

By Anne Jarvis
Expositor Staff

OHSWEKEN — Molly Brant is back.

Who?

The sister of Joseph Brant, the famous Mohawk who led the Six Nations to the Grand River.

"Few people are aware Molly existed," said Evelyn White, director of the Six Nations Indian Pageant.

Gary Hussey, who wrote the script, couldn't find information in Brantford. He had to rely on Joseph Brant Museum in Burlington and The Longhouse, a native book store in Toronto.

"I didn't know who she was," said Michelle Green, who plays Miss Brant.

She is almost forgotten in history, probably lost in the shadow of her brother. That's why the pageant is resurrecting her in a new play this year.

It opened last night and will continue tonight and Aug. 7-8 and Aug. 14-15.

Degonwadonti, or Mary Brant, born in 1735 in the Mohawk Valley, is described as smart and educated. She worked hard and handled a lot of responsibility.

The production opens in 1752, when Miss Brant is 17. She has just returned from school and met William Johnson, England's first official to supervise native affairs.

She married him, and although the influence of the English was evident, "she knew her culture and she kept pushing to keep it," Miss White said.

"The native people were always first. She strived to maintain whatever she could for them."

Before she died in 1796, she told her daughter, Magdeline: "One thing you must always remember, this is Indian land. It was, it is and it always will be no matter who says differently. We were here first and we are Indians. The spirits of our fathers are forever in this land and no white man can ever take that away."

"She was instrumental in pushing Joseph to become the leader he was," Miss White said.

She also linked the Mohawks and the English. When the Americans attempted to assume Fort Stanwix in 1777, she relayed a message to her husband and brother, who rallied 800 Indians to defeat the Americans.

"She's a really interesting character to play. I've never seen or heard of anyone like her," said Miss Green. "I'd like to get to know her more so I could feel what it was like."

The production takes place in

a unique setting which, in a way, is the real star of the pageant.



Bobby-Jo Hill, who plays Molly Brant's mother, checks her make-up.



Kim Jamieson, plays Joseph Brant.