

New Woodland exhibit honors native loyalists

An original portrait of Chief Joseph Brant will become part of a new permanent exhibit commemorating native loyalists that opened Sunday at the Woodland Cultural Centre.

Curator Tom Hill said he hopes the portrait, purchased at an auction about two weeks ago in London, England, will be delivered to the Mohawk Street centre before Christmas.

The painting, which dates to 1812, was purchased for \$1,300.

"We were surprised (at the sale price). We were the only bidders."

When the painting arrives it will become a major part of a new permanent exhibit titled Grand River Settlement — The Loyal Six Nations.

The exhibit includes artifacts from a Mohawk village once located near the Grand River, south of the present

Mohawk Chapel and just east of the Woodland centre.

A metal insert for a war club, china and other glass, metal and ceramic pieces on display were discovered during renovation of the chapel and construction of dikes along the river.

About 100 people attended opening ceremonies for the exhibit, presented in partnership with the Grand River Branch of the United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada. The partnership is a first for the Woodland centre.

Irene MacCrimmon, branch president, declared the exhibit officially open. She said that it is intended to emphasize the loyalist contribution of the Six Nations.

Work on the exhibit started about five months ago. Parts of it, such as a replica of the Mohawk village, have still to be completed.

"It gives a real insight into what life was like in the village," said Mr. Hill.

One thing that becomes evident is that "these Mohawks lived very well. The people who lived around the village were the creme de la creme."

The Woodland centre is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends.

Also on display until Feb. 18 is an exhibition called Council Fire, which examines development of early forms of government in North America. It includes wampum belts repatriated to the Six Nations.