

Nimham Memorial Recognizes War Hero

Andrew Vitelli | Aug 21, 2013 |



The 13th annual Daniel Nimham Intertribal Pow-Wow was held last weekend.

More than two-dozen tribes came together this past weekend to celebrate their culture—and remember a long gone war hero.

Both Saturday and Sunday, Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park hosted the 13th annual Daniel Nimham Intertribal Pow-Wow, welcoming hundreds to take part in Native American traditions and festivities. With constant events and activities throughout the weekend, tribes from all over the Northwest came together to memorialize a Revolutionary War hero who died in action.

There was intertribal dancing that was performed to the beat of thunderous drums, and flute playing from Native American Grammy winner Joseph Fire Cracker. Tributes and storytelling was also part of the two-day event, with vendors displaying Native American trinkets and other items.

Hosted by the Nimham Mountain Singers, one of the organizers, Gil Tarbox said he is always encouraged seeing people from around the region attend and learn more about Native American culture.

Tarbox even goes around putting signs of the event in Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess County as a way to spread the word.

“That’s the important part. Get the people to participate with us,” Tarbox, a Putnam County resident said. “And that way they have a better time. That’s why I don’t have a rope around my circle. I want people to come in and have a good time.”

Evan Pritchard of the Micmac people and an author and founder of The Center for Algonquin Culture said he finds the Pow-Wow as an opportunity to educate people about the heritage of the Wappinger, a confederacy of Native Americans who lived in the region.

On Saturday when he spoke, he asked all the people in the crowd to say “Maruit rankontin,” which means “Let us make peace” something the Wappinger used to say.

The Wappinger had a presence in the 17th century, but Pritchard believes that the confederacy dissolved out of the region during the Civil War era, though he admits different historians argue different time frames.

"It's just not something you can go to a store and read a book on," Pritchard said. "People have to come to this Pow-Wow and ones like it in order to learn about Wappinger culture. They have to happen to find a Wappinger descendent which there are very few in this region."

While nothing is formally organized in Putnam, Pritchard said over his 11 years attending he has met many Wappinger descendents that come to the Pow-Wow and talk to other Wappinger people.

But ultimately, the weekend is meant to memorialize Nimham. Nimham fought during the Revolutionary War and was killed by British loyalists.

After him, his son Abraham and 50 of their fellow Wappinger were surrounded, they were killed in the Battle of Kingsbridge, under the order of British Lt. Colonel Simcoe.

When surrounded, Pritchard believes, though open to interpretation, Nimham said, "Let me die here like an old tree."

"It's really important that we honor them," Tarbox added. "That we build a monument at the beginning of the park. The Wappinger Memorial for the Wappinger Indians in the Hudson Valley."



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