

Qu'Appelle Valley: Sask. best kept secret



The Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan's best-kept secret, is as hauntingly beautiful as the legend from which this unique land form takes its name.

According to "The Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition" published in 1860 in London, England and based on journals by Henry Youle, the Qu'Appelle Valley's name is founded on Indian legend.

That legend tells the bitter-sweet story of an Indian brave who was paddling his canoe to a far-off village to visit his sweetheart. As he paddled the river he heard a faint voice crying his name. "Who calls?" the brave asked in the Cree language. The Cree word for "who calls" is "kahtapwao". The brave heard only the echo of his own voice. Again he called but got another echo as a response.

The brave continued his journey throughout the night and as he entered the encampment of his sweetheart, he learned his loved one had died the previous evening.

But before she went to "The Land of the Souls" she called his name and it was her voice the brave had heard.

"Who calls" or "kahtapwao" was translated into French, the commonly-spoken language of the fur trade, and became "Qu'Appelle", the name that remains to this day.

Millions of years ago this province was covered by volcanic mountains but over the eons, and several ice ages, glaciers advanced and receded across the landscape. As the last glacier

receded 18,000 years ago, meltwater carved great valleys, one of which became the Qu'Appelle.

The recession of the glaciers resulted in the arrival of people from present-day Russia, across the Bering Strait, into North America thousands of years ago. The first inhabitants of the Qu'Appelle arrived 3,000 years ago.

Over the centuries they adapted to the land, surviving on the vast buffalo herds, along with resources of smaller game, fish and wild plants.



It was not until the 18th century that white men first set eyes on the beautiful Qu'Appelle Valley. Pierre de la Verendrye, a French explorer, traveled over much of this part of North America and is credited with being the first European to see the plains.

There followed many travelers, drawn by a sense of adventure and by the seemingly limitless wealth of furs. Fur trader journals first mention the Qu'Appelle Valley in 1804 when the North West Company and later the Hudson Bay Company were active

traders in the area.

The fur trade played an integral role in the settlement of the Valley and area, and several decades later an influx of European settlers broke the land. They launched the agriculture industry that's so important a part of the area.

Lakes with exciting fishing, swimming and boating opportunities, golf courses, nature hikes and facilities that provide a unique brand of Western hospitality beckon travelers to share with us the beauty and wonder of the Qu'Appelle Valley.

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