

First Nations youth art offers insight into War of 1812

By Chase Jarrett
Writer

Angelina Bomberry, 11, conjured feelings of her father up north for a week working to relate to the Haudenosaunee families during the War of 1812 and nailed it.

Her award winning piece of



Angelina Bomberry

art depicted a woman sitting under a pine tree crying - the tools, fire, and longhouse in front of her abandoned.

"That's the true feeling," she said of the War of 1812. "Not just the battlefield."

"I really missed him. That's how you would really feel if your father, or someone you loved left," said Bomberry. "You don't know if they're going to come back or not." Bomberry said this is the first contest she's ever won. "I was really proud of myself."

She was one of three First Nations youth who have pieces of art in one of the largest War of 1812 collections in the world and get royalties from their work.

Cecil Montour, Angelina Bomberry, and Chancey Martin were winners of a Woodland Cultural Centre art contest held during last fall's Whirlwind Conference on the War of 1812.

And the art contest has led to bigger things.

At the conference, Linda Stanley, owner of Canadian Art Cards, spotted the work and thought the pieces would contribute significantly to her ever growing War of 1812 collection that includes about 400 pieces.

"It's difficult to get histories written where people are

telling their own stories," said Stanley, a retired business woman turned painter. She's been collecting visual art pieces depicting the War of 1812 for just over four years.

Photographs were largely unavailable during the war, so Stanley wanted to ensure she got not only a visual native perspective, but a youth perspective too.

"The children seemed to have a really good grasp of the artifacts of history - there's lots of little detail."

Though she admires each piece's thoughtfulness, Stanley said Bomberry's work touched her the most.

"It almost breaks your heart. It shows a lot of what first nations life would have been like at that time - campfire, tools, longhouses. Then beside a tall single pine tree is a

"We pay royalties to the students - they've already made a little bit of money," she said.

Three different art cards were produced with the artwork on the front and blank inside.

"It's a different way to have a sense of pride in our community," said Danielle VanEvery, museum assistant and event coordinator for Woodlands who helped organize last fall's contest and conference.

"It shows an academic sense of a pride and a different way for striving for success because our community is so sports based - I think it's good to recognize these young artists and researchers," she said.

Woodlands Museum Director Paula Whitlow said the art cards were a perfect opportunity to ensure native voices and experiences from



Children's art depicting the War of 1812 have been made into cards (Photos by Chase Jarrett)

woman who is weeping," she said. The village and longhouses were empty. "That's her (Angelina's) view of the war."

Stanley's distribution area for the art cards roughly encompasses traditional Haudenosaunee territory - stretching from Southern Ontario in the the State of New York, and then over into Pennsylvania.

The cards are sold online.

1812 are acknowledged.

"By engaging youth, it allows for a reflection on history that had a direct impact on shaping what we know as our family and community today. Our ancestors took up the cause, and these art pieces - now art cards demonstrate our commitment, fortitude, and alliance."

The cards are available for sale at the Woodland Cultural Centre.