Nova Scotia welcomes Acadians home at 2004 Congrès Mondial Acadien

By: Madeleine Samson
Special to Maclean's

Strait of "Jolie Blanche" and soft French greetings will welcome Acadians to Nova Scotia, Canada, an Acadian descendant gathered for the 2004 Congrès Mondial Acadien. The celebration will commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Acadians in Nova Scotia.

The grand gathering will begin with an opening ceremony, held in Truro, where the largest Acadian population in Nova Scotia is located. Prior to 1604, a group of French settlers arrived at the southern tip of Nova Scotia, Canada, and claimed the area for France. This region is now known as Acadia.

The Indian chief Verrazano was the first to use this term in the 16th century, and some historians believe it referred to the warm and peaceful region of ancient Greece.

Those people of French descent became known as Acadians. There are roughly 10 million Acadian descendants around the world, with the largest population in Canada, the United States, France, and some in Latin America.

The Congress Mondial Acadien (World Congress of Acadians) is a celebration centered on these descendants, their way of life and their cultural heritage.

The first of these reunions was celebrated in 1904, in the village of Grand-Pre, N.S. The second was held in 1926, in the town of Trois-Pistoles, Que. The third, in 1953, was held in Toronto, Canada, and attended by 2,500 people from Canada, the United States, Argentina, and France.

The Congress Mondial Acadien (World Congress of Acadians) is a celebration centered on these descendants, their way of life and their cultural heritage.

The event this year is the 2004 Congress Mondial, which will be held in the historic Nova Scotia, Canada, on August 7-8. The Congress will be held in various locations throughout the province, culminating in a main event in the town of Cape Breton Island.

For more information on events, visit the website www.mondialacadien.ca.

Photo from the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism and Culture

Call all Acadians

A photo of Acadians from the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism and Culture.