



Nuggets of History

The magical attraction of gold contributed greatly to the development of Canada.

In the 1530s, hearing tales of gold in the Quebec northwest, Jacques Cartier explored the St. Lawrence River, looking for a route to Asia. He found no gold or route, but he did advance European exploration in the area. Eventually, in 1823, gold was discovered on the Chaudiere River in Quebec's Eastern Townships, but it wasn't until the 1920s that major mining activity began with the discovery of the Rouyn-Val d'Or gold belt.

In the 1850s, gold discoveries in the West lured prospectors to the Thompson River. Gold frenzy and the possibility of American miner claims on the land motivated the British Government to create the colony of British Columbia in 1858. The 1862 Cariboo Gold Rush made the boomtown of Barkerville, B.C., the largest city west of Chicago and north of San Francisco.

After the Cariboo Gold Rush, the search for gold moved farther north. The stampede of the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush brought 30,000 to 35,000 people to the Klondike gold fields and sparked the formation of the Yukon as a separate territory within Canada.

In 1925, near Red Lake, Ontario, two brothers discovered gold under the roots of an upturned tree and triggered the last great gold rush in North America. For the first time, the bush plane came to dominate travel to the goldfields; the birth of commercial bush plane fishing in Canada was a result of this exploration.

