

Call of the wild



A volley of shots rang out, piercing the stillness of a September afternoon. Consternation, anxiety, then relief as we remembered the ancient Athabaskan Indian legend of Red Dog Mountain – the big cliff we had just passed. For centuries, native boatmen have fired first arrows and later guns at the mountain to scare off the malevolent spirit who used to seize and drown moosehide canoes. The Indian hunters from Fort Norman whom we had seen four days ago back at the Caribou Flats must be right behind us.

A tourist's diary, Keele River.

Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, Ontario

Since European settlers first arrived in Canada during the seventeenth century, the Indians and other native peoples have played an important part in opening up the country's trade and communications routes. Their knowledge of the trails and canoe routes into the interior was invaluable as they helped to establish the all important fur trade.

Today this same knowledge of the land allows native Canadians to advance another trade: tourism. Their unique blend of cultures and special sensitivity to wildlife is ideal for the organisation of outdoor activities and wilderness adventure holidays.

For those enjoying these pursuits, it creates an authentic experience of the wild... the opportunity to drive and handle dog sled teams in Canada's far north or observe the largest stand of totem poles in the abandoned village of Ninstints on the Queen Charlotte Islands... a relaxing evening around a campfire listening to local Indian storytellers recount the legends of the Tlingit, Tagish and other west coast cultures... canoeing, fishing and watching the migrating caribou herds under instruction of a native guide... these are the forms of activities which will suit the amateur anthropologist and environmentalist, as well as outdoor enthusiasts searching for a new 'unpacked' holiday experience. These are the activities native Canadians organise for visitors from overseas with an intimacy with nature.

How would you, for instance, like an *Overnight Trip by Dog Team*, (48 hours) over a high mountain pass to an alpine lake? Camp out overnight, surrounded by stunning mountains and dazzling snow peaks...this is another world from the urban

rat race. Or, a two-week stay at a trapper's log cabin where you can cook your own meals or use the facilities of a nearby wilderness lodge? Activities include snowshoeing, skidooing, ice fishing, skiing and many other winter sports. It is even possible to join a trapline run by a dog team. This is a holiday with every possible variety of adventure. But for the truly intrepid you can take to the Yukon wild for three months learning how to maintain your dog team at your remote cabin or camp. You can live alone at times if you wish and alternatively join in with the daily life of a trapper family. This is a total education in winter wilderness living offered by Sky High Wilderness Ranches of Whitehorse, Yukon.

If the history of native cultures is more your interest, then a visit to Brantford, 104 kilometres southwest of Toronto, is on the agenda. The city took its name from a Mohawk Indian captain, Joseph Brant, who brought the Six Nations Indian Confederacy here from Upper New York State after the War of Independence. This area has many associations with the Six Nations and you should not miss the Six Nations Council House at Ohsweken, with its library and vast collection of information on native Canadians, also, the Woodland Cultural Centre which aims to preserve and promote the culture and heritage of native people from the Eastern Woodlands. Held each August in an outdoor amphitheatre in a forest setting is an important theatrical performance with an all-native cast. Commemorating their history and culture the Six Nations Native Pageant also features Iroquois dancing, arts, crafts and native foods.

16th Century Huron

At Midland, also in Ontario, you will find a full-scale replica of a typical 16th century Huron community, consisting of longhouses and other structures surrounded by wooden palisades. Further sites with a Huron connection are Martyrs' Shrine and Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, a detailed reconstruction of the first European community in Ontario with guides and costumed craftsmen who explain the life of the Huron people and the missionaries.

Nearby at Woodview is Petroglyphs Provincial Park. Here you can see images carved on crystalline limestone rock 500 to 1000 years ago by Algonquian speaking Indians. The petroglyphs, rediscovered in 1954, are contained in a rectangular area 70 feet by 40 feet, enclosed in a unique protective building.

Museums and sites of historical interest abound in Ontario and all are within half a days drive from Toronto, the main gateway city.

If native Canadians in a French atmosphere is more to your liking, then head for Quebec. For the second year running the Montagnais of Lac Saint-Jean and the Cree of Abitibi are helping organise, and participating in Harricana, a long-distance snowmobile rally which is held from February 24 to March 7 this year. But if adventure expeditions including transportation, food and lodging in the Amerindian fashion, have their appeal, the

