

The Athabasca Story

by
John Havard

The entire production is directed by The Author

SYNOPSIS

This is the story of a river, a mighty river and its people, the story is told by "The Voice of The River".

In The Prologue it tells of its birth in the distant mountains, The Rocky Mountains, the immeasurable ramparts at their mightiest in the Alberta Land. It speaks of its own spawning from the giant Athabasca Glacier (the Ice Maiden of our story) held vice-like in chill embrace by the encircling mountains as the God of The North Wind (Keewatin) ravages her. From the union of Titans is born — The River — to begin its journey through the mountains, the unpeopled fertile plains, the sombre stretching green forests and to its bed—Lake Athabasca.

Here it mates with its twin—the Peace River—and together in turbulence move out through the great Northern Lakes and The Mackenzie to salt water and the eternal ice in The Arctic.

The Athabasca River is perennial, the ever flowing life giving beneficent water. It is timeless, older than man, young as tomorrow. The unhurrying, slow twisting giant brown python threading history through an eternity of land, that until yesterday slept, safe girdled by ocean and flaring ice barrier. Like Brunnhilde circled by Loge God of Fire, waiting for he who will kiss her awake.

Came the Prince of Pathfinders—David Thompson—in whom is epitomised the brave drumming names of the Canada Land. Hudson, Kelsey, Radisson, Heday, Mackenzie, LaVerendrye, Fraser and others of the intrepid breed. David Thompson came to the Place of the Reeds, the great bend of the river in 1799. From thence forward it was ordained that a modern township would rise. Some fifty years later The Hudson's Bay Company built a trading post there. The remainder is history.

May the tomorrow faces read the message, that without awareness of history they cannot root. May the purpose of this day send those roots deep, may they find the tap roots of those who went before them and from it move into the new era of man's thinking—that his cultural progress must walk hand in hand with his material gain or he is doomed.

From the distant mountains we hear great peals of rolling thunder and the howling of North Wind as The River is born, to begin its journey. At its end North Wind sweeps it aloft once more as snow off the eternal pitiless waste of The Arctic, to return it to the white bearded Patriarchs and Glaciers from whence it came. The awesome cycle in nature that is Almighty God.

From the kiss of that river was born the present Town of Athabasca. To that union we dedicate this day.

The Author.

PART ONE

From the timeless past to the turn of the present century

THE OVERTURE and PROLOGUE "Voice of the River" Walter Kaasa

SCENE ONE — The First Ones — Nomadic Indians

SCENE TWO 1799 The coming of David Thompson
Charles Parker and Indians

SCENE THREE, 1848, The Hudson's Bay Post — Factor and Indians

SCENE FOUR, 1884, Athabasca Landing:

Factor Kinniard — Ronald Gordon
Father Desmarais — Louis Sale
Bishop Ycung — Canon G. Ash
Magnus Brown — Bernie Beaudry
George Gullion — Nap Gullion

SCENE FIVE, 1890, Coming of the North-West Mounted Police
Col. Jarvis — Armand Milot
and The Colinton Gymkhana Club

SCENE SIX, 1894, The Great Forest Fire

SCENE SEVEN 1896 - 97: The Klondike Gold Rush

Man on Horse - Bill Kiselyk
1st Man - Bert Weber
2nd Man - Jim Stanton
Can-Can Girls — Athabasca Can
Can Gir's. Arrangement by Nancy
Appleby.

INTERMISSION

PART TWO

OVERTURE

SCENE EIGHT, 1914 to 1946: The two World Wars,
Royal Canadian Legion, Sea Cadets,
H.M.C.S. "Athabaskan"; Air Cadets
220 Athabasca Squadron.

SCENE NINE, The Tomorrow Faces — The Children of Athabasca

SCENE TEN, Cavalcade of the Nations: Grand entrance of thirty Ethnic
Groups from the district of Athabasca, Performance of
National Songs and Dances. Scenes from the ballet Swan
Lake, Etc.

SCENE ELEVEN, Grand entrance of Part One cast, Can Can Dancers
N.W.M.P., Sea Cadets, Air Cadets, Royal Canadian Legion,
Bert McDonald - Chairman Centennial Committee

Grand Finale on the River Athabasca.

Acknowledgements

Production Manager: Hazel Hall

Stage Manager: Charles Parker

Sound Engineer: Ed Polanski

Lighting Engineer: Herman Leicht

Wardrobe: Eleanor Staszewski

Properties: Dr. J. M. Brown

Makeup: Irene Schinkinger

Choral Speech: Mary Olson, Muriel Schumacher, Nettie Evasiuk

Ethnic Groups: Jane Todd

Bridge Lighting: Calgary Power Ltd.

Stage Area: Nap Gullion

Seating: J. J. Mackie, J. D. Loiselle, Joe Potvin

Decorating: The Athabasca Art Club.

We would like to thank Radio Stations CKUA, CHED, CJCA, CHFA, CFRN, and T.V. Stations CFRN channel 3 and CBC channel 5; also Athabasca Cable T.V. Channel 4 for the use of their studio. The Edmonton Journal and the Editor and Staff of the Athabasca Echo for their excellent coverage, and to all groups or persons who have so willingly come forward to help make this production and the Athabasca Centennial Celebrations a success.

The Centennial Committee.

John Havard wishes to place on record his appreciation for the help he received from the Centennial Committee; Of particular value was the production Staff who so unstintingly gave of their time during the weeks of preparation. To all those who took part in "The Athabasca Story" both on and off the stage a very special "Thank You."

The members of the Athabasca and District Centennial Committee are R. Y. McDonald, Chairman; Rev. W. J. O'Farrell, Co-ordinator; Mrs. R. MacGregor, Secretary, A. T. Fallis, Treasurer, Robert Berrea, Publicity, Dave Hunter, Frank Dulaska, Nancy Appleby, Maria Yaciuk, Joe Eherer Jr., Dr. J. M. Brown, Steve Chorzempa.

The Centennial and Rodeo Queen Committee are: Mrs. Mike Rypien, Mrs. P. Kavulok and Mrs. J. Stychin.

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CENTENNIAL PRODUCTION OF

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by John Havard

This Historical Drama in pageant form was first commissioned by The Athabasca Jubilee Celebration Committee to commemorate the Jubilee Year of the Town of Athabasca, September 4, 1961. The Centennial production of the Athabasca Story, to be presented August 7th and 8th at 8 p.m., 1967 in Athabasca is a revised and more colorful adaptation of the Jubilee Year production.



Quotation from The Author's notes:

"The setting is the great curving arc of the River Athabasca at Athabasca. There will be no scenery, nature here provides us with its own magnificence. History backdrops the actor, he must read it in the deep flowing brown giant at his back for this, and the audience facing him, is both Past and Future."

* * *

"From the kiss of the river was born the Town of Athabasca"
HE FOUND THE CITY BUILT OF CLAY, LEFT IT BUILT OF MARBLE
(Suetonius)