



**Jasper-Yellowhead
Museum & Archives**

Jasper Story

Over 50 years ago, as part of Alberta's Jubilee Celebration, the Jasper's Chamber of Commerce commissioned Edmonton playwright Elsie Park Gowen to write a script for "The Jasper Story". It was an all Canadian production;

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written, produced, directed and acted by Canadians. Over 100 Jasper residents traveled to Edmonton for a marathon session at Sunwapta Broadcasting Studios to record the soundtrack for the production. A cast of residents and summer employees performed the musical for thousands of visitors over ten nights each July, from 1956-60.

Described as a "The Great Musical Historama", The Jasper Story was directed by Jack McGrath and performed on a stage under the stars at the Palisades. The cast included 60 performers, a dozen horses, and sets designed by Phyllis Jeffery. Performed in two acts, the play was narrated by "The Guide", representing the spirit of discovery and adventure, and traced Jasper's history from the era of the fur trade to the coming of the railway. The characters included Michael Klyne and Governor Simpson c1825, August and Catherine Schubert c1862 and Mary Schaffer and the Swifts c1908. Many of Jasper's residents, including Carl Birks, Fred Kofin and Hank Penner lent their talents to the production. Almost twenty years later The Jasper Story was resurrected by Crater Theatre and moved to a new location near Whistler Campground. It ran in that location from 1976-81.

Here is part of a song from a scene with Mary Schaffer and Billy Warren singing a duet:
"Yes, there's going to be a town in Jasper Valley
There's going to be a town in Jasper Park
There'll be chickens, there'll be roosters
There'll be bears employed by Brewsters
And birds around will sure include the stork!
A population here
Part of a nation here
And transportation here... by G.T.P.
Then every engineer
Will be a mountaineer
And drive his six white horses to the sea!
Build the grade
Lay the tracks
Hear the trains... wooo... wooo..."
They don't write songs like that any more!

Thanks to funding from the Alberta Museums Association, the Jasper-Yellowhead Museum & Archives now has a website.