

## Executive Board of Directors

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## 2026 Events

**Maple Sugaring** at the  
Fort site April 4, noon to  
2:30 p.m.

**Skirmish On The  
Oswegatchie** -American  
Revolution  
Saturday & Sunday  
July 18-19



[www.fort1749.org](http://www.fort1749.org)

## Hidden History

...arrived in May of 1749 with a party of 29, including a mason, carpenter, four Iroquois, a handful of French soldiers and a body of laborers.

By Ted Como



*Long houses in London Ontario, CA*



*In March of 2015, Aaron J. Gore, principal investigator for the Division of Research and Collections of the New York State Museum, issued a Phase III Cultural Resource Survey Report on field work conducted at the site of Fort La Présentation in the fall of 2012. As part of the report, historical information was also developed, some of which has not been widely published.*

For instance, we knew that Abbé Francois Picquet, founder of Fort La Présentation, arrived in May of 1749 with a party of 29, including a mason, a carpenter, four Iroquois, a handful of French soldiers and a body of laborers. We didn't know that by July, the site had received a few French visitors, including a Jesuit priest named Pierre

Jean de Bonnacamps, who wrote that the settlement consisted of a bark-covered structure in the midst of a 40 arpent (roughly 33 acre) clearing. By October, when Picquet briefly returned to Montreal, this rudimentary settlement had transformed into a complex consisting of a stone house, a barn, a stable, and an oven surrounded by a picket palisade 70 feet on a side upon the cleared land.

During Picquet's absence the new mission was attacked. On Oct. 26 a band of Mohawk Indians descended upon the settlement, setting fire to it and two small boats laden with hay. Three French soldiers stationed at the site were able to drive off the attackers with relatively light casualties; one man lost half a hand. The mission's struc-

## Hidden History- contd



Fort project area in red square against early railroad buildings.

tures, however, were less lucky. Only the stone dwelling survived. In response to the apparent vulnerability of the mission and its potential importance, French colonial authorities sent a military engineer, Robert de Morandiere, to establish a more substantial, defensible fortification.

The new fort would not only impress local Native American groups but would also be better suited to resist attack. The result, begun in 1749 and completed in 1753, was approximately four times larger than Picquet's earlier compound consisting of a square approximately 150 feet to a side, about half the size of a regular city block. Each bastion had a tower-shaped top, built as hewn log cabin type structures sitting on dressed stone foundations. A warehouse, storehouses, ovens and a sawmill were also built and 30 soldiers under the command of Drouet de Beaudicourt were sent to the mission by the end of the year.

We knew the site grew but it was rapid. In 1750 there were 87 Native families under Picquet's tutelage, the following year 396 and by 1752, in just three years, 500 Native families numbering around 3,000 individuals were settled around the fort. That's about a third the number of current Ogdensburg residents, though not all lived on the site but nearby. But at La Présentation were at least 49 bark longhouses and they were large, each 60 to 80 feet long and 20 to 23 feet wide.

Including necessary spacing between them the Native village footprint would have required four to six acres. That would have filled the point from

today's Main Street to the river. According to AI, to sustain 3,000 people at a 1750s fort the daily food requirement would have been approximately 6,000 to 7,500 pounds of primary food supplies. That's a lot of hunting and fishing with other foodstuffs coming upriver from Montreal.

While never attacked, Fort de la Présentation was extremely active during the French and Indian War until it was abandoned and taken over by the British in 1760. Prior to that, French soldiers stationed at the fort and associated Native American warriors took part in numerous actions against British settlements and fortifications in the Mohawk Valley, Champlain Valley, Lake Ontario, and beyond.

Fort La Présentation wasn't just a starting point for raids and a home to thousands of natives. It was also used as a staging area for supplies and goods distributed



Excavation area for fort artifacts investigation.



Pipe and bowl fragments collected during survey.



Fort la Présentation Association  
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STANDARD**  
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## 2026 St. Lawrence Valley Primitive Snowshoe Biathlon

For the second year, weather forced improvisation for The 2026 St. Lawrence Valley Primitive Snowshoe Biathlon. Starting with over two feet of snow on the trail the day before the event, by Sunday there was 6-8 inches of melt water under an equal amount of snow cover making the trail impassable.

An off-hand shooting event was quickly organized. This year's event attracted runners from across New York State, Vermont, New Jersey, Virginia and the Canadian Province of Ontario. Our generous sponsors included La Bella Associates, P.C., T.J. Fiacco Construction, Gray's Gunshop, Atlantic Testing Laboratories, the St. Lawrence Sportsman's Club and Forsyth's Regiment of Rifles. Funds raised will be used to support the development of the Fort La Présentation Visitor and Cultural Center.

Medalists in the 2026 Primitive Snowshoe Biathlon were, Saturday, March 7, Primitive Rifle Division Men, first, Joel Heins; second, Joe Tamagni; and third, Josh Bennett; Primitive Rifle Division Seniors, first, Bryan Carson; Smoothbore Division Ladies, first, Amanda Faskin; Smoothbore Division, Men, first, Tim Cameron, second, Derek La Duc, and third, P.J. Miller; In-Line Division Men, first, Ed Lycett.



For Sunday, March 8, winners were Smoothbore Division, Men, first, Tim Cameron; In-Line Division Ladies, first, Amanda Oldacre; and In-Line Division Men, first, James Burdick and second, Ed Lycett.

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