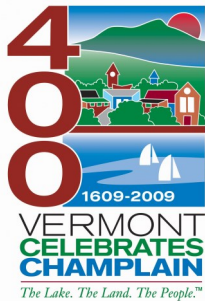


2008 Lake Champlain Quadricentennial Implementation Grants

Lake Champlain Native American Conference



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Project Summary

On May 2nd and 3rd 2009 Saint Michael's College hosted a Lake Champlain Quadricentennial conference focused on Native Americans in the Champlain Valley and Environs in the years 1550-1650. The conference participants and presenters included Native and European scholars in the social and natural sciences, museum and public interpreters, as well as Native leaders. The conference explored the Lake Champlain Basin at the dawn of European awareness of the region.

Funded by a 2008 Lake Champlain Quadricentennial Legacy Grant from the LCBP/CVNHP, the conference was divided into six sessions under the following topical areas: (1) *The Climate, ecology, and demography of the Champlain Basin, 1609 (Physical Geography)*; (2) *Archaeology & Ethnohistory of the Terminal Precontact & Contact Period in the Champlain Region*; (3) *Ethnohistory of the Wabanaki/Iroquoian/Mohican world of 1609*; (4) *Clash of Technologies: Material Cultures of the 17th century*; (5) *The Legacy of 1609: Ripples of Colonialism, Survival, Identity, and Change in the Bitawbakw Wolhanek*; (6) *Applied 1609 History: Heritage Tourism, Fine arts and Museology*. The twenty presenters and panelists came from Canada, Vermont, New Hampshire, Missouri, New York, Massachusetts and Maine which provided for a rich diversity of ideas and an opportunity for scholars and others to share ongoing research and current understandings of the 1550-1650 Champlain Basin.

The cooperation of a number of people and eight institutions was key to the success of the conference. The conference, which was free and open to the public, featured several short films highlighting various aspects of the Native peoples, their culture and heritage; and before each of the six sessions two Abenaki individuals narrated stories and shared music from their tradition. One of the attendees was Dr. David Hackett Fischer of Brandeis University who is one of the foremost biographers of Champlain. Though he was not a presenter, he was there to interact and learn from scholars and others who would have different perspectives than his own on Champlain and the explorer's legacy. Finally, various book publishers were on hand with copies of books, videos and other materials that participants could browse and purchase; and two Native organizations had rich displays of traditional artifacts and other elements illustrating the life and culture of Native peoples.

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