



## **Mi'kmaq: First Nation people**

*Mi'kmaq powwows*

### **Narrator:**

It's July, and the Mi'qmaq of Conne River are holding their annual Pow Wow. This three-day event was established 16 years ago. They're held by First Nation people throughout North America and allow indigenous people to come together to celebrate their own cultures.

### **Patrick Augustine:**

I'm a Mi'qmaq person, I'm from Elsipogtog in New Brunswick, I'm a doctoral student in Canadian Studies. What I'm doing here is basically dancing, I'm a men's traditional dancer. The dancing is rooted in my spirituality, it's a strong spirituality, it's not something that I think about very much. It's just something that I do.

I do it throughout the summer, during the Pow Wows, but I also do it throughout the fall and the winter, as well.

The historical context to Pow Wows is that we had annual gatherings in the summertime. We would call those Maoi Omi, and a Maoi Omi was basically a, people would gather around when they cooked meat and the meat would have drippings coming down, and people kind of waited in anticipation of having a feast, so that's where you get that term, Maoi Omi. It meant a gathering.

So during the summer gathering, people would come in and you'd have a lot of ceremonies, babies would receive their names, people would get married and they would memorialise the people that passed away during the winter.

And a lot of talk would be political, a lot of social activities and ceremonies would take place and they would have a lot of feasts. And then they would sing and dance at the same time.

### **Chief Misel Joe:**

17 years ago when we started talking about a Pow-Wow was whether or not we would get our own people to come to a Pow-Wow. But after the first year it was the kids that came out and brought their parents with them.

The first year, the second year the parents started showing up in regalia along with the children. So at that stage we said well we're on to something. Let's keep doing it.

**John Jeddore Junior:**

Last year was noted as one of the top 29 aboriginal experiences to see in Canada. So it was kind of set apart from all the other Pow Wows in most of Canada.

It's definitely brought a lot of attention to our community too. A lot of people think, you know, 'I didn't think there were any aboriginal people left in Newfoundland, There are no Indians here.' And so this Pow Wow is kind of our resurgence to show we are here. And we've always been here.

**Patrick Augustine:**

I think it's a Mi'qmaq manifestation of a Western Pow Wow. It has elements of a Pow Wow from Western plains cultures that have been adopted and absorbed into Mi'qmaq culture.