



Place Names

Marquis Hole

Marquis Hole (pronounced “Mar’ki”) is not a formal name but it has endured as a place name thanks to park signage which indicates a picnic site by that name.¹ It is an historic moniker for a spot at the south end of the Dardanelles where the Middle Lake flows into that short reach of the Waterton River and on to the Lower Lake. The name relates to a multi-year visitor of European nobility.²

The Marquis Nicolo degli Albizzi, along with his cousin Duke Dimitri of Leuchtenberg,³ visited Waterton on extended trips for successive years, circa 1927 to 1931, setting up camp at the southeast shore of the Dardanelles.⁴ The Marquis was said to have been a Russian nobleman in 1914 who moved to Italy where he was given his title.⁵

Frank Goble, who moved to the park with his parents and siblings in 1927 at about the age of 10, much later wrote about the Marquis D’Albizzi and what he’d learned. In a letter to the editor of *The Lethbridge Herald* he noted: “The camp was set up more in the style of a high-class African safari camp than the usual type of camp found at that time in the Canadian Rockies: large cook tent, dining tent, a chef, individual sleeping tents, cots, mattresses, sleeping bags, sheets, pillows, fancy silverware, glassware, dishes, etc. There were several boats available [for guests], bath tents for both male and female guests, tents for outhouse facilities, saddle and pack horses, guides and wrangler. There was even a diving board on the east bank of the big pool...where guests who wished to swim could do so. This pool has since become known as the ‘Marquis’s Hole.’



Marquis Hole is at the start of the outlet of Middle Waterton Lake known as the Dardanelles. This photo was taken looking southwest. (Photo: Ryan Peruniak).

“Supplies and guests were brought in on the old road that crossed the mouth of the Maskinonge at its junction with the river...through the trees where the present Stony

Creek trail runs and then across Stony Flats to the camp. The camp clientele consisted mostly of wealthy people from Europe.”⁶

Nellie Hunter Goble Hadfield, Goble’s sister-in-law, who came to Waterton at the age of seven in 1916, recalled the Marquis as being “... a tall, slim man about middle age with a precise military bearing. He had a large handlebar mustache that came straight out sideways from his upper lip, tips pointed up and were waxed. He always wore a fringed buckskin jacket. When he came uptown he was usually accompanied by some of his guests....The camp was in operation for several years. While he still had the camp there, the local residents began calling the big pool nearby at the [inlet] of the river, the Marquis’s Hole,” Goble wrote.

According to a 1931 newspaper item, those who chose to camp at the south end of the Dardanelles had access to a deep fishing hole and a sandy beach where they could to retain their privacy. “It is gratifying to think that the noblemen, used to the classic scenery of the old world, would find Waterton beautiful enough in which to camp for six months,” wrote *The Lethbridge Herald* reporter of the day. The story said the Marquis and Duke had about 16 friends visiting the camp in July and more were expected later. The group took long trips on well-bred horses used for jumping, racing and trail riding trips as well as equestrian games. “Water sports are also popular and as well as swimming; they travel in kayaks, which are boats made of skin, used by the Eskimos. The kayaks are propelled by a double paddle or sail and are quite speedy when handled properly.”⁷

After D’Albizzi vacated Waterton for good, local residents continued to call his campsite “Marquis Hole.” He moved on to other mountain resorts in Canada—both in the east and west—to pursue his interest in skiing, a skill which he had honed prior to the First World War and excelled at.⁸ Popular interest in skiing was growing at the time and had caught the fancy of thousands.⁹ D’Albizzi inspired the construction of Assiniboine Lodge by the Canadian Pacific Railway and had been involved in the Lake Placid Ski Club in New York from the early 1920’s.¹⁰



Marquis degli D’Albizzi, right with Arnulf Polsen at Lake Placid, New York, 1926. (Photo New England Ski Museum)

One other story of him in the southern Alberta area involved a scheme with Pat Brewster to purchase horses from local ranchers during the early days of World War II and ship them to the battle fields of France.¹¹

Development of the Marquis Hole as a park picnic site was completed in 1961, 2.6 kilometres from the park entry road. An open shelter was built and stoves and tables were provided for public use.¹² It became a favorite visitor location for the same reason it had attracted the Marquis: relative privacy, good fishing and sandy shores for bathers.

The changing course of Blakiston Creek over the last several years created by spring time flooding has repeatedly damaged the road to Marquis Hole preventing vehicular access all the way to the picnic site. In 1998 an angry crowd of about 75 people gathered at the site and expressed their objection to the partial closure of the road by vehicle. Waving protest signs to express their displeasure, the crowd, complete with a bull horn, shouted angry questions for about an hour to Derek Tilson, park warden, and Ken Walker, front country manager, who were present to lead a walking tour of the area in light of the road closure. In an effort to come to a workable compromise, the two park employees asked that three members of the crowd be selected to represent everyone and to meet with Josie Weninger, park superintendent, who promised a decision would be made within a few hours. The meeting took place that afternoon in her office and she agreed to open the road.¹³ In later years with repeated spring flooding, which swelled the creek and eroded the roadway again and again, nature was allowed to take its course and the road and the picnic site were closed.

The name Marquis Hole is still in use and the waters and surroundings as pleasant still as when Nicolo Albizzi, Duke Dimitri and their guests first camped there.



¹ The road to Marquis Hole is closed to motorists indefinitely due to damage done by high water.

² Although the Marquis of Lorne, Canada's fourth Governor General (1878-1883) visited the area in the late 1800s and a park warden named Henry Marquis worked in Waterton, neither of these people are the object of this name.

³ E. John B. Allen, "Nicolo degli Albizzi: Expert, Jester, Maverick", Journal of the New England Ski Museum, Issue Number 98, Fall 2015, 9. WLNP, Box 130, Item 7.

⁴ D'Albizzi and company's choice to camp speaks to their spirit of adventure and perhaps desire for privacy. The new and then-elegant Prince of Wales Hotel with its many amenities and services opened in 1927 and was quickly building a reputation for the highest standards, comparable to those anywhere in the mountain parks. Yet this party chose to camp, out of view of others.

⁵ "Wonderful Waterton," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 20, 1931. Box 130, Item 7.

⁶ Frank Goble, "Who Has Taken a Dip in the Marquis's Hole," *Lethbridge Herald*, October 7, 1993, 4. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 7.

⁷ "Wonderful Waterton," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 20, 1931. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 7.

⁸ E. John B. Allen, "Nicolo degli Albizzi: Expert, Jester, Maverick", 4.

⁹ "Sixty Years of Sport," *Lethbridge Herald*, June 1, 1927, 3: Issued by the national committee for the celebration of the diamond jubilee of Confederation, 106 Wellington Street, Ottawa. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 7.

¹⁰ E. John B. Allen, "Nicolo degli Albizzi: Expert, Jester, Maverick", 7.

¹¹ Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Pat Brewster Fond M2-81 (recollections of Albizzi for a book by Brewster called Wild Cards, 1982. WLNP, Box 130, Item 7.

¹² "Popular Fishing Spot to be Made Picnic Site," *Lethbridge Herald*, Jan. 26, 1961, 5. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 7.

¹³ Chris Morrison, "Marquis Hole Road to Reopen," *Lethbridge Herald*, Aug. 22, 1998, 4. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 7.