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Historical Mining... GREAT for Saskatchewan

- 1850** • The first record of coal seams in the Souris Valley southern Saskatchewan was reported in 1857 by the Palliser Expedition.
- Placer gold in the North Saskatchewan River was documented by the Palliser expedition in 1858.
- 1880** • In 1880, the first commercial coal mine was opened near Roche Percee. Coal was sent to Winnipeg by barges on the Assiniboine and Souris Rivers.
- Commercial clay production began in 1886 in the Estevan, Bruno and Claybank areas.
- 1900** • The Bienfait Coal Mine started production in 1905.
- 1910** • In 1915 a copper-zinc deposit was discovered north and east of Amisk Lake, which led to the development of the Flin Flon mine which started production in 1931.
- The first significant gold discovery was made in 1916 in the Amisk Lake area which became the Prince Albert (Monarch) Mine.
- 1917 potash exploration activity was reported in the Weyburn area.
- 1920** • The first char plant to upgrade lignite for briquettes was built in 1921.
- In 1923 the Rottenstone deposit at the south-west end of Reindeer Lake yielded nickel, copper, platinum and palladium as well as some silver and gold.
- 1930** • The first successful large scale strip coal mine went into operation in 1930.
- In 1934 a gold discovery on the north shore of Lake Athabasca started a gold rush and establishment of the town of Goldfields (became the Box Mine).
- In 1935 Uranium was discovered north of Goldfields and Uranium City became a major uranium mining camp from 1953 until 1982 when the mines closed.
- 1940** • Potash was discovered near Radville in core from an oil and gas well in 1942.
- In 1948, the lifting of the ban on private staking of uranium triggered one of the largest staking rushes in Canadian history.
- Diamonds were reported to have been found in 1948 in an area between Prince Albert and Flin Flon, by prospector Johnny Johnson.
- 1950** • The first attempt to mine potash using the solution method was done in 1951 near Unity.
- The last underground coal mine closed in Saskatchewan in 1955.
- The first underground potash mine was opened at Patience Lake near Saskatoon in 1958 (but it experienced serious water inflow problems). It was closed because of flooding in 1985 and reopened as a solution mine in 1989.
- 1960** • In 1961, Max Pollack claimed to have recovered 2 diamonds from gravel just west of Prince Albert.
- The first commercial potash production at Esterhazy was established in 1962.
- A successful solution potash mine opened at Belle Plaine in 1964. Other mines soon opened: Saskatoon (1968), Allan (1968), Lanigan (1968), Vanscoy (1969), Colonsay (1969) and Rocanville (1970).
- In 1967, the Western Nuclear Mine, lead-zinc-silver, on the Hanson Lake Road was opened but closed two year later.
- 1970** • A government incentive program to encourage exploration led to the discovery of the the Rabbit Lake uranium deposit in 1968 at Wollaston Lake. The mine opened in 1975 and mining is continuing in this region.
- Subsequent discoveries at Cluff Lake in 1969, Key Lake 1975, Midwest Lake 1978 led to the establishment of the Athabasca Basin as the world's largest and richest uranium mining camp.



Historical

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- 1980**
- Rich uranium deposits were discovered at Cigar Lake in 1981.
 - Production of uranium at the Key Lake Mine started in 1983. This was the world's largest high-grade uranium deposit at that time.
 - In 1987, Starlake, the first of several small gold mines in the LaRonge belt, was brought into production.
 - Kimberlites containing diamonds were found in the Sturgeon Lake area in 1988, the ensuing staking rush led to the discovery of numerous kimberlite intrusions in the Fort a la Corne region.
 - McArthur River the world's largest and richest uranium mine was discovered in 1988.
- 1990**
- Production of gold started at the Seabee Mine in 1991, this mine is still in production and is currently the province's largest gold producer.
 - 1996 exploration for Rare Earth Elements started in the Hoidas Lake area North East of Uranium City.
 - Production started at the Konuto Lake Mine for copper and zinc in 1998.
 - Production at the McArthur River Mine started in 1999, with the ore being processed at the Key Lake Mill.
 - The McClean Lake operation began producing yellowcake in 1999 using ore from the JEB, Sue C, Sue A, Sue E and Sue B open pit mines. The McClean Lake mine operation ceased in 2010 and the JEB mill is currently being recommissioned to process Cigar Lake ore.
- 2000**
- A test shaft was sunk on the Star Kimberlite in 2003 to facilitate collection of a bulk sample to help evaluate the deposit. In 2007, a test shaft was sunk on the neighboring Orion South kimberlite.
 - Cluff Lake ceased uranium production at the end of 2002 after 22 years of operation. Active decommissioning work began in 2004 and is now completed.
 - In 2005, approval was received for final construction of the Cigar Lake Mine.
 - In 2008, the Gollier Creek kaolin deposit started production.
 - Between 2007 and 2015, the Saskatchewan potash industry has announced over \$12 billion in expansions and bottlenecking projects at their existing operations in the province.
 - From 2005 through 2015, over \$2.5 billion was invested in mineral exploration in Saskatchewan, with the majority of expenditures directed to discovering additional uranium deposits and greenfield potash deposits.
 - In 2008, Saskatchewan was Canada's leading mineral producing jurisdiction, with mineral production valued at over \$9.7 billion.
- 2010**
- In 2009, construction was initiated for the first potash shaft in almost 40 years at the PotashCorp Rocanville (Scissor Creek) operation, symbolizing the expansion of the brownfield potash industry in Saskatchewan.
 - Canada's mineral production reached a record \$50 billion in 2011. Production values increased for most major minerals. Potash, coal and iron ore were the leading commodities by value of production.
 - Golden Band Resources announced commercial production at the Roy Lloyd Gold Mine (Bingo gold deposit) in April, 2011 but suspended operations in February 2014.
 - Claude Resources poured the 1,000,000 gold from their Seabee operation in August 2012.
 - In 2012 K + S Potash Canada GP broke ground on the first new greenfield potash mine built in Saskatchewan in nearly 40 years.
 - Saskatchewan's was Canada's third leading mining jurisdiction in 2013, with mineral production valued at \$7.2 billion representing 16.4% of Canada's total mineral production value.
 - Potash was Canada's leading mineral by value of mineral production in 2013 at \$6.1 billion.
 - Uranium was one of Canada's leading minerals by value of production in 2013 at \$0.77 billion.
 - In 2013, Saskatchewan remained the world's leading producer of potash and second leading uranium producer.
 - In May 2014, the SMA Safety Committee will host the 46th Annual Emergency Response/Mine Rescue Skills Competition, featuring 17 competing teams, and over 100 direct competitors.
 - The Cigar Lake uranium mine commenced production in February 2014 with ore shipped to the McClean lake mine for processing.

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