Prism of Time*.

the fonds located at the Yukon Archives and related fonds or collections. It has also raised questions about the nuances of archival theories such as respect des fonds, creatorship, and custody – theoretical issues that apply not only to Faro but also to other fonds from large infrastructure projects with multiple owners and jurisdictional overlap.

The mining industry is particularly interesting to corporate, government, academic, and civil society sectors because of its relevance to Canadian history and contemporary economics; however, many mining projects end without plans to preserve the records created by the projects, with the result that groups of mining-related records are inaccessible to researchers and the public. Some mine sites have been owned by single corporate owners over their entire mine life cycles; however, other mine sites in Canada have been successively purchased by or transferred between numerous corporations, leading to situations of overlapping creatorship and jurisdiction similar to the situation of the Faro mine. A brief search in the MemoryBC federated database for collections with *mining* or *mine* in the titles reveals 91 results. While most of the results list single mining companies as the creators, there are a number of examples where only the mine site⁸ or both the company and mine site are listed as the creator.⁹ In a few cases, while one company is listed as the creator, either multiple companies' records are present in the fonds or the company merged with or was purchased by another company.¹⁰ In one case, no creator is listed for a collection containing

- 8 British Columbia Archives, "Fonds MS-0305 – Sterling Mine Fonds," MemoryBC, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.memorybc.ca/sterling-mine-fonds>; Northern British Columbia Archives at the University of Northern British Columbia, "Collection 2000.15 – Bullion Mines Collection," MemoryBC, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.memorybc.ca/bullion-mines-collection>.
- 9 Vanderhoof Community Museum, "Fonds A.982.87 – Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada Slate and Manson Creeks Operation Fonds," MemoryBC, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.memorybc.ca/consolidated-mining-and-smelting-company-of-canada-slate-and-manson-creeks-operation-fonds>; Hedley Heritage Museum, "Fonds 991.10 – Kelowna Exploration Company Nickel Plate Mine Fonds," MemoryBC, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.memorybc.ca/kelowna-exploration-company-nickel-plate-mine-fonds>.
- 10 British Columbia Archives, "Fonds MS-1221;98608-10;M867001 – Britannia Beach Mining and Smelting Company Fonds," MemoryBC, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.memorybc.ca/britannia-beach-mining-and-smelting-company-fonds>; City of Vancouver Archives, "Fonds Add. MSS. 280 – Cariboo Gold Quartz Mining Company Fonds," MemoryBC, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.memorybc.ca/cariboo-gold-quartz-mining-company-fonds-3>; Nanaimo Community Archives, "Fonds – Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company Fonds," MemoryBC, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.memorybc.ca/vancouver-coal-mining-and-land-company-fonds-2>.

the records of multiple companies.¹¹ The historic phenomenon of mergers and purchases, which is common in volatile and speculative industries like mining, makes it difficult for archivists to reconstruct administrative histories and accurately preserve, arrange, and describe the records of mining projects. The Faro mine's administrative history is unusually complicated compared to the other mining archives mentioned above, but the Faro mine's records can provide insights that are relevant across the mining industry.

This article aims to highlight the importance of the Faro mine records and provide some insight into how archivists can approach other large fonds from major projects (especially mining projects) by exploring the challenges in the Faro mine case. The first part of the article describes the historical context of the Faro mine and its records and the history of the records' dispersal and provides an overview of the records in the custody of the Yukon Archives. The second part of the article identifies key theoretical issues raised by the Faro mine records that relate to records transfer, respect des fonds, and creatorship. The complexity of these issues and the existence of various approaches in archival theory contribute to the challenge in processing the records of the Faro mine and of similar resource projects. The conclusion suggests that current trends in archival theory could be merged to develop new archival approaches that could cope with voluminous record groups from economically and politically significant multisectoral projects, making these records more accessible to users across sectors and communities.

1. Faro Mine Records

This section provides a historical overview of the Faro mine and its records. Because the Faro mine was owned by numerous corporate bodies with a variety of internal structures, it has been challenging for the Yukon Archives to describe the administrative history of the mine and its records. Furthermore, other organizations – including territorial and federal government agencies; companies and contractors that provided services such as construction, electricity, and transportation to the mine; advocacy organizations; and Indigenous groups –

¹¹ Rossland Museum & Discovery Centre, "Fonds – Mining Company Collection," MemoryBC, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.memorybc.ca/mining-company-collection>.

all created records related to the Faro mine. The broad network of records and situations of overlapping creatorship and jurisdiction contribute to questions of creatorship, which are addressed further in part 2.

1.1 Faro Mine Records: Historical Context

The Faro mine began in the mid-1950s as an exploration site, evolved into a major mining project, and has become a large environmental remediation project that is currently the focus of ongoing discussions about opening parts of the mine property under new ownership. Throughout this 70-year (and counting) lifespan, the Faro mine has been owned and managed by numerous companies and government agencies and has experienced periods of both high profit and economically devastating shutdowns. It has also supported a growing residential town, reported to various federal and territorial agencies (which themselves changed during the mine's operations), and has been linked to other resource projects through shared corporate ownership and infrastructural links. While workers and managers at the Faro mine site created records in the regular course of mine activities during operations, without the direct intervention of corporate head offices, the mine was always under the ownership of a larger private corporate entity until its closure in 1998, at which point it entered the receivership of Deloitte & Touche; it moved into government hands in the mid-2000s. Table 1 provides a timeline of the ownership of the Faro mine and the Town of Faro (where many mine workers and their families lived), identifies the records creators involved in each period of the mine's history, and describes the transitions from each owning company to the next.¹²

¹² For more detail, see Stephen Hay and Robert Anthony Hodge, "Appendix 4: Faro Ownership and Management: 1953–2021," in Hodge et al., *The Faro Mine Through the Prism of Time*.

YEARS	RECORDS CREATOR(S) OR CUSTODIAN(S)	DESCRIPTION
1953–1973	Cyprus Mines Ltd. Dynasty Explorations Ltd. Anvil Mining Corporation (AMC)	Exploration, construction, early operations Mine exploration, construction, and early operations were undertaken by a joint venture of Los Angeles–based Cyprus Mines Ltd. and Vancouver-based Dynasty Explorations Ltd. In 1965, these two companies formed AMC and transferred all properties and assets of the joint venture to AMC.
1973–1981	Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation (CAMC)	Operations AMC and Dynasty amalgamated to form a new company (which was 60% owned by Cyprus Mines Ltd.): CAMC. CAMC managed the town of Faro in addition to the Faro mine itself.
1981–1985	Amoco Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas (HBOG) Dome Petroleum Ltd.	Shutdown In 1981, Cyprus Mines Ltd. was acquired by Amoco, which subsequently sold CAMC to HBOG. At the end of 1981, HBOG acquired 100% of CAMC. Shortly thereafter, HBOG was acquired in a hostile takeover by Dome Petroleum Ltd. In 1982, operations at the Faro mine were temporarily and then indefinitely suspended due to unfavourable market conditions.
1985–1993	Curragh	Operations In 1985, CAMC and the Faro mine were purchased by Curragh (which had various names, such as Curragh Resources Inc., Curragh Resources Ltd., and Curragh Resources, etc., so is identified here simply as Curragh for simplicity). Rather than managing the town, as CAMC had, Curragh sold its Town of Faro assets to a third-party real estate operator. In 1992, the disaster at the Curragh-owned Westray mine in Nova Scotia pushed Curragh into bankruptcy. ¹³
1994–1998	Anvil Range Mining Corporation (ARMC)	Operations, closure ARMC was formed to purchase the Faro mine from Curragh. In 1998, the mine closed permanently due to low market demand and a lack of remaining mineral resources to exploit.

¹³ Brian Dubreuil, "Westray Disaster," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, October 17, 2014, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/westray-disaster>.

1998–2003	Deloitte & Touche Cominco Ltd.	Receivership ARMC was pushed into receivership. The Ontario Court (General Division) appointed Deloitte & Touche as the interim receiver for ARMC. The decision was made in Ontario as Anvil Range was traded through the Ontario Securities Commission. Cominco Ltd. briefly engaged in discussions about taking over the mine but withdrew its interest in 2003.
2004–2009	Deloitte & Touche Government of Yukon Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) Government of Nova Scotia	Receivership, transfer During this period, Deloitte & Touche was responsible for the care and management of the mine assets, including its records. In 2004, as per a court order, Deloitte & Touche transferred the ARMC records in its custody to the Government of Yukon (which received the majority of the records), the federal DIAND, and the Government of Nova Scotia (which received only Westray-related records).
2009–present	Government of Yukon Government of Canada	Closure, remediation After 2009, the Faro mine went fully into the care of the Yukon and federal governments.

TABLE 1 *Timeline of Faro mine records creators.*

Until 1998, when the mine closed and Deloitte & Touche was appointed as interim receiver, records were created during the mine's active life in head offices, regional offices, Whitehorse, and the Faro mine site by the corporate records creators identified in table 1. These records creators included the following:

- **Companies created to own and operate only the Faro mine:**
Dynasty Explorations Ltd., Anvil Mining Corporation, Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation, Anvil Range Mining Corporation

- **Companies that owned and operated the Faro mine as one component of their networks of properties:** Cyprus Mines Ltd., Curragh
- **Companies that owned the Faro mine during shutdowns but did not operate it:** Amoco, Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas, Dome Petroleum

The number of owning companies, their diversity, and the overlap among them creates some confusion regarding creatorship and the identification of a single fonds. The following section describes the creation and dispersal of records created by the entities listed above.

1.2 Faro Mine Records: Dispersal

The last corporate owner of the Faro mine was ARMC. In 1994, ARMC inherited Faro-related records (and some others) from Curragh, which itself had inherited records from earlier mine owners in addition to creating new records. During its four operational years, ARMC created records in the course of the Faro mine's regular operations. When the mine closed in 1998, all ARMC records were transferred to the legal custody of the interim receiver, Deloitte & Touche. Most traditional definitions of the fonds would consider this group of records to be a complete fonds, since they reflect the "entire body of records" of the creator, ARMC.¹⁴

In 2004, Deloitte & Touche sought a court order to determine the fate of the records in its custody. The company held approximately 1,500 boxes of records in third-party storage facilities in Toronto, Ontario. It also held at least 300 boxes at two locations on the mine site: the Faro mine site warehouse office complex and the Grum mine site office building.

In a letter to the DIAND and the Yukon Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources (Yukon EMR), Deloitte & Touche described the records in off-site storage in Toronto as follows:

¹⁴ Society of American Archivists, "Fonds," in *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/fonds.html>.

1. **Accounting records:** “accounting and administrative records belonging to both Anvil Range and companies, which prior to Anvil Range, operated the mine site as well as other mine properties, over the past 30 years.”
2. **Permanent records:** “items of a more permanent or historical nature, including maps, photographs, press clippings and agreements.”
3. **Westray records:** Records within the “Permanent Records” selection, which relate to the Westray mine in Nova Scotia.¹⁵

All the off-site records described above were created by the head offices of the companies that owned the Faro mine. A later letter from the Yukon Archives (YA) and the Yukon Geological Survey (YGS) to the Yukon Territorial Archivist and Deloitte & Touche described the files on site at Faro as follows:

1. **Personnel records:** these contain personal information about employees and contractors at the mine.
2. **Administrative records:** these include minutes, reports, correspondence, and project files.
3. **Maps:** these include various types of maps of the Faro, Grum, and Vangorda deposits.
4. **Geological items:** these include drill logs, operating and reporting procedures, technical reports, and studies.
5. **Cores:** these include geological cores (i.e., rocks) from deposits on the property.¹⁶

From 2004 to 2005, Deloitte & Touche either destroyed or transferred to government agencies the records from these approximately 1,800 boxes (from both the head office and the Faro mine site), in accordance with the court order received in 2004. Most records were destroyed. Table 2 provides a general summary of the fate of each category of records described above.

¹⁵ Yukon Archives, Accession binder #2005/155, Deloitte & Touche, “Re: Anvil Range Mining Corporation Limited (Anvil Range),” n.d.

¹⁶ Yukon Archives, Accession 2005/155, Clara Rutherford and Lee Pigage, “RE: Faro Trip – August 30 – September 4, 2005,” September 4, 2005.

DISPOSITION	RECORD CATEGORIES
Destroyed	Personnel records (all) Accounting records (some)
Transferred to Yukon government	Accounting records (some) Permanent records (some) Administrative records (all) Maps (all) Geological items (all) Cores (all)
Transferred to federal DIAND	Unclear; possibly some accounting records and permanent records
Transferred to Government of Nova Scotia	Westray records

TABLE 2 Disposition summary for ARMC records. The date ranges for these records are not provided in the correspondence between Deloitte and the Yukon government. The records likely span the years 1953–2004, with an emphasis on the active operational years (1973–1981, 1985–1998).

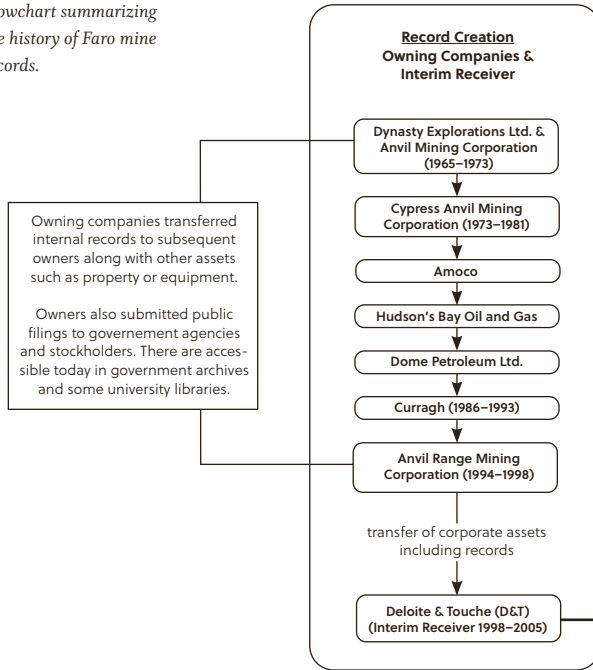
This article focuses on the ARMC records transferred to the Yukon government as these records are the most accessible and comprehensively described. It is reasonable to conclude that most records that were not destroyed were transferred to the Yukon government. Letters from Deloitte & Touche in the YA accession file indicate that DIAND received some head office records, but our project has not uncovered any comprehensive list of files received by DIAND.¹⁷

Most correspondence from Deloitte & Touche regarding ARMC records is addressed to the Yukon Department of Energy, Mines and Resources (Yukon EMR), but the Yukon Archives (YA) and Yukon Geological Survey (YGS) conducted most of the appraisal and selection. It is useful to note that YGS is an agency within the Yukon EMR, and YGS records from the Faro mine are held either in Yukon government records centre storage, as semi-active records, or at the Yukon EMR Library, as digitized records.

Deloitte & Touche sent records to the Yukon government from the third-party storage facilities in Toronto or from the two mine site offices in the Yukon. Of the records from the mine site offices and Deloitte & Touche, about 600 boxes

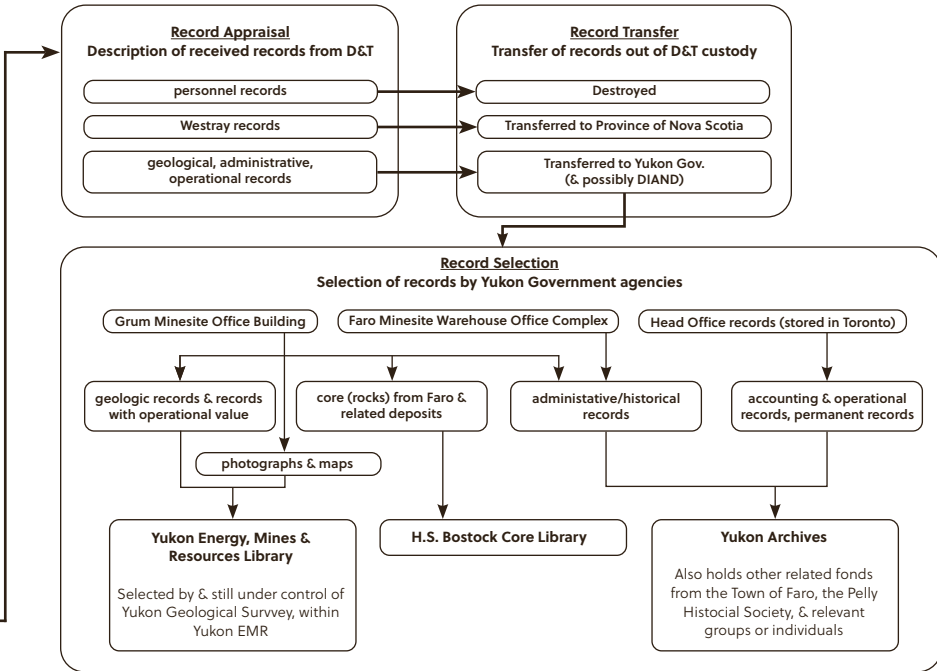
¹⁷ It is possible that Faro-related records can be found in Library and Archives Canada, Accession no. 2011-00571-X, but it is unclear if these correspond with the records transferred by Deloitte & Touche in 2005.

FIGURE 2 *Flowchart summarizing the history of Faro mine records.*



were selected for further appraisal and selection by the YGS and the YA. These boxes were sent to the YGS's core library in Whitehorse, which was used as a staging area. At the core library, records were first appraised and selected by YGS, after which remaining records were available to YA for selection. Records selected by YGS for its operational relevance entered the custody of Yukon EMR, while the remaining records entered the custody of YA. One notable exception was geological rock cores, which likely stayed at the core library.

At least 230 boxes were selected for retention by YGS because of their continued operational value. These records were digitized and uploaded to the YGS online records database (data.geology.gov.yk.ca) to become active geological records within YGS. Almost all of the original analog records were destroyed after digitization. The YA acquired a total of 283 boxes of records under accession no. 2005/155, titled the Anvil Range Mining Corporation (ARMC) Fonds. The contents of these boxes have been listed at the box and file level, but there is currently no list of series and no overall, in-depth summary detailing the scope and content of the records. The boxes have not been appraised or selected due



to capacity issues and a lack of information about the records in the fonds and about related groups of records available in other repositories, which has also hindered more thorough processing and description of the records.

YA also holds two fonds related to the ARMC Fonds: the Town of Faro Fonds and the Pelly Historical Society Fonds. These materials were not exclusively created by the owning companies of the Faro mine (although the Town of Faro was founded and managed for some time by CAMC), but they are undeniably related since they cover the area where the Faro mine site is located.

Of the 1,800 boxes of records that existed upon mine closure, approximately 513 were passed to the Yukon government; additional boxes may have been transferred to Library and Archives Canada and/or the Government of Nova Scotia. Figure 2 provides a flowchart outlining the creation and acquisition of records created at the Faro mine and related fonds. This flowchart includes only records created by companies that owned the Faro mine and related fonds in the custody of the Yukon Archives. Many other fonds might be of interest to researchers (especially the fonds of regulatory government agencies, mine service providers, and

the labour union), but these were out of the project scope as the records are not held at YA. Furthermore, there are undoubtedly copies of both public filings and corporate records in the custody of private individuals and/or corporate entities.

1.3 Faro Mine Records: The ARMC Fonds

The records selected for retention by YGS and YA are those records from the Faro mine that remain in the Yukon. While orthodox approaches to respect des fonds would argue that the group of records held by Deloitte & Touche in the early 2000s formed a complete fonds, which has since been destroyed or dispersed, it is currently more practical to consider the ARMC Fonds in the custody of the Yukon Archives as a single group of records that can be considered and treated separately from other Faro mine records. It is important to emphasize that the records at EMR Library are the other large subset of records from the Deloitte & Touche records that came from the Faro mine, but these records cannot practically be considered as part of the same group of records as the ARMC Fonds at the Yukon Archives.

Before addressing the relationships among the various groups of Faro mine records and the archival theory that may help us retrace the archival bonds between these records, I will provide an overview of the ARMC Fonds at YA. Although this fonds has not been fully arranged or described, its contents are the clearest of the groups of records resulting from the initial dispersal in the mid-2000s, thanks to YA's detailed accession record (Yukon Archives accession no. 2005/155). ARMC Fonds records include administrative records such as monthly reports and budgets from the owning companies (primarily CAMC, Curragh, and ARMC); technical reports; some newspaper articles and other publications; and some photographs.

In response to researcher requests for month-end reports, YA has processed all boxes containing month-end reports, which involved moving the reports into acid-free folders and archival boxes and giving the boxes new processed box locations. The remaining boxes, which comprise the rest of the original boxes selected by YA in 2005, are currently stored in in-process vaults. Each box includes a list of the file titles it contains, although the accuracy of these lists varies as, over time, some publications have been moved to the YA Library or (in the case of month-end reports) processed. There are also two clear series within the YA accession: head office records (i.e., boxes that came from third-party storage in Toronto) and mine site records (i.e., boxes from the mine site). These

series are identified in the accession file. Otherwise, the files are not arranged or described in further detail.

Other series could theoretically be identified based on the organizational structure of ARMC, but the relationship of files to this structure is unclear. Additionally, many records were inherited from previous companies, and further investigation is needed to determine whether these records were then used by ARMC during its activities or remained as is in ARMC storage as relics of earlier companies' activities. In the latter case, these could also constitute series within the fonds.

2. Theorizing the Faro Mine Records

In the 70 years since exploration began in the area that would become the Faro mine site, tens of thousands of documents have been produced by numerous agencies and individuals about and at the Faro mine. While traditional approaches to provenance can clarify the roles played by different actors – for example, Faro mine-related records created by government agencies should be considered part of separate fonds from the records created by the mine's corporate owners – both the administrative complexity of the Faro mine and its socio-political context raise deeper questions about how records of mine sites, other major resource projects, and multinational corporations with complex ownership history should be considered.

In this section, I discuss three areas of investigation that reflect some of the major archival questions raised by the Faro mine. First, I review the complex administrative relationships within the Faro mine and between the mine and its various corporate owners. A deeper understanding of provenance can clarify these relationships, but the mine remains a uniquely difficult site due to its simultaneous subordination to corporate owners and its existence as a quasi-independent entity, which persisted through ownership changes.

Secondly, I use Geoffrey Yeo's concepts of the "physical collection" and "conceptual fonds"¹⁸ to propose the "Faro mine collection" as a set that represents the physical group of records located at the Yukon Archives. This is distinct from the numerous corporate and government fonds, which might conceptually

18 Geoffrey Yeo, "The Conceptual Fonds and the Physical Collection," *Archivaria* 73 (Spring 2012): 43–80.

“share” records and files while still retaining their individual identities as fonds. The goal of this section is to discuss how and why respect des fonds is difficult in the context of the Faro mine and to propose a practical alternative.

Lastly, I discuss archival theories of place-based creation to consider the idea of the Faro mine as a creator. While I argue that the Faro mine can be considered a records creator in its capacity as an administrative entity, reparative and ethical descriptive practice also demands that archivists consider the socio-political context in which the Faro mine is situated. Building on ideas such as societal provenance, I consider the question of whether the mine as a place can be considered a records creator.

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of theoretical issues posed by the Faro mine records and to review some existing archival theories that can help us approach these records. In this article’s conclusion, I suggest that a theoretical approach that merges both formal and critical archival theory can support a rigorous and context-aware practice in relation to the Faro mine records and possibly other similar groups of records.

2.1 Transfer and Transformation

The evolution of the Faro mine and its records over time, both during and after the mine’s life as a private operational mine site, raises numerous questions about diplomatic originality and creatorship. As a group of corporate assets, the Faro mine records were transferred among owning companies and government agencies. Upon the mine’s closure, individual records and files were also selected by Deloitte & Touche and Yukon government agencies and moved into new contexts.

First, I will consider in greater detail the transfer of mine records from one corporate owner to the next, up to and including the interim receiver, Deloitte & Touche. It is useful to reference the work of Michel Duchein in detail, as his work provides an overview of fundamental archival theories of provenance and respect des fonds. Here, he discusses the transfer of fonds from one agency to another:

When a *fonds* has kept its identity and individuality, it must be considered as *provenant* from the agency which created it, even if, before being turned over to an archival depository, it has been received by one or more intermediary agencies. In this situation, the notion of *provenance* is linked to that of creation and not to that of transfer. On the contrary,

when a *fonds* has been, in the course of its history, dismembered and/or integrated into the *fonds* of an agency other than the one which created it, to the extent of having lost its identity and individuality, it must be considered as *provenant* from the agency which received it and integrated it into its own *fonds*. In this situation, the notion of *provenance* is linked to that of transfer and not to that of creation.¹⁹

Currently, it is unclear which of these cases better describes what happened to the Faro mine fonds before the transfer of ARMC assets to Deloitte & Touche; in other words, were the records of each owning company integrated into the active records of subsequent corporate owners, or were they kept separate? Answering this question will require a deeper dive into the structure of the files within the boxes at YA to reconstruct, as much as possible, the evolution of the fonds over time.

After Deloitte & Touche transferred ARMC files to the Yukon government, a further “dismemberment” occurred when the boxes were appraised and selected by both YA and YGS. Geological records were selected by YGS and integrated into its activities as active public records. This is further explained by the Yukon Territorial Archivist at the time, who wrote in a 2012 email,

In 2005 Yukon Archives acquired some records of the Anvil Range Mining Corp from Faro and from the company’s receiver in Toronto. (These are now held at Yukon Archives as accession 2005/155). These records were acquired according to the Yukon Archives mandate of acquiring private records of individuals and businesses. At the same time, EMR assumed from Anvil Range custody of the geological documents which the department used and managed them for its own purposes. As a result, these records held by EMR are now public records as defined by the Archives Act.²⁰

When YGS acquired the records it selected from the Deloitte & Touche transfer, it separated files by format/medium; digitized the records (which were then

19 Michel Duchéin, “Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect des fonds* in Archival Science,” *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 64–82, 74.

20 Yukon Archives, Accession binder #2005/155, Ian Burnett, “Anvil Range Mining Corp Records,” August 29, 2012.

uploaded to the YGS online, public repository); and destroyed the originals. The original order of these records and links between records of different formats would be difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct based on the current documentation at both YGS and YA. Undoubtedly, this section of the original ARMC Fonds has now been “integrated” into the records of the Yukon Geological Survey, where this group of records can now be considered provenant from YGS rather than ARMC (or any earlier mine-owning company).

The fonds of large projects such as the Faro mine lead to questions about ownership and the boundaries of the fonds. Heather MacNeil’s work on archivality²¹ is one socio-historical approach that encourages archivists to consider transformations within fonds not as obstacles to accurate arrangement and description but, rather, as expected and manageable parts of the evolution of records as they fulfill new functions in new contexts. At the Faro mine, when functions changed and companies went defunct, records became part of inactive holdings in the next company’s assets or in government archives and/or were reactivated as the next company’s active records or as public government records. Adequately describing the records of major mines requires contextual understanding of fonds that extends beyond the history of a single owning company to include the socio-historical contexts of records creators, including their evolution over time and relationships to each other and to external bodies.

2.2 Company Fonds versus Mine Collection

In theory, the ARMC Fonds should be an easy group of documents to work with (albeit one requiring extensive resources to process due to its volume). It is made up of predominantly paper records and some photographic records from a single organizational donor. However, issues of provenance, such as the transfer issue described in part 2.1, and jurisdictional overlap, which has resulted in the dispersal of records across government agencies and private institutions, all trouble the idea of a single ARMC Fonds. I propose troubling this further with the possible consideration of the Faro mine as a records creator in itself.

In their capacities within an operating mine site with its own direction and management, people at the Faro mine created records in the regular course of the mine’s business – both as its own entity and as an entity subordinate to a corporate owner. Duchein discusses the hierarchy of creating agencies, proposing

21 Heather MacNeil, “Archivality: Rethinking Original Order,” *Archivaria* 66 (Fall 2008): 1–24.

that in cases where a lower agency answers to a higher body, the lower agency can be considered to have separate (or subordinate) fonds if it has the following:

1. “its own name and judicial existence proclaimed in a dated act”;
2. “precise and stable powers”;
3. a clearly stated “subordination to an agency at a higher level”;
4. a “responsible head”; and
5. a known internal structure “regulated by an organizational chart.”²²

The Faro mine, as a physical and geographic entity, meets all five of these criteria. Its existence as a separate entity is validated in various licences and agreements, and mine operations occurred under the direction of both an on-site mine supervisor and a responsible head in the corporate head office. More broadly, it is interesting to note that when mine-owning companies sold the mine during closures, labour strikes and other protests were launched to petition the new mine owners to reopen the mine. In other words, the same group of people – workers, families, service providers, and others who were economically reliant on the mine – were involved in both the productive labour of mining and related records creation, suggesting that the Faro mine was an entity at least somewhat distinct from its corporate owners rather than merely a function or office of the corporate owners.

While the internal structure of the mine in each era of its life has yet to be fully described, the YA accession record contains both an ARMC organizational chart from the late 1990s, which details the departments on the mine site and in the corporate head office, and a filing system (dated 1983) created by an engineer at CAMC, which appears to correspond to mine functions (e.g., purchasing, transportation, drilling, etc.). However, Duchein’s assessment of hierarchy falters when the lower agency in question, the Faro mine, has been

²² Duchein, “Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect des fonds* in Archival Science,” 70. The Faro mine is not a corporation or organization in a traditional archival sense, but from its inception, it has been identified as a legal entity distinct from its corporate owners. The 1967 Anvil Agreement between the Queen and Anvil Mining Corporation Ltd. defines *mine* in section 3, subsection (1), paragraphs (a), (b), and (c), as an area where there are mining activities, plants for processing, and facilities for employees such as offices and roads. See Library and Archives Canada, R216 (formerly RG85), File no. N-7740-C16, “Agreement between Canada and Anvil Mining Corporation,” 1967. This agreement is also available as an appendix in J.E. Macpherson, “The Cyprus Anvil Mine,” in Peterson and Wright, *Northern Transitions*, 111–50.

subordinate to multiple higher entities. The Faro mine existed continuously as an operating mine through corporate transfers (e.g., from Dynasty to CAMC or from Curragh to ARMC) and remains a site with its own system of records creation (e.g., cleanup records, geological records, etc.). The operations and priorities of the mine were certainly defined and influenced by changes in corporate ownership, but the Faro mine undoubtedly existed as its own entity throughout these changes.

To respond to this issue, I argue that the Faro mine collection, comprising those records at the Yukon Archives in accession no. 2005/155, is a body of records that can be meaningfully considered separate from other sets of records such as the Faro mine-related records in the custody of the Yukon Geological Survey or the possible Faro mine-related records received by the federal government or the province of Nova Scotia. This collection is currently as complete as it can be, and considering the YA accession as an independent and complete body of records allows for more nuanced discussion of both involved creators and the records themselves. In his work on conceptual fonds and physical collections, Yeo argues that fonds are conceptual groupings of records, not actual aggregations, and that the word *collection* better describes the groups of records that are found in archives.²³ Thus, records might be physically part of one collection of records but also part of multiple conceptual fonds. Such an understanding of the fonds reflects the reality of the Faro mine records. Individual records or groups of records may be found in one collection (e.g., the YA accession or the YGS online database) while being part of many fonds, such as the Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation Fonds, the ARMC Fonds, the Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas Fonds, etc. Yeo's conceptual fonds provides us with the theory to make sense of the complex hierarchy of records creators and fonds by suggesting that Faro mine records, which Duchein might have called a "subordinate" fonds²⁴ to the higher fonds of owning companies, form a collection whose records are part of multiple conceptual fonds.

By using the phrase *Faro mine collection* to refer to the body of records created by the Faro mine and acquired by the Yukon Archives, we can identify the complex relationships between numerous records creators without erasing the essential and continuous role of the Faro mine as a records creator. This collection allows

23 Yeo, "The Conceptual Fonds and the Physical Collection."

24 Duchein, "Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect des fonds* in Archival Science," 71.

for an understanding of both the practical aspects of the fonds as it is today (i.e., 283 boxes at YA) without denying the archival bond between all the records in the conceptual ARMC Fonds, including those that went to YGS and other agencies after the Deloitte & Touche transfer. Representing this conceptual fonds may also be an opportunity for linked open data and other digital technologies to intervene in description, in parallel to processing of the physical collection.

2.3 Place-Based Creation

A large resource project like the Faro mine is both a physical place where mining occurs and an administrative entity with its own functions that generate records. While traditional theories of provenance can help us to practically approach many of the complex questions raised by overlapping creatorship at mine sites, there remain deeper questions about how we understand creatorship more generally in the social, environmental, and economic context of a mine site. For example, the granting of legal personhood to rivers or other environmental formations might suggest that mine sites, too, could be entities with the power to create and make decisions.²⁵

To talk about the Faro mine as a place or agent, it is essential to talk about the historical context of its development. The Faro mine was built in the late 1960s on the traditional territory of Ross River Dena. Some scholars and communities²⁶ link resource development in the Yukon to the early 1940s construction of the Alaska Highway (1942) and the Canol Pipeline (1943–44), suggesting that the expansion of resource extraction in the North was linked to the broader project of US and Canadian advancement into the North. In the context of

25 Morgan Lowrie, "Quebec River Granted Legal Rights as Part of Global 'Personhood' Movement," CBC News, February 28, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/maggpie-river-quebec-canada-personhood-1.5931067>. This is not to say that mine sites, like rivers, are living bodies independent of humans; on the contrary, they are entirely human-made constructions that frequently intrude on landscapes and peoples. However, juridical personhood may be a fruitful area of further research in cases such as mines, where major social, economic, and environmental forces converge onto single sites that have their own lives somewhat independent of the control of corporate owners, government bodies, civil society, or natural phenomena.

26 For example, Weinstein, *Just Like People Get Lost*, 49; The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) also cited the construction of the Alaska Highway as the first incursion into their territory by colonial forces to contextualize their response to the Aishihik Generating Station, a hydroelectric facility built on CAFN lands, which was notably built at least in part to serve the energy needs of the Faro mine. See Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, December 4, 2020, CAFN Review and Recommendations, comment on Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, "Aishihik Generating Station Long Term Relicensing Project, YESAB Project #2020-0123," 12, <https://www.yesabregistry.ca/projects/45e1a736-f431-4ea3-90d9-37c03e1b1677/comments>.

northern expansion to consolidate the Canadian state's claim over the North and the US military's control over more of the Pacific Ocean, the Faro mine was many things: a symbol of Canadian development, a geological deposit, an industrial site where machines were used to extract and process minerals, an agency with its own management structure and functions, a company town with tertiary industry including schools and markets, a collection of financial and material assets, a group of workers and bosses, a delineated set of water bodies,²⁷ and a rich hunting ground in the traditional territory of Ross River Dena. These many meanings of Faro, which interact and overlap with each other, contribute to the creation of Faro mine records. This is not unique to Faro; all mine and other resource extraction sites are multi-layered sites contending with numerous global and local interests, geological/hydrological/ecological implications, and labour and social relations.

In archival literature, there are numerous approaches to creation in the contexts of such layered spaces. Naomi Norquay describes the Old Durham Road, where the land itself functions as an archive of an erased Black community in southern Ontario.²⁸ Jeanette Bastian has theorized the "provenance of place"²⁹ by suggesting that places themselves can establish "a context of creation that links the creators as well as the act of creation to a location,"³⁰ moving beyond place as historical context to place as an active part of records creation. A growing body of archival scholarship has considered communities, societies, identities, and economic systems, rather than only individuals or organizations, as creators.³¹

27 This is especially relevant archivally, as the Faro mine was issued a number of water-use licences from 1974 to 2006 to permit its water usage and potential impacts during operations and receivership. The areas and bodies of water that were identified by the Yukon Water Board in its water-use licences could be considered as another meaningful delineation of the borders of the Faro mine. For copies of these water-use licences, see Yukon Water Board, "Waterline files IN89-001, IN89-002, QZ03-058, QZ03-059, and QZ06-075-1," Yukon Water Board, <https://apps.gov.yk.ca/waterline/>.

28 Naomi Norquay, "An Accidental Archive of the Old Durham Road: Reclaiming a Black Pioneer Settlement," *Archivaria* 81 (Spring 2016): 1–22.

29 Jeannette Allis Bastian, "In a 'House of Memory': Discovering the Provenance of Place," *Archival Issues* 28, no. 1 (2003): 9–19, 10.

30 Bastian, 17.

31 This includes, for example, societal provenance and work on the context of creation of colonial records. See Michael Piggott, *Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2012); Jeannette Allis Bastian, "Reading Colonial Records Through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space and Creation," *Archival Science* 6 (2006); Riley Linebaugh and James Lowry, "The Archival Colour Line: Race, Records and Post-Colonial Custody," *Archives and Records* 42, no. 3 (2021): 284–3038.

The Faro mine site fits into these conceptions of place-related provenance: With its massive infrastructure and land-cover impact, the land itself is an archive of mine activities; as a site where geology impacts the activities and functions of the mine, the land also has its own provenance. And in the immediate and palpable context of Canadian colonial expansion into sovereign Indigenous territory and development of international capitalist production and markets, the sexualized and racialized violence³² that is alleged to have been committed by workers against Indigenous women – especially during the construction phase – and the conflicts between mine workers, managers, and corporate bosses all contributed to the creation of records at the Faro mine. This context is inescapable and further influences the task of dealing with the hundreds of boxes of records from the Faro mine, which are waiting to be arranged and described.

2.4 Summary

Archivists have dealt with records from major mines and other resource projects since the inception of the modern archival field. There is some archival literature that deals specifically with mining records, such as Richard Carter Davis's article on appraisal of silver-lead mining records at the University of Idaho³³ or Maryna Fraser's profile of the Rand Mines Limited company archives.³⁴ However, the connection between the mining industry and archival studies is not explored in depth in archival literature. Building archival capacity to deal with the records and socio-historical and socio-economic contexts of large contemporary extractive projects is an important contribution of the archival field to an overall understanding of our economy and society.

32 A 1984 report on the impact of resource development on Ross River Dena states, "Interviews with the Ross River women about the Anvil [construction] period indicate that it was not uncommon for Anvil/Faro residents to take young Indian girls partying, buy them alcohol, abuse them sexually and then dump them out on the highway, sometimes in mid-winter." Dimitrov et al., *So That the Future Will Be Ours*, 331; This phenomenon has been noted across resource development sites. For more information about how communities have researched and resisted sexual exploitation linked with resource extraction, see Women's Earth Alliance and Native Youth Sexual Health Network, "Launch + Week of Action to end Environmental Violence!" Violence on the Land, Violence on Our Bodies: Building an Indigenous Response to Environmental Violence, June 6, 2016, <https://landbodydefense.wordpress.com/2016/06/06/launch-week-of-action-to-end-environmental-violence/>.

33 Richard Carter Davis, "Getting the Lead Out: The Appraisal of Silver-Lead Mining Records at the University of Idaho," *American Archivist* 55, no. 3 (1992): 454–63.

34 Maryna Fraser, "Profile of a South African Company Archive," *Archivaria* 7 (Winter 1978): 95–102.

Poststructuralist approaches to place-based creation provide insight into the social and discursive ramifications of arrangement and description. These approaches can inform the application of more conventional archival theories to the Faro mine records. The Faro mine site does, however, expose the limitations of both poststructuralist and conventional approaches to archival theory and practice. How can a mine site's subordination to numerous corporate owners and simultaneous continuity as a distinct entity be represented in archival arrangement and description? How can the complex reality of a mine site's situation within numerous economic, social, and cultural interests be represented in archives to promote reparative and ethical description? *Is the Faro mine a records creator, or is it simply a location where records creation happens?*

These questions are difficult to answer, yet they must be answered to adequately understand the full scope of a mine's impact. Responding practically to these questions is especially necessary to representing and responding to the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, who have been marginalized from the historical narrative into the present day, and to more fully uncovering the stories of workers and community members who are not adequately represented in corporate and government archives. While the ARMC Fonds at the Yukon Archives provides the most comprehensive collection of Faro mine records in Canada, there are tens of thousands of documents that deal directly with the Faro mine in many other archives and libraries across Canada, and perhaps even around the world. For archivists, an understanding of archival theories of respect des fonds and original order may help to uncover the technical aspects of mine-to-owner relations, which is essential to correctly representing the history of mine records' creation. Embeddedness in the community and a commitment to ethical description may also help archivists approach the extremely political task of writing administrative histories and arranging the files of major projects such as the Faro mine.

Conclusion

The Faro mine was an economically and politically significant resource project in Canada's North that supported the development of the Yukon economy, prompted the development of infrastructure in Yukon, and resulted in significant destruction to the natural environment and Indigenous Peoples. Since its

closure, the Faro mine has become a massive cleanup project requiring a federal budget of hundreds of millions of dollars. The records of the Faro mine reflect this contentious history, but they are currently largely inaccessible to researchers and the broader public due to archival challenges resulting from the volume of the records, their relationships with other records in other institutions, and their multiple creators. These records span several decades of shifting corporate and government agencies; while there is currently a fonds at the Yukon Archives that includes the most comprehensive collection of corporate records that came from the Faro mine and its owners, it is easily argued that Faro mine records are found in numerous conceptual fonds with creators in both the private and public sectors.

For researchers, the Faro mine records are an exceptionally challenging area for archival research. While almost all of the corporate archives of the Faro mine can be accessed through both the holdings of the Yukon Archives and the ARMC records selected by the Yukon Geological Survey, there are numerous other fonds that undoubtedly contain significant information about the Faro mine – for example, the archives of regulatory government agencies, service-providing companies, previous corporate owners whose records may be found in other repositories, and even client mineral processors in Japan and what is now Russia.

For archivists, Faro mine records raise complex technical and conceptual questions in archival theory. These questions range from the delineation of fonds within the vast body of records produced at a mine site with multiple corporate owners to the description of creatorship in the complex ethical and socio-political context of a mine site. At the Yukon Archives, the sprawling nature of Faro mine–related records makes appraisal an especially difficult task, which hinders further arrangement and description. Identifying the records that are “worthy of continuous preservation”³⁵ in this context is difficult not because of a lack of policy but because of a lack of information. As a government archives, the Yukon Archives is bound to fulfill its role as a keeper of evidence of government and corporate activities in the Yukon, while also serving the community as a memory-keeping institution.³⁶ These two approaches make the appraisal of Faro mine records extremely complex, as neither the evidentiary nor the research

35 Fiorella Foscarini, “Archival Appraisal in Four Paradigms,” in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, 2nd ed., ed. Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2017), 107.

36 Foscarini, 108–14.

value of the records can easily be determined without both a further analysis of the structure and content of the records and an understanding of what records might exist elsewhere that would serve research purposes and eliminate the need to preserve all of the ARMC Fonds at the Yukon Archives.

Furthermore, while the question of subject-based research in archives has long been identified as a contradiction of creator-based organizing principles, this is especially the case in a massive project like Faro with involved parties across the world. The question of whether the Faro mine is a subject of study or a records creator itself further troubles this issue. While the principles of respect des fonds and original order are useful for preserving and representing the internal structure and functions of mine owners, the resulting practical difficulty of identifying and accessing all the records related to a single mine site hinders transparency and historical research. The contested nature of the Faro mine also invokes questions of community and socio-economic relations, making the appraisal of Faro mine records an inherently political and contentious task.

Current archival theories can respond effectively to some of these issues, but as archivists increasingly encounter fonds created in contexts of political and social development and conflict, major project fonds require archival theory and practice that can integrate concepts from traditional archival theory, poststructuralist critiques of archives, and other disciplines. While a proposal for a new archival theory is beyond the scope of this paper, some lessons from the Faro mine records project have emerged. Firstly, collaboration with community and with researchers from other disciplines (e.g., history, economics, mining engineering) can help archivists contextualize their work, which is especially necessary in the cases of large fonds. In the case of the Faro mine records, the two-year Faro Mine Retrospective Initiative (itself a collaboration between mining engineers, science and technology scholars, and historians), which preceded my involvement with the Yukon Archives, was essential to understanding the context of the records. Secondly, archival theory and terms (such as creatorship, provenance, fonds) and the distinction between publications and unpublished materials helps to clarify the relationships between records and record creators. It is especially important to reach a shared understanding of these terms with collaborators outside of the archival field both to avoid confusion and to ensure that archival concepts remain relevant to the actual historical processes that led to records creation. Lastly, engaging with actual records can help to ground poststructuralist archival theory in practice. Holding discussions with community members

on ethical description and conducting historical research to gain an accurate understanding of the records and their context of creation are more urgent tasks than theorizing when it comes to getting a collection processed; more importantly, though, this work can illuminate specific problems in processing a fonds and can reveal how and why it may be useful to explore more abstract questions.

As the Faro mine site continues to evolve, with tentative considerations for a reopening of parts of the mine site³⁷ and a proposed site remediation project,³⁸ the lessons that can be drawn from the archives of the Faro mine are invaluable. As older projects close and new major resource projects proliferate,³⁹ archival capacity to process large project fonds will be increasingly necessary to ensuring the preservation of a historical record that can guide the future of operations, policy, research, advocacy, and response to conflict in major resource industries.

BIOGRAPHY Isabel Carlin is a recent graduate of the University of British Columbia Master of Archival Studies/Master of Library and Information Studies (MASLIS) dual degree program. Their work focuses on resource extraction, community archives and libraries, and the relationship between archives and class struggle in the Philippines and the Filipino diaspora. Currently, Isabel works with the UBC School of Public Policy and Global Affairs (SPPGA) to support critical research on mining and industrial water use.

- 37 Nelson Bennett, "Investors in British Columbia Back Faro Mine Restart in Yukon Territory," *MINING.COM* (blog), September 24, 2021, <https://www.mining.com/investors-in-british-columbia-back-faro-mine-restart-in-yukon-territory/>; Haley Ritchie, "Portion of Faro Mine Site to Be Acquired under Partnership with Ross River Dena Council," *Yukon News*, September 4, 2021, <https://www.yukon-news.com/news/portion-of-faro-mine-site-to-be-acquired-under-partnership-with-ross-river-dena-council/>.
- 38 Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board, "2019-0149 Faro Mine Remediation Project," YESAB, accessed April 8, 2023, <https://yesabregistry.ca/projects/39ca43c0-bd52-4dcd-90c7-37d55a305ebd>; Crown–Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, "Background on the Faro Mine Remediation Project," Government of Canada, June 20, 2017, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1497875747120/1537555534918#sec10>.
- 39 Critical Minerals Centre of Excellence, "Introducing Canada's Critical Minerals Strategy," Government of Canada, April 7, 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/critical-minerals-in-canada/canadas-critical-minerals-strategy.html>. Canada's new minerals strategy is likely to result in a significant increase in the amount of mining conducted by Canadian companies in Canada and globally, especially as minerals are necessary for the energy transition away from fossil fuels.