

OHSWEKEN — Recently I received an invitation from the Grand River Branch of the United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada to attend the opening of a new permanent exhibit at the Woodland Indian Cultural Centre. When I arrived there at the appointed time on Sunday afternoon, I was greeted by the sight of an overflow crowd. Most had come in their Sunday finery. Suits, ties and expensive dresses were much in evidence. A few ladies wore old-time dresses and bonnets while some native men wore shirts be-decked with ribbons in the Iroquoian manner.

During a short ceremony, Irene Mac-Crimmon, the branch president, declared the exhibit officially opened. The Grand River Branch of the UEL had provided a \$5,000 grant, which it received from the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications, as part of the cost of the exhibit. The exhibit emphasizes the Loyalist contribution of the Six Nations Indians. Its title is, Grand River Settlement — The Loyal Six Nations.

If the Six Nations Iroquois had not remained loyal to Great Britain during the American War of Independence the British could very well have been driven right out of North America. There would be no Canada today. But after Joseph Brant led his band of veteran fighters north into Canada the Americans had little stomach to follow. Canada was secure behind the tough war chief and his small, but experienced, army.

Less than 30 years later, the Six Nations again saved Canada's bacon. In the War of 1812, they prevented the Americans from taking southern Ontario. First they helped stop the Americans at the Niagara frontier. Then when the Americans began raiding from Detroit and across Lake Erie, they were decisively halted at the Grand River.

Even the large American army that killed the Shawnee war chief Tecumseh, routed his followers and put the British to flight near Chatham hurried back towards Detroit after the battle. They were getting uncomfortably close to the Six Na-

tions and they turned back while there was still 100 miles between them. Some of them probably could still recall Joseph Brant's devastating attacks deep into New York State and Pennsylvania during the previous war. The reputation of the Six Nations Iroquois as peerless guerrilla fighters still inspired respect and fear years later.

It is fitting that these facts, which can be gleaned from history books but often are not, should be remembered. It is doubly fitting that the United Empire Loyalists Association helped the Woodland Indian Cultural Centre to prepare this exhibit.

One has only to read the history books without racial discrimination to realize that the Six Nations were United Empire Loyalists in every sense. Some of the forefathers of present day UELs travelled right with Joseph Brant and the Mohawks as they came north. And none of them lost more than the Six Nations for their loyalty.