

Remarks by Tim Johnson
Woodland Cultural Centre
October 29, 2012

On behalf of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian I extend congratulations to Executive Director Janis Monture, to her staff, and to the Woodland Cultural Centre Board of Directors on the development and installation of this timely, relevant, and very important exhibit, "War Clubs & Wampum Belts: Haudenosaunee Experiences Of The War Of 1812."

I also want to recognize and honor the work of Curator Rick Hill. I've known and worked with Rick for over 30 years and never cease to be amazed by his relentless commitment to education, to cultural preservation, and to the public interest. Rick is a master teacher who helps us all better understand how past events have shaped the complex realities of our contemporary lives.

The War of 1812 was a defining period for Six Nations and other Native Nations that became involved in the conflict. For Six Nations, as but one example, the war's outcome served to stem the uncertainty of two centuries of upheaval and relentless violence. For Canada, the unfinished business of the American Revolution finally yielded to peace and the firm establishment of secure borders within which their fledgling country could take root. Canada's identity emerged during this time. In numerous battles defending against invading American forces an *esprit de corps* emerged from the accumulated victories. But let us never forget that many critical engagements in the War of 1812 included the participation and sacrifice of Native peoples — on both sides of the disputed border.

In the Canadian context, the participation of Six Nations leadership and forces, as well as that of numerous other First Nations, were crucial to the successful repulsion of invading American forces. One could make a strong circumstantial case that Canada would be very different today were it not for the involvement of Native peoples. And yet, who, within our own communities, and, more broadly, within educational systems across Canada, fully comprehends this history? The