

New museum exhibits spotlight Oneidas' history

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UTICA -- An addition to the Iroquois Children's Museum longhouse exhibition will go a long way to telling the story of the Oneida Nation, museum representatives and Nation members said.

Two kiosks, aimed for visitors ages 8 to 14, were unveiled during a ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday at the museum. The kiosks feature interactive games based on the Oneidas' history and include storyboards that speak to the Oneidas' contribution to the Revolutionary War.

Oneida Nation Bear Clan Mother Marilyn John said she was impressed with the exhibit. It would enlighten young visitors to the museum, John said. "This will set the kids straight," she said.

Museum Executive Director Marlene Brown emphasized the kiosks will expand understanding of the importance of the Oneidas in the history of this country, especially in Upstate New York. "There's a long history of help that they gave," Brown said, citing the Oneidas' role as allies during the Revolutionary War.

Oneida Nation Bear Clan Representative Brian Patterson said just having the presence in the museum helps lead the Oneidas from 200 years of obscurity fueled by violated treaties and the dwindling population of American Indians.

"There are still those that would push us to the fringes of society," he said. "When you have an exhibit, it helps the Oneida legacy to continue and shows our presence on the land is a continuing story."

Margaret Splain, director of Central New York Outreach for the Nation and also a Children's Museum board member, said the museum would be an ideal place to showcase local American Indian history.

Splain said she is hopeful the new addition would be the beginning of a long collaboration and that the exhibits would be continually updated. "There's a lot of Oneida and Iroquois history and it's hard to pack it into a single space," Splain said. "There's so much information to get out there about Indian people. This is just a start."



Photo by Photos by PATRICK PALLADINO / O-D Brian Patterson, left, Bear Clan representative for the Oneida Nation Men's Council and Marlene Brown, executive director of the Children's Museum, talk about the longhouse exhibit Thursday at the Children's Museum in Utica. Both were in attendance for the unveiling of two computer kiosks featuring interactive computer programs that discuss Oneida Indian history, and culture, donated by the Oneida Indian Nation.



Photo by OBSERVER-DISPATCH Marilyn John, Bear Clan Mother for the Oneida Indian Nation, tries out one of two computer kiosks featuring interactive computer programs that discuss Oneida Indian history, culture and contemporary news at the Children's Museum in Utica.