

472 W 39 Ave Vancouver 15 B.C.  
Feb. 24, 1961.

Dr. E. K. Wright  
Athabasca

Dear Doctor;

Your letter to the Province of a few weeks ago was noticed and read, with interest. I apologize if I appear dilatory in writing you, particularly in view of the fact I am one of the few survivors of the residents of Athabasca Landing when I arrived there in the autumn of 1908, with my wife and first born son, after a two day drive with a livery team and surrey, with fringe on top. We stopped over night at the half-way house. This was only means of travel between the two points at that time, and for a few years after. I had been transferred by the Imperial Bank, from Edmonton to take over the Branch at Athabasca.

There has been an impression among some of the recent arrivals at Athabasca that I opened the Branch of the Bank there. That is not correct, I was the second manager. Mr. Reid had opened the branch a year or two previously.

A Board of Trade was functioning at that time and I served as Secretary for a few years. This Board was energetic and all the members boosted enthusiastically for improved transportation facilities, on the river, for roads into the farming districts and for railway connection with the south. These efforts bore results, eventually.

I was instrumental in having the first Agricultural exhibition held at Athabasca. This was held on land on the hill south of the present school, loaned to the Society by Geo. Hees, for the occasion. The entire district of homesteaders joined the village residents in making this exhibition a success. Exhibits included horses, cattle and poultry also hogs. The ladies were as enthusiastic and energetic as the men, and many very fine exhibits were entered by them. These included needlework home cooking and preserves. The weatherman co-operated with us and gave us a fine day which helped materially in making the first effort a success. I recall some workers who exhibited in addition to working. You will be able to get detailed information from them. I do not have any records here. Mrs. Cull, Mrs Minns, Mrs Falconer were energetic. Among the men were Billie Smith, Bill Day Rayner Whiteley, Willeys, Frank Falconer, and others I do not recall at this time.

*Jim Wood*

The early days of Athabasca, when it was known as Athabasca Landing and the chief occupation was the transshipping of goods into the north from the south, by water in summer, and by sleighs in the winter. The incorporation of the village into a town as quite an event. I do not know the year. The arrival of the railway from the south was also an achievement. Details of such events will be available to you from the few remaining residents of the town and the surrounding farms.

Hoping you are able to glean some material from the foregoing to aid you in your splendid effort, and wishing you every success,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A.L. Sawle".

A.L. Sawle.