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Events

Battle of
Ogdensburg
February 17-18

Snowshoe
Biathlon
March 2-3

Solar Eclipse
April 8, 2024

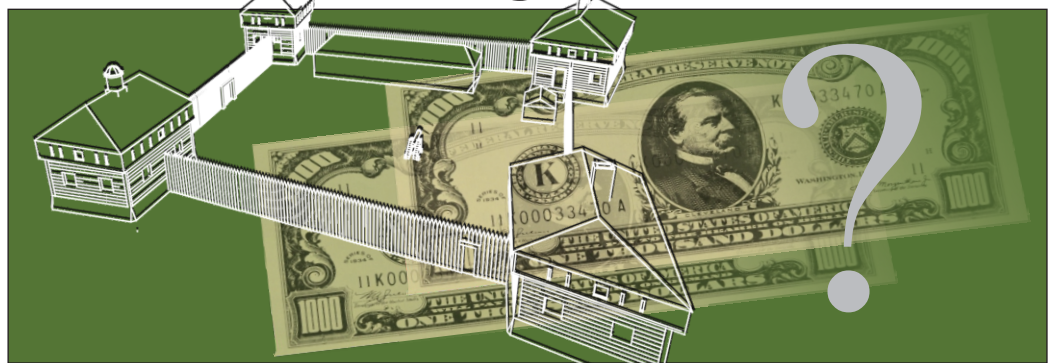
Picquet's Landing
Anniversary June 1,
2024 275th

Le Siege July 20-21



www.fort1749.org

What happened to the \$6,000,000 ExxonMobil gave the Fort?



At each Fort La Présentation event people ask:

"What happened to all the money ExxonMobil gave the Fort?"

Usually followed by, *"When is the Fort going to be built?"*

Many fort supporters and visitors to the fort site who have seen or heard of the fort site cleanup by ExxonMobil and mentions of the millions of dollars "given the fort" by ExxonMobil. The fort never received any part of the "millions" spent on the cleanup. Here is the story.

1986- Fort La Présentation Company incorporated by the New York State Board of Regents.

1987- February- Find the original Fort: Garrett Cook, of the Anthropology Department faculty at the State College of Arts and Science at Potsdam, was asked to help find the original Fort de La Présentation on Lighthouse Point in Ogdensburg NY.

1988- A very strong fossil fuel odor: During the archaeological dig in a field west of Commerce Street as the backhoe operator initiated the excavation it began to fill with contaminated water which produced a very strong fossil fuel odor.

The pollution in this area was so pronounced in fact that it was clear that no further expansion of the excavation should be attempted.

1988- Tom Duffy was concerned: In the spring the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) investigating the oil spill on the Point at landowner Tom Duffy's request. Tom was concerned about allowing excavation for the fort when the extent and nature of the pollution was unknown.

2001- The Fort reports petroleum contamination of Lighthouse Point to the DEC.

2002- ExxonMobil refuses to sign an agreement with the DEC to investigate contamination.

2003- Agrees to sign: Fort appealed to ExxonMobil to agree to sign "Consent Order" to cleanup the site at an estimated cost of \$3 million.

What happened to the \$6,000,000 continued

2004- DEC accepts ExxonMobil's revised work plan after lengthy discussions.

2005- ExxonMobil- had failed to complete any remediation of the site

2006- DEC withdraws "Consent Order" from ExxonMobil and assumes cleanup of Fort site. DEC contracts with Nature's Way Environmental Consulting to cleanup the site. ExxonMobil agrees to pay the Fort Association an additional \$72,405.75 in legal and technical fees.

The DEC, New York State Environmental Protection and Spill Fund reached a settlement with ExxonMobil for \$6 million. The NY Attorney General did not sign off on the 2007 6M agreement saying it was not in the best interest of NY.

2007-The Cleanup: DEC / Nature's Way completes the final site remediation

2013-The Final Settlement: The court awarded the Spill Fund all of the \$8 million in the settlement. Fort La Présentation was left out of the settlement. Final cost of remediation \$10 million.

All negotiations with ExxonMobil were done by the DEC, the NY state Comptroller's Office.

The Fort La Présentation Association never negotiated directly with ExxonMobil. During this time frame the Fort was able to secure two additional parcels of land on the site through grants and donations.

Everything that is seen at the fort property has been achieved by the hard work of the Association, its members and dedicated volunteers completing one project after another, seeking out funding through grants and donations from our supporters. The Fort is currently seeking funds and donations to install electrical lines to the site and funding for a French Cabin to be used for lectures and demonstrations.

January 1990 "The Quarterly", Official Publication of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association
 Aug 22, 2007, Watertown Daily Times, Author David Winters -Times Staff Writer, Pg. B1
 Sept. 28, 2007 Watertown Daily Times, Author David Winters, Times Staff Reporter, Pg. B1)
 Dec. 9, 2013 -Watertown Daily Times- Author Sean Ewart, Johnson Newspapers, pg. A4
 Sept. 28, 2020- St Lawrence County Board of Legislators, Finance Committee. Meeting minutes



1966 Aerial View of Van Rensselaer (Lighthouse) Point - Steele Photography



2023 Birds-eye view of Fort property.
 Photo Courtesy of: Travel St Lawrence NY
 on Facebook.

Happy Anniversary 275th Ogdensburg!

275 years ago, Abbe Francois Picquet, first set eyes on a little peninsula at the confluence of the Oswegatchie and the St. Lawrence Rivers.

November 17, 2023

President Barbara O'Keefe's Annual Message

Abbe Francois Picquet, a French Sulpician priest in search of a place to found a mission and a fort, first set eyes on a little peninsula at the confluence of the Oswegatchie and the St. Lawrence Rivers, a natural port partially hidden by a small island covered with vegetation on the feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple on November 21st 1748.

He returned on June 1st 1749 with four Iroquois Indians, a stone mason, a carpenter, a few French soldiers and the rest Canadian common laborers, in all, 30 persons. This was a more hospitable construction season in the North Country.

Abbe Picquet celebrates the first mass on the grounds of what would become Notre Dame Church on that day.

The Fort La Présentation Association is honored to be stewards of his noble site of Fort de La Présentation and the birthplace of the City of Ogdensburg.

This year we dedicated the original site as the Newell Family Archaeological Park and the Daughters of the American Colonists placed a historical marker. The site has and will contribute to our knowledge of life in the 18th – 19th centuries in the St. Lawrence Valley.

Our dedicated volunteer maintenance crew continues to diligently maintain the 28 acres site. We could not do this without our members and donors.

Maintenance is one of our largest expenses. I am pleased to announce the 3 new dog stations are being used. Two more benches have been added to the Abbe Picquet Memorial Plaza and another picnic table has been placed.

We completed our first phase of the Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative REDI ahead of schedule and under budget. Fortunately for all of us the State allowed the Association to use the remainder of the funds.

If you have not been on the Abbe Picquet Trail in a while please do to enjoy the new additions and improvements funded by these funds. There have been upgrades to the Masonic memorial area, additional shoreline stabilization, extensions to the trail, more landscaping, new fencing and a new interpretive sign.

The jewel is the new bridge to the Lookout Point peninsula, the former train car ferry dock. From the island you have an uninterrupted 180 degree view. This was the culmination of a three year project with Clarkson University engineering students. Their professors were able to see the completion of their project when the bridge was installed.

Our next project is to prepare the island for the gazebo funded by the Grassroots Foundation. This will take labor and funds.

We continue to look for and apply for funds to build structures. It needs to be mentioned that grants are specific and do require monetary matches.

If you would like more information about the Association, please stop by the registration table or speech with a Board member.

*Thank you for coming tonight.
I would not have the honor of standing
here tonight without YOU our sponsors,
donors, and members.*

Fort la Présentation Association
Post Office Box 1749
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

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New Bridge Installation Complete !

The new bridge at the end of Van Rensselaer Point now connects the former railroad ferry dock to the mainland. It was installed on a rainy day at the end of October 2023.

Brush clearing and trail installation makes way for spectacular views east and west along the St. Lawrence river according to Dallas Robinson of the Fort La Presentation Association.

The bridge was built by Contech Solutions, located in Fort Payne, AL, utilizing a basic design developed by the Mechanical and Civil Engineering Departments at Clarkson University in 2020. Undergraduate students worked to develop plans for a bridge to cover the span. Several designs were formulated by students from both the Mechanical and Civil Engineering Departments. Drawings were then presented to the Association for input.

Our thanks to Labella Associates for their design work, the NYS REDI Grant Program for providing the funds to construct the bridge and T.J. Fiacco and his crew for their outstanding work in the completion of this project,” Robinson said.



Photography by: Tim Cryderman