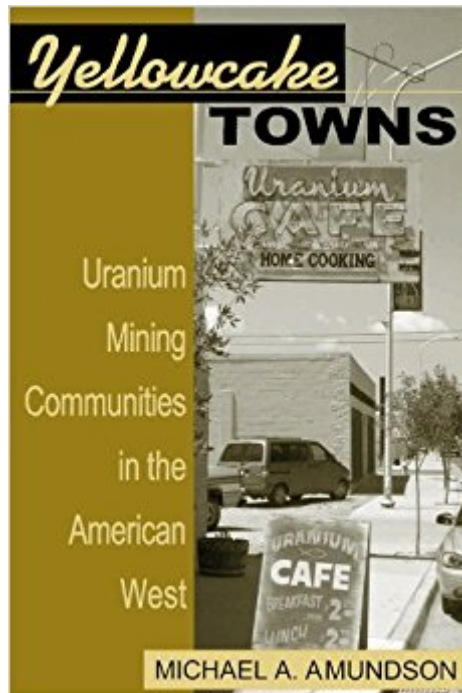


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Yellowcake Towns - Uranium Mining Communities In The American West (Mining The American West)



Synopsis

Michael Amundson presents a detailed analysis of the four mining communities at the hub of the twentieth-century uranium booms: Moab, Utah; Grants, New Mexico; Uravan, Colorado; and Jeffrey City, Wyoming. He follows the ups and downs of these "Yellowcake Towns" from uranium's origins as the crucial element in atomic bombs and the 1950s boom to its use in nuclear power plants, the Three Mile Island accident, and the 1980s bust. Yellowcake Towns provides a look at the supply side of the Atomic Age and serves as an important contribution to the growing bibliography of atomic history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Amundson, being an historian by training, has written a fascinating tale of uranium hardrock mining in the west...mostly concentrated on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. Amundson takes you through the discovery and processing of uranium from the early days, meaning from the late 1800s through the cold war and the shutdown of the major mining centers. Yellowcake Towns, the title of the book, refers to the processing centers which converted uranium ore into uranium oxide which is known as yellowcake from its color. This is what was then sent to special processing centers for conversion into fissionable material. The mining centers discussed are Uravan in Colorado which was a company town now closed and being cleansed of radioactive contamination. Jeffrey City, Wyoming, another company town which also has been abandoned. Then there is Moab, Utah, which was a major uranium processing center but has survived into present day as a

tourist center because of its spectacular redrock landscape. Uranium mining in Grants, NM, which was considered the uranium capital of the USA because of its four processing mills, is also discussed and, again, Grants also survives due to the western film industry and tourism. Reading Yellowcake Towns, though, is slow going if one reads all the footnotes, too. I found the bibliography to be just as engrossing as the actual writing. It's a great read....takes you through the early years when radium was king; then in the years leading up to WWII, the tailings were reprocessed for vanadium to strengthen steel; and finally reprocessing the tailings a third time for uranium extraction to support the making of the first atomic bombs; and, following WWII, the uranium craze to fuel atomic energy plants and even more sophisticated weapons of war until finally, the entire industry collapses. A great read which few people outside of the industry know about.

Because of record prices for uranium, there is currently underway a boom in applications for uranium mining in the western United States. At this time (March 2008), there are 10,000 applications for permits to mine uranium on file in Colorado alone - more in other western states. The history of uranium mining in this country is abysmal at best and possibly criminal. There has been little regard by the mining industry for the health and safety of people affected by the mining. This book details the horrors that resulted from uranium mining close to Navajo communities. This book is a must-read for anyone living within 100 miles of proposed uranium mining and wanting the facts to fight irresponsible plans for mining which ignore human health and safety and are motivated solely by greed. Read this book, organize and take action to protect your families, your communities, and your environment.

Yellowcake Towns depicts the great American Uranium Boom with style and gusto. It is one of the best modern books on the subject and an important tome for anyone interested in the history of the Western United States.

A detailed and accurate overview of a key part of American small-town, mining history that has, for the most part, been remarkably unexplored.

Since I was looking for more information on the actual processing of the ore into the 'yellow cake', this was sadly lacking in this book. If you just want info on the towns, the people and the hardships of the miners who died obtaining the uranium ore, buy this book. However, if you are a chemist, like me and always are looking into the actual synthesis of compounds and elements, you will be sadly

disappointed with this book.

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