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Abasand

Today Abasand is a residential community on the west side of Fort McMurray high on a hill overlooking the city. Originally the community of Abasand started with the workers who were operating the Abasand Oils Ltd. Company.

The Canadian Northern Oil Sand Product Ltd. later known as the Abasand Oils Ltd. started producing oil in the Horse River valley in September 1936 (OSDC website 2007a). The plant operated for five years when a fire destroyed the powerhouse. The plant was rebuilt and continued to operate until 1945 when yet another fire devastated the plant (OSDC website 2007a). The plant was never operational again even though several attempts were made. Today, the Oil Sands Discovery Centre conducts guided tours of the original site along the Horse River during the summer.

During attempts to drill for oil the Northern Alberta Exploration group located salt deposits at the mouth of the Horse River (Huberman 2001). In 1925 the Alberta Salt Company set up a commercial salt plant behind Abasand on the Horse River (FMHS 2007). The salt plant produced salt for two years then closed due to transportation costs (FMHS 2007).



Abasand Refinery Boiler Plant 1942

Source: University of Alberta Archives (image 85-22-008)
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