

**SOLUTION MINING
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**MEETING
PAPER**



**1147 - 1997
850 Years Solution Mining
in Altaussee - Austria**

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Abstract

In the Alps the production of salt from unsaturated natural brine began approximately 1300 years ago.

The salt mine at Altaussee can be regarded as a benchmark of technical progress. In 1147 for the first time underground mining techniques were used to advance directly to the subterranean deposit.

A few years later they started with artificial leaching in underground cavities. Thus solution mining was invented.

Until about 1600 very simple methods were used to transport the brine from draw-wells up to the galleries.

From 1600 onwards the solution-mining techniques improved gradually. The most important innovations were the draining of the brine to a deeper level instead of the labour-intensive drawing, and the beginning of the continuous leaching-technique from 1840 onwards.

Due to the perfection of this technique the size of the caverns could be expanded even more during the 20th century. Finally, the borehole-well-method was adapted to the difficult geological conditions of Alpine salt mines.

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