

François Picquet was the founder of Fort La Presentation, the French fort out of which the city of Ogdensburg grew. Picquet was a priest and worked closely with Native Americans during his time in the New World. However, his efforts to fight the British were not enough to keep them from eventually conquering most of North America.

François Picquet was born on December 6, 1708 in Bresse, France. He was made a deacon at the seminary of Lyons in 1731 and made a priest just a few years later at the Seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris. Picquet showed interest in “[finding] converts for Christ in the New World” (Reagan 10) and traveled to Canada, where he lived in the small city of Montreal for seven years.

Picquet quickly was given the task of converting Native Americans to Christianity and subsequently opened a mission on the Ottawa River in 1740. Several Native American tribes, including the Algonquins, Nipissings, Hurons, Outaouais, and Iroquois spent time at the mission. One of Picquet’s goals was to stop their nomadic way of life and convince them to become farmers.

However, his main objective was to make an informal alliance with the Native Americans so that if a war with the British began, the Native Americans would support the French. When fighting between the two countries did begin in 1742, Picquet convinced the Native Americans to help the French, showing how his efforts had paid off. In addition to acting as scouts for the French, these Native Americans, who were led by Picquet, attacked several British forts and settlements, including Albany, Lake George, and Saratoga.

When the fighting ended in 1747, the Iroquois told the French that a mission could be built in their territory. Picquet accepted this invitation and started a settlement

which he later named Fort La Presentation. This fort, which was located in present-day Ogdensburg, gave the French control of the St. Lawrence River.

Fighting began once again in 1754 and Picquet resumed his leadership of the Native American forces. Although the war continued for six years, the French were badly beaten down. Picquet left America and returned to France in 1760 and spent the rest of his life in Paris and Bresse, where he was born. He died in Ain, France in 1781.

Picquet valued his country and his religion above all else. His relationship with the Native Americans in the New World served two purposes. He was both saving souls and helping fight the British, the two most important things he knew.

Bibliography

Fournet, Pierre Auguste. "François Picquet." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 12. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. 5 Jun. 2010

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12075d.htm>.

Garand, Rt. Rev. P.S., The History of the City of Ogdensburg. Salem, M.A.: Higginson Book Company, 1927.

Reagen, James C., Warriors of La Presentation. Ottawa: Dollco, 1999.