



June Doxtater (left) of the Six Nations sells crafts to Glenna Stratton, a New Credit native who lives in Crystal Beach.

NEW CREDIT — Ojibway, Potawatomi and Odawa nations came together during the weekend as Mississaugas of the Credit played host at the third annual Three Fires Homecoming Powwow and Traditional Gathering.

The theme was "When the Spirit Came First."

Most of the weekend's events sought to revive native culture and heritage.

Brightly-dressed dancers performed a variety of native dances, including the crow hop, the two step and the fancy dance.

As they danced around a circle cleared in the middle of the woods, the Three Fires Society Singers and other groups pounded out a steady drum beat, accompanied by ancient chants.

"The singers need very good memories to memorize the whole repertoire of songs which are appropriate for different ceremonies or powwows," said emcee Dave White. "It takes years for them to learn them all, and requires a lot of dedication."

Veterans carrying the eagle staff led the grand entry parade, which also featured flags of Canada, the United States and the Three Fires Confederacy. A flag

song honored the many native veterans who have served in the Canadian and American armed forces.

A special honor song also was performed in memory of Fred King Sr. The former chief of New

Credit Mississaugi, was instrumental in creation of the first Three Fires Traditional Gathering during his last year as chief.

Goods sold

Saturday evening, native elders, including former Trent University professor Fred Wheatley and Eddie Benton-Banai from Wisconsin, led a discussion which centred around the gathering's theme.

Representatives of the Six Nations "Arrive Alive" program were present with brochures to warn natives about the dangers of drinking and driving.

A variety of native leather goods, jewelry, ceremonial rattles and beadwork were on display. Less traditional, but selling just as well, were souvenir T-shirts and ball caps.

For the hungry, vendors were offering such native foods as salt pork on fried bread, corn soup and Indian tacos.

Though powwow's are a tradition for native people, the gathering was a new experience for some people attending.

"We were just driving around looking for souvenirs, and a man told us to come down here because it's probably the only chance we'll ever get to see something like this," said Mike Martz, a visitor from France.

"It's great. It's very interesting. And all the people are very nice."

Aug. 12 & 13
1989