

Le Courier Frontier

August 2005

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Senator Wright Visits Founder's Day

New York State Senator James W. Wright visited the Founder's Day event on Saturday. The Senator says he's been impressed with the growth of the event over the past seven years. Wright says that the number of people who come to participate in the event and the numbers who come to watch keep growing each year.

Wright says he's been a strong supporter of cleaning up the oil contamination on the property and eventually rebuilding the French Fort. He hopes to see the cleanup begin this fall.

Fort members say once the cleanup is complete, they will consider launching a fundraising campaign to contribute to the endowment and to build the Fort. Members say they have felt that it would be unfair to the community to fundraise for the fort until they have the site actually cleaned up.

The first step would be to fundraise to increase the endowment fund to \$1 million or more that would be able to provide an annual operating subsidy to the Fort to cover costs during years when weather or other problems hurt attendance. The goal is to build a fort that will draw tourists not only to Ogdensburg but St. Lawrence County as a whole.

**Barbara O'Keefe, President
Fort La Présentation Company
Annual Address - October 24, 2005**

As of 8:47 PM the DEC approved interim remediation work plan for Lighthouse Point is still scheduled to begin on Monday. The contamination resulted from the former Exxon/Mobil operation in which pipes crossed our current property and contamination from the terminal itself migrated onto Fort property. Since the discovery of the spill in 2001, we have attempted to work with Exxon and DEC to get the site re-mediated. We hope that the open communication promised at the public meeting earlier this month and granted to the stakeholders in the March 2004 Citizen Participation Plan will help to insure the success of the remediation of Lighthouse Point and the reconstruction of fort de la Présentation. We are understandably frustrated over the fact that decisions were being made about our property without our input or knowledge.

Our job as property owners is to press for this project to be done right and in a timely manner, as we await the thousands of people who will visit the site upon completion of the construction of the fort. We will continue to look over the shoulders of both DEC and Exxon to be sure our interests and that of the visiting public are being protected. The final remediation plan to be submitted in the Spring will reflect the success or limitations of the interim excavation. Preservation of this historic site and any uncovered archival evidence will also impact the project. It is vital that the remediation conforms to the NY State Historic Preservation standards and that a plan is in place to retrieve and to preserve any artefacts found during the remediation. For these reasons the Board of Directors has authorized Atlantic Testing Laboratories to monitor the excavation on Exxon/Mobil and Fort La Présentation Company property.

We are presently developing plans with our architect Foit-Albert of Buffalo and need timelines to plan for construction and fundraising. Fort de la Présentation has the honor of being the final official site of the National and New York State celebration of the French and Indian War in 2010 to commemorate the final battle of that war. It is imperative that we have a reconstructed fort, interpretive center and museum, Native American Village, and re-enactment and encampment areas by July of 2010. National attention will be on the conclusion of the commemoration. The events of 1760 impacted not only our history but that of France, England, and Canada. History did happen in Ogdensburg, NY. Legislation cosponsored by Senator Wright and signed into law by Governor Pataki established a temporary commission to promote the 250th anniversary of the F&I War. What a black eye it would be for New York State if it could not require an obviously contaminated site, with a known source be cleaned in time for the celebration.

Through the financial support and actions of Senator Wright, Congressman McHugh and Assemblyman Aubertine, as well as the hard work of the Fort Board and its hired technical and legal consultants, Atlantic Testing Laboratories and our environmental lawyer Judy Drabicki, we are optimistic that the Fort will be prepared for the 2010 Celebration.

The Fort La Présentation Company Board, in order to insure an ongoing presence for future generation to learn about our rich cultural heritage, has wisely established an endowment policy and fund with a goal of \$1,000,000. In just a few months we have close to \$50,000. Imagine the possibilities if our energies and resources were not diverted to ensuring our right to have a clean environment and if Exxon/Mobil had done the right thing four and half years ago. We are cautiously optimistic that next week will be a start with the cleanup of our property.

In the near future the Fort La Présentation Company will be concentrating its effort on broadening the membership base. I wish to remind everyone that we are part of the Ogdensburg Economic Development Zone and as such any contributions of \$500 or more toward the fort de la Présentation reconstruction project qualify for NYS Economic Development Zone Capital Credits.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated members of the Board of Directors of the Fort La Présentation Company who freely give of their time and talents and whose only reward is to know that they are contributing to the cultural and economic enrichment of the North Country. They have stood fast against one of the richest and most powerful companies in the world and will prevail. It has been a privilege and honor to serve as your President. In the past seven years I have met new people, made new friends, traveled, and have had many new experiences. However, I now know way too much about the technicalities of environment pollution. It may be a cliché, but my involvement as president has been a life altering experience.

Thank you all for coming and for your continuing support.

Barbara O'Keefe, President

Continued on back page:

Message from the President of Fort La Présentation Company

With a district appropriation from Senator James Wright, Fort La Présentation Company will proceed with plans to clean up oil contamination at Lighthouse Point, and to seek reimbursement through the New York Environmental Protection and Spill Compensation Fund. Senator Wright stated "I have shared with Exxon Mobil my intent to press the State to do everything possible to clean this site up as expeditiously as possible. It is my intent to send a clear message of our commitment to begin clean up this summer. This is my commitment to Ogdensburg and to Fort La Présentation", said Senator Wright.

We have waited long enough for Exxon Mobil and the New York State to try to come to an agreement, and have only heard of more delays. With the funding assistance from Senator James Wright, we are able to move forward with our plans to get the site clean, seek reimbursement, and begin re-construction of fort de la Présentation.

The district appropriation in the amount of \$50,000 will be used to pay for a remediation plan from Atlantic Testing Laboratories (ATL), as well as cash flow for clean up at the site. In order for the Fort to access funding from the Spill Fund, it needs initial capital to start the clean up. The Fort then will submit requests to the Spill Fund for reimbursement on a revolving basis until the site is clean.

ATL is very familiar with the site as well as the results from initial testing conducted by Exxon Mobil. They will be able to create a plan that will be acceptable by State standards. Once the plan is created and we determine reasonable costs, the site can start to be cleaned. We plan to work closely with DEC and the Spill Fund Administrator on the project.

We fully expect to receive reimbursement for the work that is done. ATL has carefully reviewed information which was included in Exxon Mobil's own report regarding the site. Once reimbursement has been received and the site is cleaned, the money will be used toward reconstruction of the Fort.

In April a remediation plan from Exxon Mobil called for no action to be taken at the site, and said the contamination would dissipate by itself over time. This plan was unacceptable to NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, State representatives, the County Legislature, the City of Ogdensburg, as well as the Fort Company which owns property adjacent to property formerly owned by Exxon Mobil. The natural attenuation of the property, which Exxon Mobil recommends, could take decades.

The Fort Board has waited since 2001 for adequate remediation of the property, when evidence of contamination was provided to DEC and Exxon. At no point has Exxon denied responsibility for the contamination; however the company has continued to delay clean-up efforts. DEC has now moved into more discussions with Exxon Mobil over the site and the remediation plan. (Continued on Page 6: FROM THE PRESIDENT)

ANNUAL DINNER

Save the Date: *Friday, October 21, 2005*, the Fort La Présentation Company will host its Annual Dinner at the Gran View Restaurant on Route 37, Ogdensburg. The era to be featured this year is the Colonial Period and, if you like, you are welcome to dress in the styles of the period. Plan to come and enjoy fine food served elegantly and celebrate the progress made by the Company and its supporters toward making fort de la Présentation a reality.

**YOU CAN BE
A PART OF THIS
EXCITING TIME IN HISTORY**

If you have a special skill or interest to assist us with some of our functions and activities please contact us to volunteer your services. We welcome your support and assistance in the following areas:

- Founder's Day 2006 Committee
- Founder's Day Weekend
 1. Registration Table
 2. Raffle Table
 3. Site Preparation
 4. Brushing/Mowing/Weed Eating
 5. Narrator for Boat Tour
 6. Signage
- Clerical
- Annual Dinner
- Public Relations
- Fund Raising

Any bit of time you feel you would like to contribute would benefit our endeavor.

Contact people:
Barb O'Keefe

P.O. Box 1749, Ogdensburg, NY 13669
Tim Cryderman – (315) 322-5519
Marsha Hough – (315) 393-3201

THANK YOU

**Children's Games and Toys
In Early America**

By: Michael Whittaker
There was more work than play for many children in colonial America.

Children, especially in the modest homes and on the frontier, were engaged from a very young age in household tasks and farm chores. For some there were schools in established communities to fill their days, and church played a large role in their lives on Sundays and beyond.

Given the nature of the times there was not a lot of leisure as understood in the current century. Many games and toys, by coincidence or design, helped develop important life skills. The common games - hopscotch, yo-yo, jump rope, leap frog, red rover, hoop rolling and marbles - can be seen as more than idle pass-times. They can be interpreted as a preparation for life, encouraging self-discipline, co-operation, hand-eye coordination, perseverance and patience.

Most games were played outside. The equipment necessary for games such as quoits (ring toss), nine pins (similar to lawn bowling) and kites were usually made in the home or of local manufacture. Toys were simple and often made by the children of wood, cornhusks and rags. Only the wealthiest families could order porcelain dolls and china tea sets from England.

Childhood ended early for many children. Boys, after a minimum of schooling, went to work on the family farm or were apprenticed to a trade. Girls, often with even less time in school, worked in the household. They spun wool or linen, wove fabric, embroidered or made lace to contribute to the family income.

Infant and child mortality was high, but extended families of 15 to 25 under one roof were not uncommon. Under these conditions, working children were an economic necessity.

BY JIM REAGEN

During the Revolutionary War, as the British fought to keep America from capturing Canada and winning their own independence from the Crown, Claude-Nicolas-Guillaume de Lorimier played a role in several major events involving the fort that the British had renamed Fort Oswegatchie after they had captured fort de la Présentation. de Lorimier was actually the fourth son of Captain Claude Nicolas Guillaume de Lorimier, Chevalier de St. Louis, who was the commander of the French forces at fort de la Présentation during the French and Indian War.

When the younger de Lorimier arrived at Fort Oswegatchie in the winter of 1776 to escape the Americans in Montreal, the British commander of Fort Oswegatchie was facing a difficult challenge. Captain George Forster of the King's 8th Regiment of Foot had been given an assignment by Sir Guy Carleton, the Governor General of Canada and supreme commander of the British forces stationed in North America. When the Americans had captured Montreal in the fall of 1775, Sir Guy had fled Montreal to Quebec City where he had repelled an American attack in late December. But the British commander had chosen not to follow up on his victory by attacking the American troops outside the city. Sir Guy knew that if he could hold out until the spring when the ice on the St. Lawrence River melted, Great Britain would be able to send reinforcements from London to help him drive the Americans out of Canada. Instead of launching any attacks on the Americans himself; Sir Guy had sent word to Captain Forster at Fort Oswegatchie. The governor wanted him to take as many of his 50 men stationed at Fort Oswegatchie as he could spare and lead them on an attack against the American rebels. His 50 men against a rebel army of several thousand men. Captain Forster knew that the spring would bring more than good weather. When the ice cleared from the St. Lawrence River, British Troops would arrive by ship from England to help drive the rebels from Canada. What worried him was the prospect that spring could also bring more rebels to reinforce the invasion force. If the rebels could reinforce their position and capture Quebec City before the new troops from England arrived, the King could find it a difficult proposition to smash the rebellion. Sir Guy's strategy appeared to be simple. The Governor General would use his troops to hold on to Quebec City, waiting to be relieved by England, leaving it to Captain Forster and his men at Fort Oswegatchie to harass the rebels near Montreal so they would not be able to focus their strength on a renewed assault on Sir Guy Carleton's forces at Quebec City.

The job of Captain Forster and the 50 men of the King's 8th Regiment of Foot at Fort Oswegatchie were to buy time for the King's forces. Eventually, he knew, troops would arrive from England to smash the rebellion. He just hoped that he and his men from Fort Oswegatchie would still be around by the time they arrived. Captain Forster and his small company of troops had been shaken in November when they first heard that the rebels had captured Montreal, cutting the regiment and its forts stretching along the Great Lakes off from supplies and assistance. Captain Forster had immediately ordered his patrols to fan out in search of any enemy activity along the St. Lawrence River, in case the rebels planned a sneak attack on the fort at the mouth of its namesake, the Oswegatchie River. But they had seen little sign that the rebels had any immediate design on the forts along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes manned by the men of the 8th Regiment. Forster had asked the Oswegatchie Indians living outside the fort and the St. Regis Mohawks 40 miles downstream at the foot of the rapids to keep him informed of any rebel activity their hunting parties might come across. While the rebels at Montreal were wooing the Canadian tribes to join their cause, Captain Forster reminded his own long-time native allies of their 16-year relationship with the British crown since France had abandoned them to British rule. While the loss of Montreal meant that Fort Oswegatchie had been cut off from re-supply since November, Captain Forster and his men had been forced to devote more of their time to hunting and fishing to supplement their provisions. (Continued on Page 7: de Lorimier)

From the President: (Continued from pg. 3)

The New York Environmental Protection and Spill Compensation Fund (Spill Fund) was created in 1977 for the remediation of petroleum spills. The Fund's major source of revenue is a license fee charged on each barrel of petroleum sold in New York State and is administered through the State Comptroller's Office. This is money that we, as taxpayers, pay on every gallon of gas that we purchase.

The Fund administrator is responsible for seeking reimbursement of Fund expenditures and penalties from discharges of petroleum. The Fund acts as liaison among members of the DEC, the petroleum industry, spill victims, local governments, environmental groups, and members of the Legislature.

The administrator must determine if the request for reimbursement is for necessary work and reasonable costs. If the responsible petroleum company refuses to reimburse the fund, the administrator, after investigation, makes every attempt to ensure payments of the claims against the Fund.

The Fort La Présentation Company, and I as President, would also like to thank Assemblyman Darrel Aubertine for his assistance in expediting communications with the New York State Environment Protection and Spill Compensation Fund.

Barbara J. O'Keefe, President

Fort Company Wish List

- Bookcase
- File Cabinet
- Land Maintenance
- Mowing, brushing, weed eating
- Sponsors for newsletters

Anyone wishing to donate may contact

Barb O'Keefe
 PO Box 1749, Ogdensburg, NY 13669

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 LIVING HISTORY
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 "PER INDIVIDUAL"**

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Le Courier Frontier
 Our newsletter publication(s) will be sent to all donors of \$25.00 or more each year of donation.

We hope you will join us

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Send your 2005 tax deductible donations to:

**Fort La Présentation Company,
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**www.fortlapresentation.net Fort La
 Présentation has been ruled to be a
 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization.
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 consult your tax advisor.**

de Lorimier (continued from page 5)

But from all the reports he had received from his spies inside Montreal, the winter had been no kinder to the rebels. With nothing but rebel paper currency of dubious value to offer the tribes and the outcome of the invasion of Canada in doubt, many of Montreal's residents and natives who had at first welcomed the "revolution" seemed to have lost some of their initial enthusiasm for the rebellion. Captain Forster and other representatives of the crown had spent the winter reminding tribal representatives that they had far more to fear from the rebels than they had from their King. The King and his Royal Governors were not the people who were constantly encroaching on native lands. It wasn't the King who had been chopping down their forests, building homes, farms and settlements in the Champlain, Mohawk and Ohio valleys. While the King's representatives might have an imperfect record in protecting native lands, the people who were now in rebellion in the 13 colonies had a long history of breaking treaties, swindling tribes, and stealing land. If the rebels succeeded, he'd warned, the Canadian tribes would soon face the same problems that for years had plagued tribes along the frontiers of the 13 colonies. They'd all heard the stories of the steady encroachment by pioneer families in the Mohawk Valley. Many had seen it first hand on their travels with their own eyes. Many had relatives who had experienced the problems first hand.

If the tribes stood with the King, now, in his time of need, he would remember those who stood by their oaths after these troubles passed. The King would also remember those who broke their oaths to follow the traitors, Captain Forster had warned. Just 15 years before, many of them had seen first hand the terrible wrath of England's King when they'd seen 40,000 of the king's troops converge on Quebec, driving the French from North America. Many of the Oswegatchie and St. Regis Mohawks had personally seen 12,000 troops under Sir Jeffrey Amherst sweep down the St. Lawrence River. They would personally watched the French evacuate the fort they'd called LaPrésentation, tearing it apart to build a new fort they'd called Fort de Levis. They'd watched the British besiege the island fort, standing on the shore, observing the gunboats destroying its fortifications. After that battle was over, and the British had sailed down the St. Lawrence, capturing Montreal, they'd seen the British rebuild Fort de Levis, renaming it Fort William Augustus. They'd seen the British rebuild Fort La Présentation, renaming it Fort Oswegatchie. Back when the French had been here, the natives numbered more than 3,000. They had fought valiantly for the French, terrorizing the British settlements along the Mohawk Valley, the Champlain Valley and the Ohio Valley. After the tides of war had turned against the French, many of the natives had left La Présentation, returning to their native villages. But some had stayed, swearing their allegiance to the British king, accepting the presents given to them on his behalf from his representatives. For 15 years, they'd enjoyed the protection afforded them by living next to a British fort. They'd traded their furs at the fort's trading post, purchasing items for their families from the British traders.

Seven years prior, the 8th Regiment of Foot had been assigned the task of keeping the King's peace along the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes. Companies of the Regiment had been assigned to garrison duty at Montreal, Fort Oswegatchie, Fort Niagara, Fort Detroit, Fort Michlimackinac and others. Fort William Augustus on the island downstream from Fort Oswegatchie had been abandoned but the Regiment had strengthened Fort Oswegatchie. Captain Forster wished now that he could call on a nearby fort. If the Regiment's strength had not been stretched out across hundreds of miles of wilderness, Captain Forster could have called on trained, experienced troops to attack the rebels. Instead, he would have to call upon the native tribes along the St. Lawrence River and his own Oswegatchies. With luck, he might also be able to call on some of the French and British loyalists to join his attack on the rebels. He would also need to use Claude-Nicolas-Guillaume de Lorimier, who styled himself Chevalier de St. Louis, a Knight of the Order of St. Louis, an honour that had actually been awarded to his father Captain Claude Nicolas Guillaume. He gave de Lorimier the job of helping him to recruit the tribes to join him on his attack on the Americans. (TO BE CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE OF
LE COURIER FRONTIER)

