

Opening Ceremony, Walk that tells a sacred story
Jun 04, 2010

On June 2nd I attended the opening ceremony that was the beginning of "Ateqnohkew Pemohhneaw", which translates to, "a walk that tells a scared story." It was a simple ceremony, but very spiritual and emotional. It was like opening a page of a history book and having those that were participants tell their story, a story that had been passed down through the years to their ancestors. Richie Plass told how he was given his Menominee name Powekonnay, and that certain responsibilities come with their names. Chief Poweknnay was one of the leaders of this historic removal. Richie felt that it was his duty to re-enact this walk. Richie also told use that between 2,300 and 2,400 Menominee's left this area and only 1,600 made it to Powekonnay Falls, today identified as Wayka Falls. In perspective,our present population according to the numbers given us in 2009 is 1,218. The population of the Village of Winneconne in 2000 was 2,145. (Richie is pictured talking to the people in attendance, about 40 to 45 Menominee's and 12 to 15 non Native Americans.)

The opening prayer was said in the native tongue. Tribal members were introduced and had stories to tell.

There were Honor Songs presented by the drum group from the Menominee Indian High School. Richie told the story of the drum that was used, and the responsibilities that go with the drum. (Members of the drum group are pictured.)

The most spiritual part of the ceremony was the Pipe Ceremony. We were asked to remove our glasses and that no pictures be taken and that no recording devices be used. We were told to see with our eyes and hear with our ears. Every part of the ceremony had a spiritual significance, a very beautiful and moving ceremony.

At the end of the ceremony Richie and his family walked the circle shaking hands and greeting all that were present.

Julia Reinert,Clerk