# Title: Reflections From Across the River: A History of the Area North of Athabasca

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**Overview**

A 913-page book focusing on the area just north of Athabasca, but also including the Calling River and Tomato Creek communities, due to their close relationships. Chapters step through time, from 20,000 years ago, when ice sheets covered this land, to 1993, mostly in decade chunks. Homestead titles recorded in this region are listed by year of filing. Family stories conclude each chapter, alphabetic by last name; some involve families with Calling Lake connections. This summary includes the family names, so that searches can be made by name. The full book is available in Calling Lake and elsewhere, as noted above.

**Some potential connections to Calling Lake and nearby**

Page 1: (quoting from Ruth Gruhn’s research)…during the summers of 1966, 1967, and 1968, excavation of four archaeological sites on the shores of Calling Lake were carried out. No traces of dwellings were identified only scattered ash and charcoal from hearths, leading to the assumption that the prehistoric occupants camped in the area to fish the lake and hunt in the surrounding forest.

All four sites rendered evidence of simple tools. Artifacts found indicate that the hunting weapons were bow and arrow, dart or spear. The diversity of tools recovered and the abundance of flaking debris suggest that the manufacture and maintenance of tools and utensils were major activities of the prehistoric occupants of the Calling Lake sites.

Bifacial knives, unifacial scrapers, and heavy choppers were likely made for use in processing game. butchering, bone-breaking, and the preparation of hides. Adzes, choppers, and smaller flake tools were likely used in the manufacture of tools and utensils of wood or bark. Microblades, founds at every excavated site, may have been shafted to form composite tools. One site produced faint of the knowledge of pottery on the part of late prehistoric occupants.

When artifacts from various sites in northern Alberta were compared, it suggested the migration of Plains hunters into the north. Until Europeans arrived, there is no written evidence to identify the inhabitants of this area.

## Page 1: Introduction

Pages 2-7: Discusses diverse early Indigenous presence, the influx of fur traders and settlers along various trails, Dominion of Canada acts and initiatives to encourage settlers to move into the area. Early sawmills at Athabasca Landing (1898+) and north. Also early drilling, with one well at Pelican Rapids in 1896 that burned off and on for several years. (Page 6, Page 19)

Page 8: The activities in the north from 1890-1900 (particularly the Klondike Gold Rush) attracted the attention of the Dominion government, and it was felt that the vast unsettled area of western Canada needed settlers. As with other areas, the government first had to settle with native groups. In 1898 an Indian Treaty and Scrip Commission was appointed to settle land claims in the North West region. The Commission arrived at Athabasca Landing on June 1, 1899.

By the end of 1900, the Indian Treaty and Script Commission had concluded its work and the Dominion government increased its campaign to settle the west. Homestead regulations were simplified, immigration rules relaxed, and a well-publicized advertising campaign was carried out in the United States and Europe. It outlined the opportunities in western Canada. The new settlers came west, settling along the railways on land that was surveyed into quarter-sections. Between 1900 and 1905 a handful of settlers came to the Landing and squatted on unsurveyed lands. Surveying in the area began 1904 and took four years.

## Page 10: Chapter 1, 1906-1913

Page 11: Athabasca Landing **ferry** installed in 1906. Upgraded 1913.

Page 14-15: **Roads.** Petition for construction of a truck road to Calling Lake using Thompson’s Road built the previous summer. This would give a direct, high road all the way and eliminate the hills (Payne’s, Gauthier’s and Howick’s) except the one on the north bank of the river [and encourage settlement north of the river]… **Since settlement was soon to be started at Calling Lake,** this would be another reason to have an extension of the railway across the river. However, the last portion of the road was never built.

Page 15-16: Early **government** acts for elections, school districts, municipal matters.

Page 17: Dominion Lands Act of 1872 and subsequent changes.

Page 19: **Sawmills.** Since the building of the first scows in the late 1870s, the only industries in the Athabasca area (apart from the transportation of furs and trade goods) were sawmilling and boat-building.

During the early 1900s, some sawmill operators set up north of Athabasca solely as businesses. Others supplemented otherwise meagre incomes, which helped open the area for cultivation. By the beginning of the 1900s, several sawmills and boat-building businesses were dotted along the Athabasca River, powered by steam engines. River used to move the logs. As local timber logged out, operators turned up river, where they operated winter camps, hauling out the lumber on horse-drawn sleighs over the ice. Logs were skidded to the river’s edge and floated down in booms in spring.

Bald Hill, about 25 miles up river from the Landing, was one heavily logged area. *Northern News* accounts 1908-1913 tell of many sawmill camps and some families. E.g., Pearce and Wood on Mr. James Wood timber limit. **Bush fires** raged north of the river June 1909 – no fire break despite lobbying: “Nothing is being done to save our valuable timber”

Page 20: types of wood and uses. Spruce and jack pine used most. White (aspen) and black (balsam) poplar used as flooring. Black poplar for barns and hog pens; larger hollowed for feed and water troughs – white poplar not as durable. Birch seasoned and used to make sleigh runners, replace vehicle and implement parts, handles, flooring , furniture. Large tamarac squared off for skids under buildings. Smaller, thinner tamarac used for fence posts or railing for corrals and fences. Willows as fence posts. Diamond willow for furniture, brackets for shelves, etc. Alder for smoking salted ham or bacon and, during depressed 30s, making hockey sticks.

Page 20-21: **Telegraph.** Dominion Government Telegraph began operating at Athabasca Landing Oct. 1, 1904. (Athabasca office closed in 1955) In 1909, work began on extending to Peace River. Story about Goodwins and telegraph men.

Page 28: Work on telegraph line from Athabasca Landing to Fort McMurray began summer 1912: to Calling River, across Deep Creek, to Pelican Rapids, to House River and Fort McMurray – 258 miles.

Page 32: **Telephone** poles Edmonton to Landing town limits in place 1912; service began early 1913.

Page 21-2: **Tomato Creek,** 38 miles up river from Athabasca Landing, settled in 1911 by **Archie Goodwin,** father of DGT lineman Lee Goodwin. Moved from Wisconsin to Gibbons, where Mrs. Archie Goodwin died. Archie, six sons, daughter Alta and daughter-in-law Maggie moved to Tomato Creek by horse and wagon. Built down by the river, and operated **two stopping places**. Family later moved to Sawdy district.

Last Tomato Creek resident, William (Bill) Morgan died in winter 1951 when he ran out of groceries. Tomato Creek now just graves and fallen buildings.

Page 22: **Athabasca Landing** role changed during first decade 1900s from distribution centre catering to freight and fur enterprises to commercial centre serving agricultural community. Proclaimed a town in September 1911. By 1912, were five communities just north of Athabasca Landing. First **train** rolled in May 25, 1912, Canadian National Railway, quickening pace of settlement. Word “Landing” dropped from town name in 1913. Fire burned many businesses in 1913.

Page 32: “A jolly fishing party left from the neighbourhood on Tuesday last with two teams for **Calling Lake.** In the party… They will be gone a week or more, staying until they get “good and ready” to come home.” *Northern News,* December 19, 1913.

**Newspapers.**

Page 22: *Northern Light,* Athabasca Landing’s first newspaper, launched 1909 by Rev. F.W. Moxhay. 1909, *Northern News* began.

Page 30: *Athabasca Times* published between May 1913 and October 1914.

Page 33: **Oil boom** just north and east of Athabasca in 1913, 125 prospectors in a week. No major discovery. Tons of equipment abandoned down river.

Page 33: **Calling River** settlement. “Settlement in the Calling River are had its beginnings some years before the DGT line reached the junction where the Calling River flows into the Athabasca River. For many years previously, the area had been known to travellers on the Athabasca River, and before that to the Cree who passed through on their way to Lac La Biche for supplies. It was also the site of distribution during the signing of Treaty 8 in 1899. Charles Mair, secretary of the Half-Breed Scrip Commission, in his book *Through the MacKenzie Basin,* describes the Treaty Commission’s journey from Edmonton. They left Athabasca Landing June 3 and returned September 18, 1899, after the signing of the famous treaty. He wrote of their **stop at Calling River – “Kitoṓsepe” – on September 14, 1899,** where **1843 certificates for scrip were distributed, only 48 being for land.** He also wrote of an interview there with Marie Rose Gladue, then about 111 years old, who “remembered the **buffalo as plentiful at Calling Lake, that it was a mixed country, and that their supplies in those days were brought by way of Isle a la Cross, Beaver River and Lac la Biche.**” *Northern News* reported that Peter Pruden, a farmer there, had arrived about **1899.** Dominion Land Office homestead records show applications after 1914.

Pages 35-116: **Family stories.** Anderson, Black, Bodnar, Byrtus, Carlson, Carter, Cocke, Cull, Cullen, Currie, Devlin, Doroshenko, Fesuk, Frigon, Goodwin, Gora, Gorman, Gregoraschuk, Haub, Heczko, Hein, Jany, Kawulok, Kowalchuk, Ladouceur, Laporte, Loan, Lytwynetz, McCullough, McKelvey, Nelson, Nye, Overholt, Porayko, Reap, Richards, Sawdy, Schmelzle, Sylvain, Thorn, Veronneau, Webb, Wiles, Yanik, Young,

Others whose information was found in local newspapers rather than from family: Abbot, Baker, Bellamy, Bowes, Braumen, Brown, Chard, Couture, Currie, Curry, Darsie, Denny, De Vore, Donaldson, Donevan, Driver, Duiger, Dumont, Easton, Farrell, Fielders, Gaitrix, Gauthier, Grisdale, Hagermann, Hein, Hodson, Howick, Hutchinson, Johnson, Jones, Kent, Ladwig, Lapierre, Larson, Lessard, Lindon, Magee, Martin, McAuley, McCulloch, McLeod, McSundine, Menard, Middleditch, Millbank, Miller, Monroe, Moorehouse, Murtaugh, Newell, O’Rielly, Payne, Roy, Rush, Scotton, Seber, Smith, Sollanyk, Subic, Sundin, Sutherland, Swanson, Switle, Trainer, Vance, Viccars, Vincent, Wagner, Watson, Watt, Wien, Wood

Other families are listed who were mentioned in newspapers but not located in land records, as well as those who filed for homesteads but no further information is available.

**Page 117: 1914-1919**

Page 117: Homestead Act amendments 1914 had far-reaching effects, including reducing time allowed for securing patents on pre-emptions from six to three years, adjusting/abolishing interest charges and allowing homesteaders onto land not of highest grade where, to qualify for patent they could keep stock instead of breaking land.

Page 118: **Wabasca Trail:** a winter road used for hauling freight, followed the river to just south of Martin Hein’s Stopping Place, then angled northwest, followed Deep Creek a ways, then headed north over frozen muskeg. (Route still visible in 1993) Crossed Winter Lake, passed east of McCullough Lakes, joined the Calling Lake Trail at Five Mile Creek, five miles south of Calling Lake. From there, north to Wabasca.

Page 119: **Road to Calling Lake**. “Several homesteaders have been engaged in the self-imposed task of **clearing a roadway for the freighters hauling fish from Calling Lake.** This will mean a saving of three miles and is situated north of Thorn’s Store. (Harry Thorn opened the first store north of the river in fall 1913.) The new road is also being made with the idea of obviating the big hill close to Shank’s stopping place, which is encountered on the old route. The boys deserve the benefit they will undoubtedly receive as soon as the bulk of ish traffic is diverted to the new roadway.” *Northern News,* January 8, 1915

Page 127: In 1917, Oscar W. Crawford was general road foreman for Public Works Dept north of Athabasca, according to a letter at the PAA that estimated cost of $300 to repair three burned bridges north of the river.

Page 119: **Lumbering industry** continued to prosper in the Athabasca area. In fall 1914, **Watt & Co.** manager William Dent took a gang of men by Peace River Trail to Tomato Creek to log 22.5 miles of timber permits, staying at Archie Goodwin’s stopping place at Tomato Creek and walking five miles to camp until bunkhouses were built. By February 1915, had about a million board feet worth of lumber. Before spring breakup, brought a boiler and engine, sawmill, edger, cut-off saw and planer to camp and erected a large mill for a scow-building operation that turned out 12 double-bottomed scows/week. Lumber brought to Athabasca in the scows when ice gone, guided by a boat with a gasoline inboard motor. Scows stored on land leased from the HBC and available to freighters and other going down the river.

Pp 118-119: James Cornwall, river pilot known as Peace River Jim, realizing days of Athabasca as part of ta transportation system were numbered due to trains running elsewhere, floated two Northern Transportation Company steamers through the Grand Rapids during high water 1914. Though somewhat damaged, they were repaired and operated from Fort McMurray north. HBC took the S.S. Athabasca up after 1914 freighting season, to Peace River crossing. **“Almost overnight Athabasca changed from being the Gateway to the North to being the last stop at the end of the railroad.”**

Page 123: **First World War.** Alberta enlistment in Canadian Expeditionary Forces was 45,136 men – 20 battalions infantry, 4 mounted regiments, 3 artillery batteries, a field ambulance unit. Many RNWMP officers enlisted; Alberta Provincial Police organized on March 1916 to provide order. With increasing price of food and other difficulties, settlers began leaving the district in 1914.

Page 128: November 11, 1918 **armistice** ended the war, and **Soldier Settlement Board,** enacted in 1919, provided returned veterans who wished to farm loans to purchase land as well as stock and equipment. Many took advantage, although not always successfully. Winter of 1919 a lean one, and thatched roofs fed to livestock.

Page 125: On July 1, 1916, **Province of Alberta went “dry.**” (ended 1923, and AB Liquor Control Board formed 1924 with strict licensing requirements) Another reason for formation of provincial police. The RNWMP had tried to enforce prohibition during the territorial period and found it so difficult that they did not renew their contract with the Alberta government

Page 126: United Grain Growers erected the first **elevator** in Athabasca in 1917.

**Equal Suffrage Act of 1916** gave women the right to vote.

Page 129: **Calling River** news, including S. Cox injury after setting dynamite in a prospect hole and pushing off into the river, when shock of the explosion ignited cartridges in his boat. Brought to Peter Pruden’s, then to hospital in Athabasca. Also mention of **E. Hall**, and of **Jos. Kramer,** who has a **fox farm** at Calling River. Telegraph station opened with E.J. Collin in charge.

Filing on land: Joseph Simion, 1915; David Cardinal, 1916; Peter Pruden, 1916; Harold Wedge, 1919.

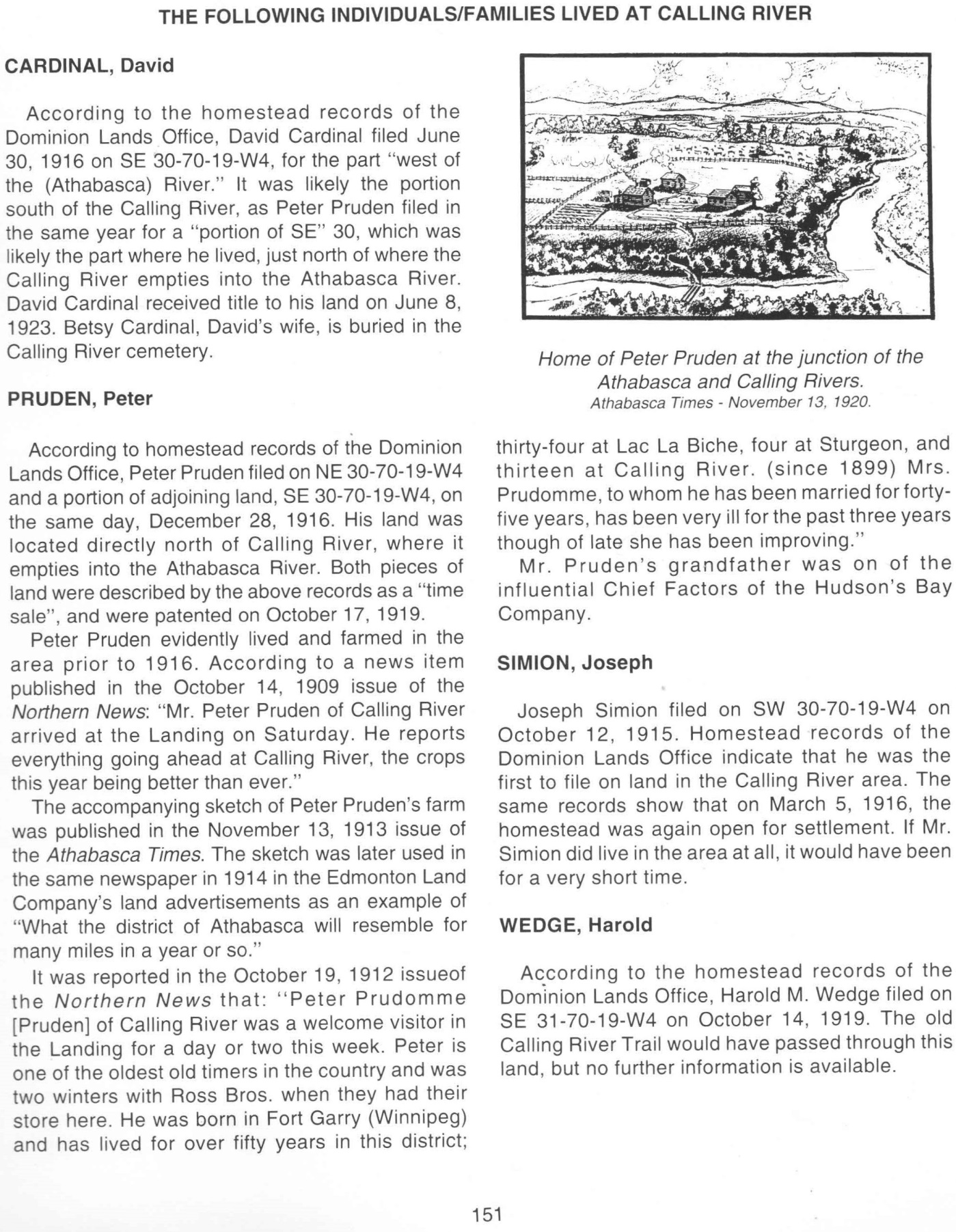
The next homestead, filed on in 1929, would become a sheep ranch in the 1930-40s.

Pages 131-226: **Family stories.** Brown, Cass, Findlay, Gardner, Goodwin, Heim, Hillson, Lasuth, Leguise, Locher, Macadie, Mykietowich, Overholt, Rogers, Rypien, Schmelzle, Soluk, Stirling, Sypos, Tann, Weldon.

From homestead records and local newspapers: Bennett, Hall, Harlock, Johnston, Mackie, Martin, Tudershaw, Newell, Marr, Murphy, Murtaugh

From newspapers, no known location: Tudershaw, Newell, Tucker, Diggory, Waugh, Sloan, Sumers

**From Calling River:** David Cardinal, Peter Pruden, Joseph Simion, Harold Wedge



**Chapter 4: 1920-1929**

Page 154: During the 1920s, the majority of immigrants came from Britain. Many found it difficult to adjust to rural life and moved to the cities. To offset, federal government entered into a Railways Agreement with CPR and CNR in 1925 to attract more central and eastern Europeans.

Pages 154-160: **Lumber and sawmills.** abundance of spruce and pine useful and important source of income, whether full or part time. (These pages scanned and available in “Forestry” as Sawmills\_Reflections pp154-160)

Pages 160-161: Post-war recession, Wheat Board established in 1920 disbanded, fall in grain prices brought more mixed farming, **Alberta Wheat Pool** opened October 1923 and by 1928 was Alberta’s largest grain company.

Page 161: **Ice fishing at Calling Lake** - Among the ways to bring in extra cash. A few sold their catch right on the lake, often to James McIntosh. At times they packed the fish in ice and hauled to Athabasca. Jeff Cocke hauled to Edmonton to be shipped as far away as New York.

Page 162: “In 1926 **James McIntosh** started an enterprise at **Calling Lake** called “**Fresh Fish in Winter.**” He and **Mr. Menzie** were the first two fish buyers at Calling Lake to purchase fish from commercial fishermen. Later, **Stan Crawford** was a buyer, and others later still.”

In the early 1920s fishermen were paid 1.5 cents per pound. By late 1920s, the price was 3.5 cents. Some fishermen delivered to Athabasca by team on the first winter trail, known as **“fish camp trail.”** It went west of Calling Lake to the Athabasca River, and down the river to Athabasca. Fishing season usually opened December 1 and closed end of March.

Every fishing outfit consisted of three men. One looked after the horses, one cooked, one had to wash, dry and mend al the woollen mitts, which were used all day and had to last all winter. They had to have a license and were entitled to 600 yards of netting – 5.5-inch cotton-mesh nets. In evening, the had to put floats and leads on the nets and repair any nets torn during the day. Cotton nets ripped easily. It was a full-time job, seven days a week from 8 a.m. until dark. It took two hours with team and caboose just to get where nets were set. They built the cabooses by nailing canvas over a framework. They all had airtight heaters on them, to keep the fish from freezing and warm the fishermen on the lake.

Many hardships. Had to build log barns for horses, log shacks for themselves, all close to the lake. Feed for horses, wood, water from the lake. Horses watered through a hole in the ice. When lakes not frozen hard enough for horse teams, dog teams hauled the fish to camp.

Lawrence Devlin had a team break through the ice when coming back to camp one night. He lost one horse nad saved one. Jim Webb got the drowned horse out and used it to feed his dog team.

At time 25-30 outfits were fishing. When looking across the lake, cabooses could not be seen; only smoke going straight up.

**By 1932 the lakes were fished out quite heavily.** That year Calling Lake was **restocked** with 13.25 million whitefish eggs from a government hatchery at Slave Lake. Soon fishing resumed.

A train of horse teams hauled the fish to Athabasca, making a round trip in four days. To speed delivery to distant markets, Arthur Brown of Colinton, AB used Reo trucks, meeting teams from Calling Lake at Kirkpatrick’s Stopping Place. In **1934 McIntosh bought an airplane. Joe Irwin, pilot, could pick up 700 pounds of fish right on the ice and make a round trip to Athabasca and back in one hour.**

In Athabasca, the fish were boxed and sent to Edmonton by truck, then on rail express to New York. Fishermen got five cents a pound; in New York they sold for over a dollar a pound.

Fishing regulations kept changing.

Page 162-3: **Trapping and raising foxes** as ways to make money. Chris Schmelzle raised wild foxes; Mabel Overholt bought a pair of silver foxes in the 1920s and bred them for pelts until 1932.

Page 164: 1920s as a time of **change.** Growing use of cars, trucks, tractors, telephones, radios, moving pictures. Chautauquas came to AB in 1917 and were still appearing in Athabasca in the early 1930s.

Page 166: **Telephone.** Late summer 1920, reported that toll stations would be placed at **Archie Gormans,** then at Deep Creek, and would continue on to Calling Lake. By August 28, 1920, the toll phone was placed at Archie Gorman’s farm, with persons operating the toll office also relaying messages to nearby residents for a small fee. Then to Yaniks or Lines at Deep Creek. By end August 1920, initial steps in constructing telephone line to Calling Lake taken. Linemen used telegraph poles to nine mile north of Athabasca, spiking arms onto poles. The line followed the road north and east along the contour of the Athabasca River, within half a mile of the river bank. From **John Bodnar’s** homestead, where the telegraph line turned east, the telephone line continued north using its own poles through heavy willow and timber forest to the first Oscar Kirkpatrick homestead and the **William (Bill) McLeod** place. First toll phone at Deep Creek was placed at **Oscar Kirkpatrick** home, also a stopping place (later known as MacDonald’s and by the mid-1990s the Leonard Miller farm). The line crossed Deep Creek at Wesley Lines’ place. It wound through heavy timber along the first Calling Lake road built in 1912 and **finally reached Calling Lake in February of 1921.** A phone was placed at **James McIntosh’s** residence and later in the home of **Jacob Crawford.**

**Gisli Gislason Sr**., then mail carrier, also took on telephone line maintenance. He bought Crawford’s homestead at Calling Lake and took over the phone. In 1928 he moved to the Billy McLeod farm near Deep Creek and brought the phone with him, adding another phone to the area.

In **1924 George (Mickey) Monson** took over operation of the **Calling River telegraph station**, continuing 21 years, until 1945. **Salome (Sally) Marquette (later Monson)** recalls the time the family spent at Calling River: They built a lumber telegraph station – white siding and a green roof, in front of a tall log house which we used as a storehouse. A few yards north of that, my husband had a log cabin built, to house the girls and the housekeeper. A little later, a lumber bunkhouse was set up on the south of the station for the male guests, with bunks, and much more comfortable than sleeping on the floor of the dining room of the station. I married George T. Monson in 1934, and we had two children in addition to the three girls he had by his first wife. She died when their youngest girl was born. The Athabasca River was breaking up then, and there was no way of getting help. I taught all the five girls while we were there. I also did the office work and learned the Code to become the stand-0in operator, and the Dominion Government was delighted to have an assistant operator at no cost. I sent the weather reports and relayed information when my husband was doing line work. The only means of communication was the telegraph, and a slow monthly mail service (introduced later, ten years before we left). The stations Pelican and Calling River were the Post Offices, the operators being postmasters also. The mail carrier used a motor boat when the river was open, and a horse and cutter when it was frozen over. He had to work his way around Pelican Portage the best he could.

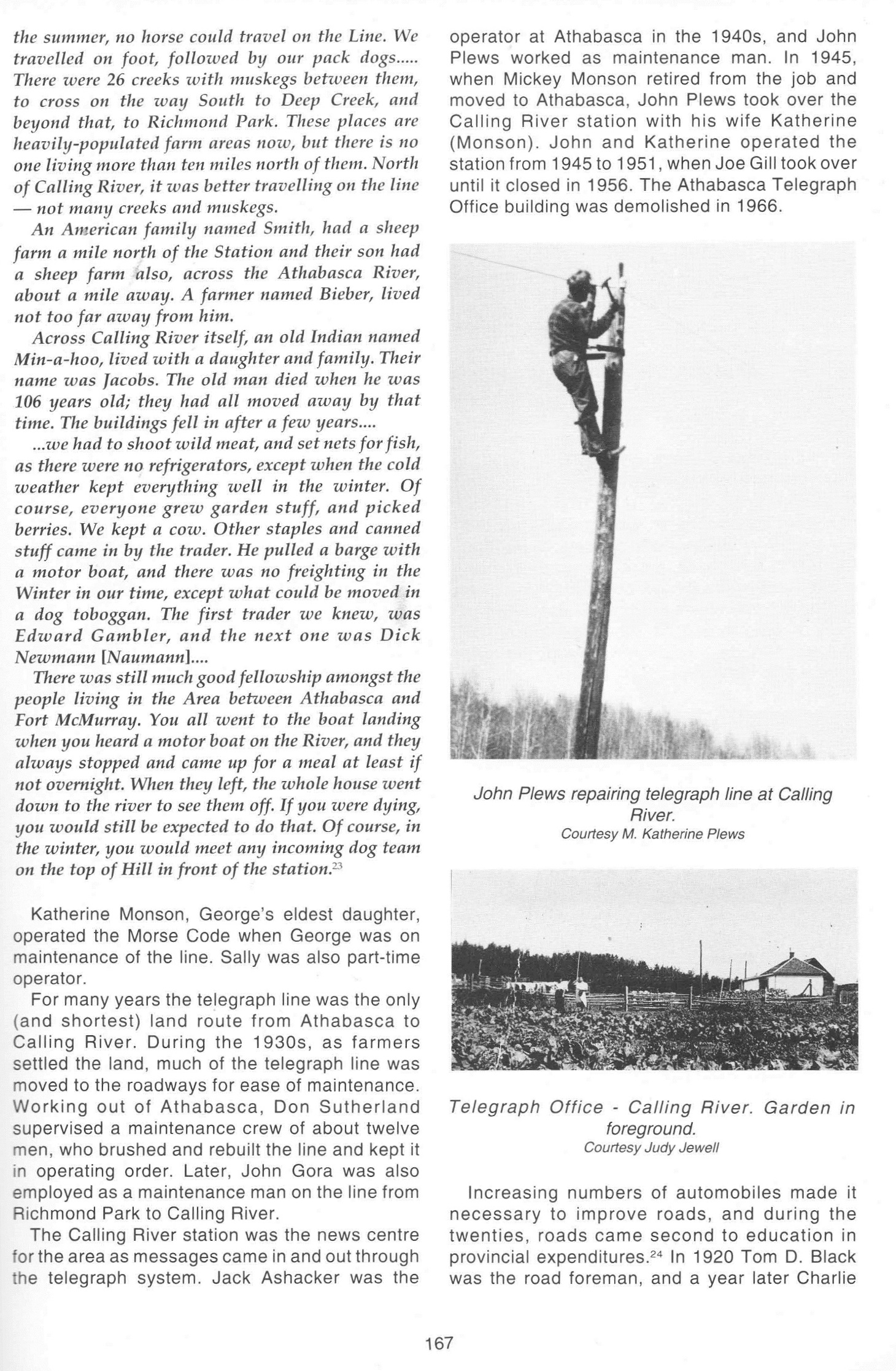
Travel was by motor boat, or by foot on the line. Travelling was good on the line when the ground was frozen and some snow on it, when a dog team could travel with a toboggan. In (continued in scan, next page)

Pages 170-256: **Family stories.** Allen, Asanger, Astasiewicz, Beatty, Bilida, Borody, Bowzaylo, Braden, Bury, Byrutus, Carlson, Christie, Chudek, Coke (Cocke), Deren, Doroshenko, Fraser, Galus, Gislason,   
Gisli and Margaret (includes a time in Calling Lake – text below and in Family histories),   
Greathead, Gunther, Hnatyshyn, Hrycoy, Irla, Juelson, Kawulok, Keil, Kirkpatrick, Lines, Kobzey, Konior, Korolak, Kotyk, Laporte, Lauder, Lebid, Lewis, Lupiezowiec, Malik, Martynek, O’Donoghue, O’Neill, Overholt, Palash, Pozniak, Rabin, Rhodes, Rojowski, Ryga, Rypien, Sahaydak, Saley, Shalapay, Stinsman, Thiese, Tomlinson, Wallach, Williamson, Wiselka, Wolanuk, Yanik, Yartys, Zawatka, Zmuda, Zwarun,

**Calling River families:** Monson, Smith

Lived north of river but no story: Harvey, Holownia, Hrycoy, Scott, Service, Worley

Found in newspapers, no land location: Crawford, Addison, Cooke, Millar, Clement



**GISLASON, Gisli and Margaret**

From *Reflections From Across the River, 1994, pp. 190-192 (original has several photos) (scan in Family histories)*

In the mid-1800s when the Gislason family immigrated to Canada with their children, which included nine year old Gisli, their goal was to start a new life and create opportunities for their children. The father, Reverend Oddur Vigfus Gislason, would travel the sparsely settled country baptising, confirming, marrying, and burying people who, otherwise, were deprived of these Christian rights. The family settled in Winnipeg.

The Sigurdur family arrived in Canada and parented ten children, one of which was Margaret. In a pioneer quest to adapt to their new country, Jacob Sigurdur changed the family name to Crawford. They set up a stopping house to feed hungry travellers and Jacob got involved in the Prince Albert Volunteers participating in the Reil uprising and the Battle at Duck Lake.

Years later, one Sunday morning when Reverend Gislason was conducting a service in the Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, both 24 year-old Gisli Gislason and 20 year-old Margaret Crawford were in attendance and met at the social tea party after the service.

On January 1, 1910, Reverend Gislason performed the wedding of his son, Gisli, and Margaret Crawford.

Gisli and Margaret settled in Winnipeg, he driving the horse driven taxi service and she continuing to work at her folk's stopping house.

In October they were blessed with their first born, Jacob, and two years later their first daughter, Karatas (Carrie). With two young children in tow they headed West with the intention of joining the Crawfords who had moved to Athabasca earlier. After a brief stop in Edmonton to check the employment situation they continued on to Athabasca. Gisli settled the family there briefly while he checked the possibility of settling near a lake where a commercial fishing operation would be profitable. He built a home at Buck Lake and moved the family there. In August of 1914, their third child, Margaret arrived. Pioneering had truly begun as Gisli registered a trap line and set up his fishing operation. Margaret planted a large garden and learned the art of wild berry picking and canning. In 1917, a fourth child arrived, Theodora (Edith).

Shortly after, because of a poor winter of fishing, the family moved to Calling Lake, where some of the Crawford family had settled earlier. A fifth child, Oddur Vigfus (OV) arrived in December, 1918. With five happy children in their home, Gisli brought home a baby moose that soon became a much loved family pet. Margaret was busy mothering her five children, gardening, canning, knitting, sewing as was the role of the pioneer women. Gisli had obtained one of the two telephones in the area. He was soon involved in commercial fishing, hunting, trapping, maintaining the telephone line to Athabasca, assisting the game guardian, monitoring forest fires by radioing Athabasca each day.

the family, Gisli Jr. The community grew, and soon Gisli Sr. was carrying the mail from Athabasca to Calling Lake, the first mail service to the area. Through love of family and hard work, the family flourished. Elementary school was being held in a bunk house and the older children enjoyed their own saddle horses and dog teams, Margaret arranged social gatherings in the village.

In August, 1922, the family grew to seven with the birth of Helen, and in 1924, son William (Buster) made his appearance.

After the birth of their eighth child they decided to buy a farm in the Richmond Park area where the children could attend a better school and the family could grow more vegetables and raise more animals to provide food for the family. Gisli would continue to fish at Calling Lake during the winters.

Three more children would grace their family while living in that area, Rose, born March, 1927, Lillian, born January, 1930, and Frank, born March, 1932.

At this point a larger house was necessary. Gisli homesteaded a farm in the Deep Creek area and built a large house. Gisli moved his family to the homestead (SW 07-69-21-W4), in 1933, just in time to be settled when the twelfth child, Patricia, arrived on March 17, 1934.

Jake with "Buck", the moose. Courtesy OV Gislason

Lady and Lotte were two beautiful silver foxes that Gisli had acquired and soon another venture to support his family was well underway - that of fur farming.

In August of 1920, a sixth child was added to

Gisli Gislason Sr. - Ranger/Fisheries Inspector 1936. Courtesy OV Gislason

Gisli stopped carrying the mail that year and turned that task over to his eldest son, Jacob. For the first few years he and his other sons fished commercially in the winter and cultivated the land in the summer. With some of the older daughters married or gone to work in Edmonton, Margaret took on preparing and carding wool from the sheep they raised, and knitted sweaters. For several years she and the girls knitted and sold fifty or more sweaters each winter. The family ran the local post office and for many years Gisli continued to assist the game guardian and held the position of local fire ranger, arranging crews to fight forest fires in the area.

The happy times in the big house with neighbouring farmers joining in soft ball games, skating on the slough in the winter, horse shoe games and just generally being part of a community made up of pioneering families will always hold wonderful memories for the whole family.

In 1949, because of failing health, Margaret and isli spent their first winter in Edmonton away from he home they loved so much. For many years they spent the summers at the farm and the winters in Edmonton. All the children married and had their own families.

one of the neighbours that had spent many happy times at the big house as a child.

All twelve children survived them at their death, Margaret on July 8, 1968, and Gisli on May 1, 1969, a few short months before their 60th wedding anniversary.

Pioneering was hard work and hard times but truly brought out the genius in people as they learned to use material at hand to feed and clothe their families. The simple happiness was the gathering of the community for card games, picnics or Saturday night dances in the old log school where all the family went and the mothers brought wonderful food for all. When our pioneers died, an era ended.

Gislason Family - 1960. L-R: Pat, Frank, Lil, Rose, Buster, Helen, Gisli Jr., OV, Edith, Margaret, Carrie and Jacob with parents, Gisli Sr. and Margaret. Courtesy OV Gislason

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**Page 257: Chapter 5, 1930-1939**

Page 257: Petitions continue for bridge and free ferry , and free ferry begun 1930, and a cage installed in 1934 so people and goods could be shipped during spring and fall, between river crossings and ice crossings. 1936 news article says “A population of upwards of 2,000 is marooned except for a passenger cage that runs over a ferry cable carrying three or four persons and takes about 20 minutes to do the precarious return trip.”

Page 258: Northside area, I.D. #697, renamed “Local Improvement District #122” in 1930 and Art La Porte became general foreman until 1943, working with many local residents on road making and improvement. **Work on the Calling lake road continued in the 1930s.** Gauther’s bridge, two miles north of Athabasca, burned in spring 1932 and was never rebuilt; other routes found. Stopping places included Bill and Margaret McPherson farm, about 1933-1938, along original winter road to Calling Lake. Their farm was the first as travellers journeyed south from Calling Lake.

**60-year control of homestead land by the Dominion government ended,** and power transferred to provincial governments. New regulations by summer 1931. Fee $50, $10 payable on filing and $40 when patent secured. Exceptional crops but plunging prices in 1930. In 1930 **Crawford Bros.** won Provincial Field Crop Competition for Northern AB and went on to win title for entire province.

Page 261: **agriculture.** Diseases of concern 1933 included Bangs disease (brucellosis) in cattle, sleeping sickness in horses. 1933 wind/rain made harvest hard nd some homesteaders left to work off farm; summer 1934 disastrous rain/hail destroyed crops/gardens; some **Deep Creek** residents completely wiped out.

Page 263: **Anna Margaret (Devlin) Parker** re 1930s: … **Dad fished for many winters in Calling Lake** – hauling **fish in a sleigh and living in a caboose.** Times were tough!... **Toys** were scarce, and we were allowed to cut out the slippery pictures of children, men, and women for cutouts. What fun we had with those! We always had stick horses to ride and to play Cowboys-and-Indians on. We also had swings, teeter-totters, and a merry-go-around. We swam in the slough on Grandpa Nelson’s place, and always ended up with the itch. Tony Anderson made skis for Earl, and we all used them occasionally. We treasured the few toys we had. Balloons were a favourite at Christmas…. An exciting event in our lives was the **Indians trekking past on their way to Lac Ste. Anne from Wabasca.** Sports Day, May 24, was a memorable. All that practice – running, high-jumping, relays, and softball in preparation…. I recall one year everyone was clearing land and burning muskegs. The smoke was so thick you couldn’t see ten feet… (she went to Fair Haven school, 7.5 miles from Athabasca)

Pages 266-271: **Sawmills** in the 1930s and how they operated, including mention of Bissell and Crawford; northside stores and post offices in the area. (scanned, in forestry file)

Pages 276-279: Sawmills, including G.G. Fowler’s Spruce Mills (1936+) list of settlers running commercial sawmills, **Chester Overholt** and Oscar Carlson. “Chester moved his sawmill in about 1941, to the Mill Creek area via Calling Lake road, then westward to Mill Creek. After two years, to Fred Chudoba’s farm, then to the **Calling Lake area.** After about three years, sold the mill to **Frank Crawford.**  (scanned, in Forestry file)

Page 281: **Forest fires** in 1938 throughout Athabasca area – dry spring and summer.

Page 274: Mild case of **“oil fever”** when oil found at a well 35 miles north of Athabasca – financial problems forced its closure. Also **“gold fever”** – consortium set up a mine abut a quarter mile above Six-Mile Island. Rumoured they went broke because the gold was “float” gold. They had run too much sand over the mercury used to separate the gold and lost a lot of the valuable mercury.

Pages 283-4: Home remedies

Page 286: Map of homestead entries 1906-1939.

Pages 288- : **Family stories.** Babie, Barnstorf, Blatt, Bodnar, Breau, Breslowski, Bulas, Byrtus, Carlson, Chlak, Chrusch (stopping house for trip from Calling Lake), Chudoba, Church, Cocke, Danylchuk,   
Day (**Cloe [Payne] Day** taught at **Calling Lake School** and married Jack Day there – scanned pp. 307-11, in Family histories file), Deford, DeFries, Deren, Gaba, Gamble, Garton, Geleta, Goodwin, Gora, Gorski, Gosselin, Grant, Hagen, Haines, Hillson, Hobday, Holowieski (cut logs for his first home south of **Calling Lake** and had Chester Overholt saw them into lumber for $5 a thousand board feet, then hauled them across Deep Creek, down steep hill on self-made roads, perhaps first **sawmill** on his side of **Deep Creek**, p.330), Jensen, Kachalaba, Kachorowski, Kawulok, Kephart (Grummet, McDonald), Klak, Kleiven, Kobzey, Kokolsky, Korolak, Koss, Kotyk, Kowalchuk, Krawec, Kruger, Lashuk, Lea, Leschuk, Los, Lukacz, Luzny, McCullough, McPherson, Mescouski, Mochid, Morley, Mykietowich, Nelson, Olynyk, Overholt, Peterson, Pidzarko, Pocaluyko, Porteous, Radkewich, Rhodes, Rogers, Russell, Ryan, Rypien, Saley, Santrock, Savstedt, Seymour, Shalapay, Swanberg, Switcher, Sydor, Talbert, Tann, Vance, Walton, Waslyk, Weekley, **Wiselka** (scanned, in Family histories file), Wodasch, Wolak (Meroniuk), Wolchansky, Yartys, Zahara, Zuk

Info from local papers: Brook, Darbyshire, Greenslade, Hazelwood, Jensen, Johnson, Shtokalko, Telling, Watmough, Watson, Wiliams, Makolka, Lissy

**Page 419: Chapter 6 – 1940-1949**

Page 419: Impacts of war, including National Resources Mobilization Act of June 21, 1940, national registration of August 19-21, 1940, compulsory service for home defence, freezing of farm labour, enlisting of women beginning 1941, drives for aluminum, rubber, fat (for glycerine in explosives), victory bond drives, rationing,

Pages 423-4: “Harry and Chester Webb were lucky enough to meet unexpectedly in London, England, while on separate leaves.” Photos of Harry and Chester Webb – EJ article saying “Paratrooper Harry Webb of Calling Lake” (scanned, in Military file)

Page 427: Photos and list of those from north of the river who served in the Second World War (scanned, in Military file) Victory in Europe (V-E Day) May 8, 1945; Victory in Pacific Sept. 2, 1945

Page 430: local farmers began organizing “fence-line system” party line phones

**Page 431: “Lovely Calling Lake Opened to Motorists by New Highway:** The new Calling Lake road is now passable for cars and a number of people have been up fishing and bathing in the lovely old Calling Lake, which promises to be one of Northland’s finest lakeside resorts. 150 miles straight North from Edmonton, the lake is teeming with the finest whitefish in Canada and for years large shipments have been made to New York & Chicago… Appreciation for the good work of road foreman Art Laporte, who stretched his appropriation to make the trail into a highway. Our fishermen also remember how the Edmonton trucks picked up the fish at the nets daily last winter, a convenience never before possible till the good work done on the road. Calling Lake is calling city tourists for camping, bathing, fishing and yachting de luxe.” (quoting *Athabasca Echo*, August 2, **1940)**

People who had to travel the long distance between Athabasca and Calling Lake with horses required two days to make a one-way trip. Many welcomed the stopover at **Max and Mary Shwaga’**s farm, about half way, for a time the last farmhouse along the road. After James McIntosh of Calling Lake purchased a truck, he often left it at the Shwaga arm and drove the rest of the way home with a team of horses. Some residents traveled to the Shwagas with a team and then caught a ride to Athabasca and back in the truck, returning to Calling Lake the next day.

Page 432: October 1945 meeting of Big Coulee residents called on government to take immediate action on building a bridge, but were told other areas in more urgent need. January 1947 Athabasca Board of Trade communicated, but was told entirely out of question due to extreme shortage of steel and greater urgency elsewhere.

Pages 440-446: Sawmilling in the 1940s, still “going strong” (Scanned, in Forestry file)

Brownie Holowieski describes his sawmill, the first across Deep Creek, and later sawing for others

John Byrtus Sr. purchased his first sawmill from **Charlie Bissell** about 1940, and later a bigger one from Dan Bilida. Farm permits on crown land were granted by Alberta Forest Service…

In 1943 **Frank Crawford** purchased a small sawmill from Chester Overholt, and a timber berth (special) from AFS directly north of the **Calling River bridge**, parallel to the river. Later moved several times…

Paul Wallach started 1946, still running in the mid-90s.Started as a contractor to G.G. Fowler on a berth on the **west side of Calling Lake.** Others operating near Calling Lake at times included **Rypien Brothers** 1946-1966; **Walter Artyen** 1947-1956, **Erwin Barnstorf**, about 1947-1960s, **H. Allen Richards and brother Bo** and **Tom Gorman, Charlie Seymour** 1948-1955;

Page 449-452: unusual situation of high yields and high prices in late 19840s and early 1950s, but cattle production decreased due to attractive clover prices. Move to improve stock, 1946 strike re increasing freight rates, lower prices mid 1946, various farm organizations, including co-ops.

Pages 452-3: **Moosehorn Coffee Shop,** owned and operated by **Chester and Hjordis Overholt** (Photos scanned) and their family, opened in the fall of **1948.** The coffee shop was located along the Calling Lake road on NW 08-70-22-W4 (land owned in 1990s by Craig Crawford – the buffalo pasture west of paved Highway 813). It was right along the bend in the old Calling Lake road, where it turned and ran back to Kidd’s Cabin Creek (south of later gas plant along Hwy 813). At that bend, the winter road from some sawmills met the main road. Moosehorn was built to serve the truckers hauling lumber from the area to Athabasca. **Many sawmills in the area then: Albrecht, Linvingstone, Richards, Gorman, Seymour, Barnstorf, Mikkelsen, Swanberg, Lovgren to name a few.** Also served fishermen and others who travelled to and from Calling Lake. It was named Moosehorn Coffee Shop because **someone had shot a moose at that site and left a big set of antlers there. The antlers were on display outside the café.** A **well was dug to supply fresh water.** The building was erected fall 1948. A log cabin near McCullough Lakes (used years earlier by a crew of men who cleared the roadway to Calling Lake) with a roof of logs covered with birch bark or tar paper and a layer of clay was dismantled and hauled to the coffee shop site, reassembled, a lumber and tarpaper roof put on, and made ready to serve as the shop. There was a long dining area, a kitchen, and bedrooms. On one side of the dining area was a long counter with a bench to seat about 10 people. Mrs. Overholt served full, home-cooked breakfasts, dinners and suppers. She often woke in the morning to see the distant lights of an approaching lumber truck and had fresh hot pancakes and coffee ready on the wood-burning stove by the time the truck stopped outside. Hjordis remembered making a lot of doughnuts, which seemed to be everybody’s favourite – people passing through would often buy some to take home. A full meal cost $2 to $2.25 and pie and coffee about 25 cents.

**Oscar and Martha Carlson** took over and operated Moosehorn Coffee Shop from December 31, 1949 to March 19, 1950, its final year of operation.

Page 453: **Gravel roads.** Gylvia De Ford became general road foreman in 1943, with limited funds. Things began to improve in 1944-45, with roads getting their first coat of gravel. The gravel was loaded out of the pits with fresnos pulled by horses, then loaded onto loadlifters, deposited into trucks and spread on the roads.

Page 454: The **Calling Lake Ranger Station** was **once part of the Athabasca Forest with its head office in Athabasca.** Included Wandering River, Smith, Calling Lake and Athabasca. **Dexter Champion** and **Jack MacGregor** were early superintendents of this forest district. In **1955** became **Lac La Biche Forest**.

**Bill McPherson** (who worked as a summer ranger 1943-1949) became first forest ranger stationed at Calling Lake in 1949.

**Gisli Gislason Sr**. one of first ranger/fisheries inspectors; In 1963-4, fisheries separated from lands and forests.

Page 454-456: **Traplines and natural gas exploration.** (pages scanned, in Traplines)The system of registered traplines (trapping areas) on crown land began in **1939** in extreme northern Alberta (north of the 25th baseline). Trapline registrations were extended south to the North Saskatchewan River in **1941**. Exploration in **1948** for “probable gas reserve of sixteen billion cubic feet in Athabasca area. Story of Pelican Rapids Dick Naumann who set up gas flares around his garden to ward of frost.

Pages 459-530: **Family storie**s. Anderson, Bell, Burlo, Byrtus, Chorzempa, Chrusch,   
Chudek (recalls Fish and Wildlife Inspector **Ludwig Silver** coming on skis from **Calling Lake** to inspect his trapline – also names others trapping to the north, p. 468),   
Demko, Doroshenko, Dziadosz, Fesuk, Gasiorek, Geleta,   
Gislason (scanned - see next),   
Gora (John was very good friends with Micky Monson family at **Calling River** and spent a lot of his spare time visiting them.), Gorman, Gorski, Hurst, Husak, Kavulok, Kisinski, Korolak, Kotyk, Kowalchuk, LaPorte, Lux, McKelvey, Peters, Pidzarko, Plews, Popowich, Pozniak, Prokopchuk, Reap, Rogers, Rojowski, Rypien, Sawchuk, Schwaga, Shalapay, Shwaga, Soluk, Stirling, Wallach,

Watson (Banks Watson and Delia Gambler lived at Calling Lake – pp. 524-525 scanned, in Family histories), Webb (lived in Calling Lake – pp. 525-6 scanned, in Family histories)   
Weldon, Yaramus, Zahara, Zwarun

No story but some info found: Owens, Roberts

Pages 477-478: **Gislason, Jacob and Alma by Alma (Schmelzle) Gislason.** (pp. 478-479 scanned – in Family histories) Alma was born July 3, 1919 and raised in Sawdy district, attending Youngville school. Married Jacob (Jake) Gislason April 1941. The oldest son of Gisli and Margaret (Crawford) Gislason, who had moved to Alberta and then, in early October 1917, moved from Buck Lake to Calling Lake. Jake was par tof the first school class ever held at Calling Lake, taught by Arthur Cooke in 1922. His father Gisli very involved in the building of the first log school there. In October 1931 Jake took over the mail route from his father and began delivering from Athabasca to Calling Lake. In 1927 the Gislason family moved to a farm I Deep Creek district. Jake had 11 brothers and sisters…. Jake and Alma lived in Fair Haven district, in a little home at Payne’s Coulee. Husband Jakie was a mail courier, delivering mail to many post offices north of Athabasca: Big Coulee, Richmond Park, Laura, Deep Creek, Calling Lake.

**Road to Calling Lake** was east of the present road and started at Deep Creek. Four-day return trip, hard at best – just a trail with corduroy over the muskegs. The very worst spots on the road were “improved” – the Big Muskeg, 1.5 miles across, was corduroyed but no dirt on top. Jakie mixed pine tar, creolin, creosote and grease (often bear) and smeared this on the horses to discourage flies… When the road became impassable, Jakie would leave the wagon, put the mail on the pack horse and ride to Calling Lake. Often had to pull a mired horse or wagon out of muskeg. Later by cars and trucks, Ford tractor. 1940-46 he also took mail once a month to Pelican Portage, 10-day round trip by boat or kayak I summer, or by pack and saddle horse, in winter with three ponies hitched tandem to a toboggan. Mont Kirkpatrick, then postmaster at Deep Creek, delivered to Calling Lake then. Oct 1961, he began to make trips twice a week to Big Coulee and Calling Lake. DEliverd mail to Calling Lake for 48 years. Made and sold snowmobiles, motorcycle

**Page 531: Chapter 7 – 1950-1959**

Pages 531-534: “Without a doubt, the **opening of the bridge across the Athabasca River on June 9, 1952** was a most important event in the lives of northsiders. After years of waiting, the farming community could deliver produce, carry on business, and attend functions without delay, year-round. It was predicted the northside would show tremendous progress within 10 years.“ Extensive coverage of bridge opening and construction, which had run Dec. 1, 1950 to March 31, 1952. Replaced ferry system in place since 1906. Ferry dismantled in 1951. Cable cage added April 1934.

Page 534: balanced farming.

Page 535: As farming expanded during the 1940-50s, farmers turned to **native people** to increase their labour force. Rock-picking, root-picking, stoking, threshing, loading racks, general farm work. Lived in teepees, later in old houses or granaries. Young men often worked in groups, going from farm to farm. Received milk, eggs, etc. from farmers and caught rabbits, chickens and other wild meat. Returned year after year, until mechanization resulted in less available work.

Page 537: In 1948 the province passed legislation enabling farmer-owned **Rural Electrification Associations** (REAs) to finance and own all rural distribution lines. North Athabasca REA formed December 1955.

Page 538: summer 1952 – outbreak of **polio**. Vaccine developed by Jonas Salk 1955

Page 541: By 1937 the Dominion Government Telegraph (DGT) line was no longer being used and had to be dismantled. Some bought for local telephone consortia, e.t. Athabasca Sawdy Mutual Telephone Company – finished November 1939.

Page 542: in 1920 the **telephone line going north to Calling Lake** had used the telegraph line to carry its wires. Now, 35 years later, the Richmond Park Mutual Telephone Company was once again using the Calling River telegraph line poles to carry wires from Pleasant View. In November1956, the company purchased the Calling River telegraph line – poles and all the wire – from Calling River to Bilda’s corner. Also bought all the wire as far as Athabasca. All for $225.

Pages 543-545: **Sawmill 1950s update** (scanned, in Forestry)

Pages 547-8: Construction of an airstrip on the north side of the Athabasca River, brainchild of Charles (Junior) Fix, who had various flying operations, including flying fish from northern lakes, transporting oil company personnel and moving things. Built a strip 1955-1957, aided in the end by Lawrence Ellefson. Sparked interest in flying in the Athabasca area.

**Pages 554-645 : Family stories.** Artym, Birigt, Blatt, Bodnar, Borody, Bulas,   
Bury (summers 1977 and 1978, Mary was one of 20 people who **hand-planted spruce seedlings east of Calling Lake** for Forestry. Now, in 1991, those trees are close to six feet tall.),   
Byrtus, Curveon, DeGagne, Ecker, Geleta,   
**Gislason** (Oddur Vigfous - O.V.: Dad and I continued **commercial fish at Calling Lake** during winter, camping out in a lean-to. Used a horse and caboose to haul out the fish. Dressed and frozen, they were sold to J. MacIntosh, the local fish buyer at Calling Lake for 2 and 3 cents a pound. All of us older kids travelled back to the lake in the summers to put up hay for the livestock we had accumulated on the farm, p 580.)   
**Gorski** (worked at many sawmills, including Calling River and Calling Lake),   
Haub, Hauzenberger, Kavulok, Kobzey, Kotyk, Kowalchuk, Krawek, Laferriere, Lebid, Lewis, Lovgren, McCue, McKinnon, Meyer, Murphy, Nelson, Overacker, Overholt, Ozga, Peterson, Pidzarko, Polok, Popowich, Radkevich,   
**Richards** (Allen, with brother Bob, Tom Gorman and later Charlie Seymour, bought a sawmill from Archie Ryan in spring 1948. First set up below the Gorman place and sawed spruce, hauling it over the ice in winter. Next year, they moved to “the bush” near **Calling Lake** where they sawed for the Fowler Lumber Company for two years. Allen and Bob bought out Tom and Charlie and continued to operate their mill for another four winters, one year for Archie Swanberg, two for Imperial Lumber Company and one year for themselves),   
Rojowski, Russell, Rypien, Schmelzle, Schwaga,   
**Shwaga** (Dora (Staszewski) Shwaga taught at **Calling Lake School** beginning fall 1960, living at the teacherage with four children while husband Steve managed the farm. He’d bring fresh milk mid-week and visit. Home Friday for weekends, laundry – no power or running water at Calling Lake – bought groceries. Back to Calling Lake Sunday nights. **May 1968 fires,** before spring work completed, many fires – dry, east winds, spread rapidly. When the first threatened the community of Calling Lake, we were all evacuated from the teacherages there. When school opened again, we packed up our belongings, left the teacherage and stayed full time at the farm. Began driving to Calling Lake School and enjoying their new hour full-time… **After secondary Hwy 813 to Calling Lake was paved,** I enjoyed the improved driving conditions. After 25 years of teaching at CL, received a gift of appreciation – a locally crafted moosehorn carving of a dogteam, complete with beaded rawhide harness. Taught for five years more, but worked only six months in the modern building completed in 1989 and officially opened Oct. 20, 1990 – pp. 631-2 ),   
Tarabula, Webb, Wolak, Wolanuk, Zachoda, Zolkowski

**Page 646: Chapter 8, 1960-1969**

Page 646: telephone upgrades, AGT loan and then taking over lines, going to dial-tone system. “In 1966 a contract to build a telephone line from Richmond Park Hall north as far as Gislasons was awarded to **Moosehorn Market of Calling Lake.** By end 1966, the Richmond Park Mutual had about 110 miles of two-wire line with 45 phones on three circuits – spanning form Mike Gorski’s home in the east and OV Gislason’s residence in the north, through parts of Mercury and Big Coulee, including Big Coulee Store and south as far as NW 04-68-22-W4.

Pages 654-656: 1968 fire and sawmills (scanned, in Forestry and Fire)

**Pages 659- : Family histories.** Baron, Barrett, Bury,   
**Frank Crawford** (son of Stan and Henrietta Crawford of Calling Lake: Attended log school, quit age 14 and started commercial fishing with father and brother. With a team of horses, hauled freight from Calling Lake to Athabasca when fishing was slow. Also sawmills. pp. 662-3 scanned, in Family histories),   
Deren, Doroshenko, Galus, Gorman, Haub, Heben, Jaegli, Kindt, Krawec, Maheden, Malik, Mochid, Overwater, Pacholok, Prokopchuk, Radkewich, Rogers, Senyk, Shalapay, Squire, Thomas,   
**Uchytil** (Gerald born February 1941 to Joe and Pat Uchytil of Calling Lake. Took grades 1-8 at CL, then worked in sawmills there, trapped and did commercial fishing with his dad. Married Lois Overholt in 1963. Gerald bought a truck, hauled logs and lumber in winter, gravel in summer. For several years ran a guiding outfit for non-residents with brothers and Dad. In 1976 went into partnership in Quint Oilfield Construction. Live on SE 31-66-22-W4 Lois works at Athabasca U. Children: Dale, Donnie and Ken – p690),  
Weekley, Wildfong,

**Page 692: Chapter 9 – 1970-1979**

Page 692: Amalgamation of Alberta Federation of Agriculture and Farmers’ Union of Alberta to form Unifarm in 1970, and other **agriculture** changes/advances. **Utility compan**y expansion and ownership changes – power, natural gas (County of Athabasca Gas Utility as of October 1976; Plains Western in some parts of the county).

Page 693: 1970s overproduction led to **quotas** – and farmers peddling directly to consumers.

Page 696: airstrip, 1973 flying school, **Athabasca Airport opened August 1977** 4.5 mi NE of Athabasca and old airstrip decommissioned

**Baseball.** Richmond Park Raiders part of a large league involving **Calling Lake**, Grosmont, Jewells, Wilgers, Colinton, Athabasca Aces, Athabasca Young Boys’ Club, Big Coulee Stealers. **Coach the first year was John Jacobs from Calling Lake…** team members named… During the 1980s, some of these same men formed a men’s hockey team, the Flying Farmers – played in Athabasca in the Senior Men’s League.

Page 697: **Gas and oil exploration** had slowed to a crawl in 50s and early 60w. In 1965 only seven gas wells drilled in the area, and for the rest of the decade 2 to 4 drilled yearly. By ar the greatest activity in the 1970s – 136 wells. Slowdown in 1980s.Late 1974 heavy drilling for **natural gas**

Page 698: **Forest fires of spring 1968 left a great deal of fire-killed timber.   
Frank Crawfod** purchased a large quota of this west and south of Calling Lake, bought a complete sawmill and jackladder and set the mill up by Otto Lake, west of McCullough Lakes. (main body of this portion scanned, p. 698.)… **Double R Forest Products** taken over in 1974 by Rudy Wiselka and Frank Rojowski – formerly run by the people of Calling Lake as **Calling Lake Co-operative Ltd.** Double R employed 30 to 40 persons in busy season. Ran mill from November to June or July, when they usually finished planning and selling the lumber. Most employees local, so lived at home, but a few lived in camp when the mill was in operation. Mill sold in 1992 to Tom Casey and Tom Kelly.

Page 699: **telephone.** During fall winter 1972-3, AGT installed and connected the buried cable system. Limit of four phones on one circuit, but customers heard only one ring besides their own. Residents along CL Highway received telephone service for the first time when buried cable laid through the Northern Heights area as far as Frank Crawford’s place. Buried cable not w/o problems – water seeping into lines, road construction crews and farmers cutting into lines.

Page 700: It was announced in 1974 that the **highway to Calling Lake** would be straightened, upgraded, and yes – paved! This was progress! Work started on Secondary Highway 813 in 1974, and upgrading was completed to the north edge of the county in 1978. **First 15.8 km was paved in 1976 and the next 20 km in 1983.**

Olive Fredrickson (formerly Atta Goodwin) wrote *Silence of the North* based on her life – she lived for a time at Tomato Creek. Her father, Archie Goodwin ran the stopping place, Goodwin’s Halfway House, and her brother, Lee Goodwin, was a telegraph linesman for several years. Movie made – filming in 1980, not nearby as rumoured, although several locals worked as extras.

Pages 703-741: **Family stories.** Bellamy, Boily, Boven, Braun, Byrtus, Chrusch, Danylchuk, Deren, Doroshenko, Gordey, Gorski, Guay, Haub,   
**Hendy** (Eileen (Schwaga) worked at Alberta Forestry Services and Athabasca Health Unit in **Calling Lake,** then at Athabasca Archives and Athabasca U Archives and library),   
Horning, Jensen, Jodry, Johnson, Kleinschroth, Korolak, Krawec, Lisowec, Los, McKenzie, Mihailuk/Hill, Miller, Nelson, Olsson,   
**Pearce** (William and Adeline, sons John and Colin had cabin at Calling Lake – heard of land for sale near Athabasca and purchased land in 1973 and later. Continued living in Sherwood Park, where Bill was an engineer with Interprovincial Pipe Line. Spent much of summers and most weekends on the farm, where they have a trailer. Sold some of their land and retired to Victoria BC – p. 727),   
Rein, Rypien, Steinke, Sutherland,   
Uchytil (**William (Ed) and Mary – Ed raised in Calling Lake, son of Joseph and Patricia Jen (Day) Uchytil –- more about them below),**Wallach, Webb, Whitford, Wilger, Williamson,   
**Wolanuk** (John worked for Steve Pidzarko at a sawmill near **Calling Lake**. For two winters felled timber with Mike Bodnar for Ellefson Sawmill at Calling Lake, then sawed for Steve Pidzarko, Brownie Zilinski,   
**Frank Crawford** and **Frank Rojowksi** – P. 736),   
Woodhouse, Zachoda, Zahara, Zolkowski

Pages 731-2: Frank and Mary (Trunka) **Uchytil** were born in Bohemia and later immigrated to the United States. He was the sixth member of a family of 13. They moved to Alberta, settling west of Athabasca when Joseph was five years old. The family moved back to the US, but **Joseph** returned to Alberta when he was 19 years old andsettled at **Calling Lake.**

Patricia **Day** was born in Calgary in August 1917, **daughter of Chester Reid “Buffalo” Day**, who was of English descent and born in 1884 in New Brunswick, and Mary Agnes (McKay) Day, who was born in Scotland. Patricia was the third oldest of a family of eight. Chester Reid and Mary Agnes Day met and married in Vancouver and moved to a ranch in Hanna, Alberta. Two other children, Jim and Jack, were born in Calgary. They later moved to Saskatchewan, where “Buffalo” Day worked as a customs officer for several years. Five more children born: Bill, Dick, Harriet, Phyllis, Bob. They moved to New Brunswick and in 1927, when Patricia was 10 years old, they moved to Calling Lake. Here, Patricia and Joseph met and married in June 1934, had five children.

Joe did trapping, mink ranching, commercial fishing, some farming and later worked for Forestry during fire season and as a big game licensed guide. **Joe and “Buffalo” Day were instrumental in establishing a road between Calling Lake and the main road.** They surveyed 30 miles of the main road. Work on this road was done manually and completed in 1933.

Their **son Ed** was raised at Calling Lake and went to school there, taking correspondence for two years under tutorship of his mother. Started grade school at age 8. At 15, began working for Ellefson Lumber as a caterpillar operator, skidding logs for the sawmill. Later worked for other sawmill operators and began to work as a heavy duty equipment operator on road construction for different contractors.

In 1969, his father, Joseph, his brother Gerald and Ed started big game guiding during the fall, which they did for six years. In 1975, Ed became a partner in Quint Holdings Ltd. – a road and oilfield construction business.

**Page 741: Chapter 10, 1980-1989**

Page 741: After strong end to 1970s (aided by boards, quotas, price regulations), acute economic instability developed in the 1980s. Many farmers quit or needed off-farm income. Other enlarged.

Page 741-2: Planning for construction of another **crossing at Deep Creek** began in 1980, and work began August 1981.

Al (Boomer) Adair announced in April 1987 that **Calling Lake and Wabasca would be linked with a direct road,** 170 km, partly result of lobbying, including a 75-vehicle caravan from Athabasca to Wabasca to present a petition for all-weather road to Sandy Lake. 170-km. *Athabasca Advocate* April 21, 1987 quoted Adair saying road should be ready for full travel by early 1990s and possibly winter road in use earlier.

Page 743: **Tornado. Friday, June 29, 1984** – devastated parts of the north side, injuring people and downing buildings in Big Coulee and Richmond Park, timber, campground, power poles. Mennonites from various parts of Alberta helped with cleanup.

Page 745: Further north on Secondary Highway 813, **Frank Crawford and his sons** decided to try their hand at alternative livestock. **FJ Buffalo Ranch** was started in the spring of 1984, owned and operated by Craig and Chris Crawford, west of the highway on 08-70-22-W4. A “lazy rail” fence encloses the buffalo pasture, built of rails 24 ft long laid in a zig-zag pattern. No fence posts. 8 ft high, four miles in length. Took six men about 3 months to complete. Outside the rail fence is a wire fence enclosing a pasture for ranging horses, which keep the grass down around the perimeter and cut down on fire hazard. The ranch started with 120 head of yearling and two-year-old heifers and cows as well as 12 bulls from Nilsson Livestock at Clyde. Eat 40% of beef cow, use snow for water, stand cold well. (Page 746 describes more about raising buffalo.)

Page 746-8: **Northside businesses.** Greenhouse Northside sand, gravel and pipeline service operations, in “one of the few actively-drilled gas fields in the province.”Greenhouse, woodworking, attempt to launch Athabasca Agro-Power Association to develop $90 milion Athabasca Charcoal Manufacturing Plant to produce cattle feed – did not come to be. Foundry, elk farming (Dale and Pat Braun, Sawdy), oil and gas services,

Page 751: **ladies’ fastball.** Richmond Park Razzers, 1983-1987, played in **Calling Lake** and elsewhere nearby. Athabasca Ladies’ Fastball Fun League included **Calling Lake.** Some continued playing “in the newest form of baseball – slowpitch.”

Pages 752-3: **Elk transplant** by Athabasca Fish and Game Assn. Between January 16 and February 27, 1981, nine trips with ruck and horse trailer transported 29 bull elk and three females to **Amadou Lake** area northeast of Calling Lake, where released into the wild. Had been caught in baited corrals from overpopulated Elk Island National Park. For safety, lightly tranquilized and antlers, which usually drop by end February, were removed. Each ear-tagged and fitted with bright-coloured collar, some with radios for tracking. The next winter, Feb 5 and 12, 1982, Athabasca Fish and Game Assn and Fish and Wildlife Division together transported 50 elk to the Pelican Mountain drop site, about 30 miles north of Calling Lake, where an eight-foot-high holding pen had been assembled. Each load of elk bedded, fed and watered for 72 hours, then released, thus encouraged to stay together and remain in the area until oriented. The holding pen then taken apart and moved to Amadou Lake and reassembled in preparation for 25 elk transplanted March 15. Of the 75 animals, 54 female, 21 bulls, about 30 fitted with radio collars and monitored by Fish and Wildlife for a year. Some had come from Elk Island, others from Pincher Creek area of southern Alberta, where they had been a nuisance to farmers’ haystacks. A great deal of interest in the 1982 project by Fish and Gam, Fish and Wildlife and visitors. Northsiders donated labour, some helping to feed the elk at both sites. Athabasca Fish and Game Assn received several awards for the program, including the Order of the Bighorn from Alberta govt.

Page 753: **Richmond Park Volunteer Fire Department,** organized February 1982, covered five miles north of Athabasca, **north into ID #17, which includes the Frank Crawford farm**. And toward the Athabasca River east and west.

Page 754: **North Athabasca Crime Watch** includes all areas north of Athabasca River. Since 1984

Page 756: Farms becoming larger, many went into cattle, more farm women worked off farm, mixed farming all but disappeared. Gas and oil activity north of river increased. Farmers wanting computer hookups. In 1988 AGT announced rural Alberta would receive private phones at cost of $560/subscriber.

Victor Wolanuk: “The coming of the buried cable put an end to the **singing wires heard on cold winter days.** Anyone who lived near a telephone line, or walked on a road alongside a telephone line, will recall the sound made by the crunching of boots on a cold night and the hissing, ringing, and singing of the wires. The colder the temperature, the louder the singing of the wires. It would make one stop and listen to this mysterious sound. Then, on a stormy night when a blizzard would be blowing in full force, one could hear the ghostly whistle of the wind against the wires and past the cracks in the poles. Another rural landmark that for years had criss-crossed the country for many miles disappeared with the removal of the poles and lines.”

Page 756: “The end of the decade was marked by the **opening of the Wabasca-Calling Lake road on Sept. 23, 1989.”** Distance from Athabasca to Wabasca on Secondary Highway 813 was now 180 km, improving access for tourism, forestry and the oil and gas industry

Pages 758-798 : **Family stories.** Baker, Bandola, Bennett, Borody, Byrtus, Chernish, Costa, **Crawford – Chris and Craig, sons of Frank and Eileen (FJ and Toots)** (Chris and Lynette (Peredery) had a western wedding on the buffalo pasture at the Crawford family recreation area. Chris was raised north of the river, where he farms. Has two older sisters and an older brother. Now live where, as a young boy, he built tree houses. Have two daughters, Kelsey and Kandice. Chris hauls logs in winter and operates a backhoe in summer. With brother Craig, operates buffalo ranch begun in January 1984. “The family really appreciate the buffalo and people who drive north of the river on the Calling Lake Highway enjoy looking at them.” Also raises orphan buffalo calves, a little hobby that gives daughter Kelsey a part-time job.( (Craig started school in Calling Lake, continued in Athabasca, graduated 1975 and worked with his dad in construction, first on the Calling Lake highway. 1985 bought a tandem truck and started working in Dad’s sawmill, hauling logs and lumber. Haul gravel in slow times. Work as a sawyer at Dad’s sawmill and help maintain buffalo ranch),

Demko, Dietzen, Duniece, Filion, Geleta, Giesbrecht & Byrtus,

Golonka (Richard and Paulette [Kavulok] – she was raised on a mixed farm 10 miles north of Athabasca and says: I always looked forward to summer vacation as we went to the Edmonton Exhibition, **spent two weeks at Calling Lake** and took swimming lessons at Baptiste Lake.),

Gora, Gorski, Griffin, Haines, Haley, Haub, Hrycun, Jensen, Kapelari, Kerbes, Killinger, Kisinski, Kowalchuk, Krawec,

Lemay (Louis and Kathleen, who took early retirement from city jobs to spend more time in the country and travel a little. In October 1981, acquired land on the south edge of Improvement District 17, just east of 813. In 1986 started building on SE 04-70-22-W4. Fpund pieces of old-style dishes and pans, part of a coal oil lamp and a small rubber lift form a shoe. By coincidence, had cleared where someone had lived a long time ago. – page 780),

McDonald, Mikalunas and Robinson, Morrison, Nelson, Neville & Kisinski, Overholt, Pellan, Polok, Popowich, Richards, Richardson, Schmelzle, Schmidtke, Schultz, Shalapay,

**Shwaga** (Kenneth and Connie – Connie, born 1954, eldest of four children born to Frank and Eileen Crawford – younger sister Carol, younger brothers Craig and Chris. To Calling Lake School Grades 1-6 while living at Crawford Beach Resort, owned by grandparents Stanley and Henrietta Crawford. It was great living at the beach! We learned to swim like fish and had an unlimited number of playmates during the summer holidays, when people would come to stay at the resort. In the winter, we would trap squirrels to make extra spending money. My sisters and I would take turns packing our little brother Craig, so he could take the squirrels out of the traps for us. In 1966, the family moved to farm 25 miles north of Athabasca and continued schooling in Athabasca, then to NAIT in Dietary Technology),

Stashko, Tchir & Schoeppe, Wagner, Webb, Wintonyk, Wiselka,

**Woodbury** (Clair and Mary – bought 80 acres north of Athabasca just after Mary Woodbury wrote vast amounts of material for AB Advanced Ed re proposed move of Athabasca U to the town),

Young, Zahara

**Page 799: Chapter 11, 1990-1993**

Page 799: International subsidies have pushed grain prices down to below $2/bushel. Lower oilseed prices, higher fuel costs, property taxes, machine and labour costs – many farmers turn to government programs and services, including the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation, Alberta Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance.

Page 800: high stress, bankruptcies, elevators slated to close in 1994, small farmer all but gone, yet great need for people on the land, ril line lost in 1989,

Page 801: **Changes in forestry.** Mass production, higher labour costs,

In 1990, because of a shortage of available lumber quotas, **Crawford’s Sawmill** had to remain a relatively small operation, choosing instead to diversity and manufacture metric squared timber for which there was a better dollar value in current markets. A Randle sawmill, a Pendue sawmill, and a bucking station were purchased.

The trees were processed differently (scanned Page 801, with more detail about Crawford’s)

Pages 801-803: updates on utilities, gravel pits,

Page 803: **New bridge across Athabasca River opened Sept. 1, 1993**. – Pleasant View Road, off Secondary Hwy 813 going east, was started in 1989 by County of Athabasca. Some of Frank Crawford’s equipment used. In 1992, the road was completed to the Calling Lake Connector Road (log haul route to AlPac) – 13 miles from the highway. Final portion built by Dept of Transportation and Utilities, Athabasca. It is one mile beyond the end of Pleasant View Road to the new bridge over the Athabasca River.

Pages 806-798 : **Family stories.** Christensen, Couturier, Cruthers, Day, Eherer, Hall, Holt, Johnston, Kanzig, MacGregor, Pacholok, Rymer,

**Shwaga** (Gerald Shwaga & Tammy Pichota – Gerald is fifth of seven children born to Steve and Dora – lived at Calling Lake teacherage with Dora and later rode back and forth each day from farm until Grade 4, when joined older siblings busing to Athabasca. Left HS in Gr 11 and operated heavy equipment for road construction, building leases and logging roads; also several years on rigs as roughneck and motorman, helping on the farm spring and fall, etc. IN summer 1990 bought a trailer and moved it to parents’ farm. Family moved in by fall, while he was working for Prairie Road Builders),

Smith, Soluk

**Pages 814-875: Appendix I – Education**

On quick scan, appendices do not seem to include Calling Lake.

Appendix I does describe typical early school beginning and growth.

Page 815: Photo of log cabin school at Calling River.

Page 825: Northside School Districts, 1968 (scanned map)

**Pages 876-887: Appendix II – Churches**

**Pages 886-891 : Appendix III – Cemeteries**

**Pages 892-893: Appendix IV – Topics and Researchers**

**Page 894: Appendix V – People who live/have lived north of the Athabasca River but no story obtained**

**Pages 896-7: County of Athabasca No. 12, 1992 map** (scanned map)

**Pages 899-908: Topical Index**

**Pages 909-915: Individuals/Families Index**