

FOUNDER'S DAY WEEKEND RETURNS TO OGDENSBURG WITH THE HISTORIC THUNDER OF GUNS

OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK, July 12, 2011 -- The historic waters of the St. Lawrence and Oswegatchie Rivers will witness the return of French and Indian War re-enactors to Founder's Day Weekend in Ogdensburg July 23-24, 2011.

More than a dozen colorful re-enactment units portraying 18th-century regiments of the French and English armies, their colonial militias and Native allies are expected to establish their canvas camps on Lighthouse Point. Along the shore, nine bateau and traditional boats will mark the navy encampment.

"A reason re-enactors from Canada and the United States return every year is because the nearness of the archaeological remains of Fort de la Présentation puts them in touch with the history they treasure," said Barbara O'Keefe, President of the Fort La Présentation Association. "Now that the fort site on Lighthouse Point has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, they should consider their enthusiastic support recognized and rewarded beyond the bounds of Ogdensburg."

In the re-enacted battles Saturday and Sunday afternoon, the re-enactors prove their mettle. First, the boats armed with bow guns and musket men skirmish on the bay at the mouth of the Oswegatchie River. Then the conflict spreads to the Lighthouse Point battlefield when the infantry, artillery and Indian warriors clash.

"The exciting maneuvers on the river and the point, portraying the 1760 Battle of the Thousand Islands, are the most photographed part of the weekend with grey clouds of gun smoke swirling around the vivid uniforms," said O'Keefe. "But there is something for everyone who enjoys history, from country dancing to children's games, traditional crafts to period merchants, the ever-popular bateau race and historical talks."

This year a collection of 18th-century maps is on display in the Ogdensburg Public Library until the end of July. Retired New York State Trooper Randy Patten, who amassed the historic maps over 30 years, will give a free public lecture about them Friday, 22 July at 5:30 PM in the library.

Wampum belts, the waterways of war and constructing an 18th-century small boat are other public presentations over the weekend.

Saturday offers a couple of activities where the public can meet the re-enactors. The Rotary Club and the Freight House Restaurant are co-sponsoring a fundraising pancake breakfast for the Fort Association at the Freight House from 7:00 AM to 10: AM. Founder's Day opens to the public at 10:00 AM. At 7:30 PM Saturday, there is a traditional country dance with live music in the banquet room of the Freight House. The public is welcome. Admission to the dance is free.

At dusk Saturday artillery from the shore, the boats and Fort Wellington in Prescott will light up the night.

"As Fort de la Présentation was a Roman Catholic mission to the Iroquois and their allies, it is especially fitting that Bishop LaValley will conduct an early morning mass on Lighthouse Point this year," said O'Keefe. "The public mass at 7:00 Sunday morning will be attended by re-enactors and their Indian allies."

There is much to see and do at Founder's Day Weekend. Visitors are encouraged to go to the Fort La Présentation Association website at www.fort1749.org where they will find the weekend schedule and a discount coupon for an adult admission. They are invited to copy the coupon and print one for each adult in their party.

