

August 18, 2019

Cormier-Village, New Brunswick
Congres Mondial Acadien
1pm

Cormier-Village is a short scenic drive from Moncton, New Brunswick. The village hosted a large crowd for the Mi'kmaq and Acadian gathering, with a standing room only crowd in attendance.

Outside of the gathering, the Canadian wilderness was being held at bay by an aging fence. Giant wildflowers fought for sunlight following a morning shower during their short growing season. Returning to the conference center, the chief of the Mi'kmaq Native Americans, Stephen Augustine, (pictured below) was being interviewed by a television crew.



He told of the long-standing 400-year bond of friendship that the Mi'kmaq Native Americans and the Acadians have shared. He briefly explained the Mi'kmaq creation story and of the first man they called Klus-Kap (pronounced as *gloos-cap*), who was created from the sand of Mother Earth, Wsitqumu'k (pronounced as *oo-sit-gah-moo*), and three bolts of lightning.



Sitting at the conference table on stage were (above, left to right) University of Moncton Prof. Maurice Basque, Chief Stephen Augustine, Mi'kmaq Elder Donna Augustine, Dr. Stephen White, and Acadian historian Ronnie-Gillis Leblanc. Before beginning, Augustine burned some sage and tobacco to cleanse the soul, recited a prayer from her ancestors, and offered up the branch of a white pine as a symbolic gesture of friendship to the Acadians. This token was intended to remind us that the First Nation people prepared white pine-needle tea for the newly-arrived Acadians sickened after their long journey across the Atlantic Ocean to settle the colony of Acadia in the New World. Augustine's son came onstage and sang a moving traditional Mi'kmaq song while playing his hand-held drum (pictured below).



Chief Augustine began the discussion about continued efforts at reconciliation for both the Acadians and the Mi'kmaq. He explained how both have lost some of their culture and language

and must work together to rekindle their combined heritage. He explained how the Mi'kmaq shared their food and taught the Acadians how to survive in the wilderness. In the cold months of winter, the Mi'kmaq also shared their women with the Acadians to keep them warm, help them cook food, and eventually to birth their babies, babies that the Acadian priests would not acknowledge. Thus began the story in 1604 of how these two cultures became intertwined forever.

The Acadian historian Ronnie-Gilles Leblanc discussed how many present-day Acadians come from the mixed union of Mi'kmaq and Acadian people. The historian Maurice Basque remarked how there was a break in their relationship in the nineteenth century because of the assimilation of Acadians into popular culture.

The conference was a stark reminder of how important the friendship of the peoples of the First Nation was to the survival of the Acadians—both in Canada and later in Louisiana. All presenters suggested that it is important to foster this relationship once again so that they can work together to strengthen their cultures.

Moncton, New Brunswick
Congres Mondial Acadien
Louisiana Pavillion
3pm



The Extreme Frontier tent, also know as the Louisiana Pavilion, had a lot going on including lectures by Warren Perrin on the New Acadia Project (seeking to find the lost Acadian settlement in South Louisiana), Zachary Richard (pictured above), and Mary Perrin (healing traditions). Following the talks was an energetic performance by the Blake Miller Extreme Frontier Trio (pictured below).



The evening line up at the CMA stage was Emile Billeaudeau (pictured below), Menoncle Jason, and Joey Robin Havhé and Maggie Savoie.



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