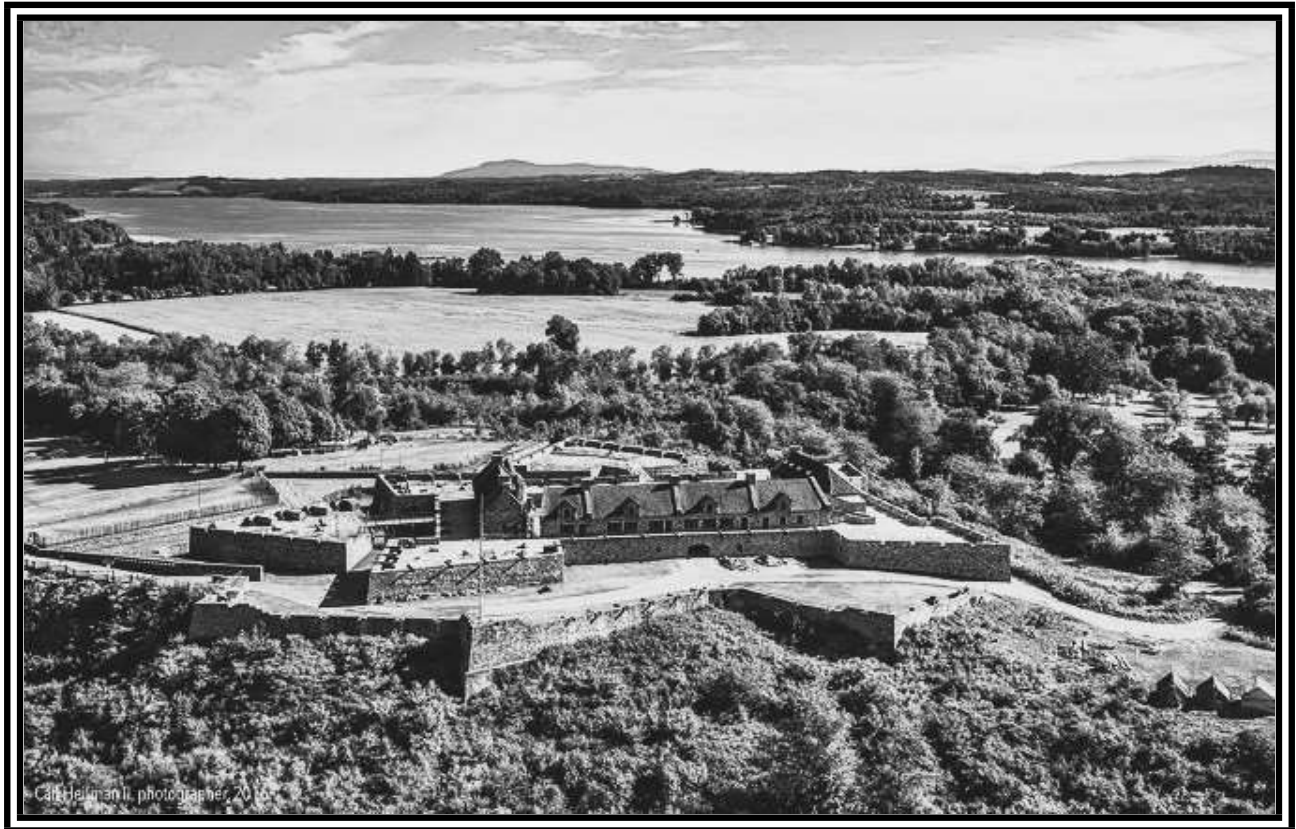


***Fort Ticonderoga***  
*The Key to the Continent*

Steve Spiller  
Redlands Fortnightly Club  
Meeting # 1985  
Thursday, November 2, 2023



It was June 1971. I was nineteen having just completed a 2,800 mile cross country drive from Redlands to upstate New York. My destination was one of our Nation's first historic preservation efforts. This was Fort Ticonderoga, a designated National Historic Landmark.

The fort has a rich history. Conflict and resolution are the obvious. Six times the fort was attacked. Three times the attacks were rebuffed and three times the efforts successful. The story does not begin with the French initiating construction in 1755 nor end with the abandonment at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. The history is more complex, more layered. Commerce, industry and transportation, agriculture and horticulture, Native American pre-history and history, and the birth of American tourism are essential elements in the centuries-old story. Other factors, including architecture, settlement, women's suffrage and equal rights play a part, as does art and

the preservation and conservation of view sheds, landscape design, literature, and popular culture. The mission to preserve and restore the site, a vision woven into the rich fabric of America aristocracy and philanthropy is essential to understanding the value of history.

The previous summer one of my sisters mailed me a postcard featuring an 18<sup>th</sup> century drum in the fort's collections. It peaked my interest learning college students dressed as Revolutionary War soldiers gave tours. I could do that. Playing the drums was an advantage. It was worth a shot and the persistence paid off. Duties included giving tours and performing artillery demonstrations. We learned to project our voices in the open air. There were times when tours exceeded 100 guests. Attendance on a good day surpassed 4,000 visitors. The uniform of the day included hair tied in a queue. We were "pied pipers" representing the 6<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Battalion. Our guests followed us from tour stop to tour stop as we shared the dramatic history, pointing out the various landmarks and objectives, describing the daily life of a soldier, and discussing 18<sup>th</sup> century military strategies while throwing in a little humor with a joke or two. Questions were always encouraged.

We fired authentic 18<sup>th</sup> century bronze mortar and cannon. Visitors gathered around a roped off area or watched from the upper walls. A fifty gallon steel barrel painted white was the target for the small, 4 or 5 inch mortar. Should we place the ball in the barrel, a case of beer was the reward; the odds stacked highly against us.

For five summers I lived in a small cottage on the shores of Lake Champlain with my fellow guides. Our tiny home was but a dot along the great Hudson River Lake Champlain Waterway. Control of the waterway provided leverage, served as a political boundary and functioned as trade routes. Battles were fought over it and on it.

The corridor begins or ends as the Hudson River coalesces with the Atlantic forming estuaries upstream from Battery Park. Lake Tear of the Clouds buried deep in the Adirondack woods is the birthplace of this "Rhine of North America." Portaging was often a necessity, including from the Hudson to Lake George. The 32 mile lake flows north into the La Chute River at the Town of Ticonderoga. A series of falls along the La Chute made it impossible to navigate. Street names in this small Adirondack mill town reinforce the storied history; Lord Howe, Iroquois, Hawkeye Trail, Cannonball Path, and The Portage to name but a few. The Portage serves as a reminder of an earlier history when watercraft, goods, and supplies were dragged, carried and manhandled to the reach the bay where the river spills into Lake Champlain. At this point a peninsula juts out into the lake. This is Ticonderoga or "the land between two waters." The lake constricts, becomes narrow meandering another 20 miles south to the point of origin near Whitehall, New York. Moving north from Ticonderoga, Lake Champlain crosses the Canadian border to the Richelieu River and then, into the Saint Lawrence. In total, approximately 375 miles. This combined series of lakes and rivers is truly one of North America's great waterways.

In 1755 the French initiated the construction of a fort at the juncture of the two waters. Why would they do this when in 1734 they commenced building Fort St. Frédéric just 18 miles north at what is Crown Point? This new location, sited at the narrowing of the lake, held distinct strategic advantages over the earlier-built French fort.

Charged with designing and implementing the project was Michel Chartier de Lotbinière. Despite the obvious advantages to building the fort in this location a significant disadvantage would play out years later. De Lotbinière created a design following the classic concepts of 17<sup>th</sup> century military engineer Vauban. The star-shaped structure resembles many similar structures on both sides of the Atlantic, all with overlapping geometric shapes. Other examples are The Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine, Florida, Tilbury Star Fort, Essex, England, Fort Stanwix near Rome, New York, Baltimore's Fort McHenry, and the Citadels of Copenhagen and Quebec City.

De Lotbinière's layout is a basic rectangle upon which various shapes were added. At each corner are bastions, extending out from the walls, providing additional protection and the ability to fire down on the opposition. Crescent-shaped structures or demilunes were placed on the east and west in anticipation of attacks from the landward sides. Wood bridges connected the two structures to the main fort. On the interior were three sets of barracks and on the 4<sup>th</sup> side, a curtain wall. This new fortification was named Fort Carillon. The source of the name lost to history.

A substantial garden was established below the fort's eastern walls. Following the British capture in 1759 this area became known as the King's Garden. On the western edge was the French village, set aside for kitchens, and blacksmiths, tinsmiths, cobblers, and other trades.

The French clear cut the peninsula. On the northern landward approach about three quarters of a mile from the fort, defensive earthen and wood outer breastworks were constructed. These were the French Lines. Remnants remain visible today. Lines of abbattis also proved essential in a July 1758 battle of remarkable consequences. The abbattis are fashioned with sharpened sticks laid out in a tight row and set at an angle. The latter similar in use to barbwire.

In 1755, the British built a wooden fortification at the south end of Lake George named Fort William Henry. Today the recreated fort sits as part of the tourist fed Lake George Village of souvenir shops, candy stores, nearby amusement parks, motels, restaurants, soft served ice cream, and fast food establishments. Despite the throng of thousands who descend upon the village each summer, the region maintains the remarkable beauty as America's Queen of the Lakes and was reason enough for artist Georgia O'Keeffe and her husband, Alfred Stieglitz, to spend time there year after year.

At the other end of the Lake George in 1757 was the French force at Fort Carillon commanded by the Marquis de Montcalm. The French force of 8,000 were intent on capturing Fort William Henry. They proceeded south on Lake George with an advance arriving three miles north of the fort on August 1. The British force of 2,500 was commanded by Lt. Colonel George Monro. After several days of bombardment by the French, Monro surrendered. Montcalm ordered the fort dismantled and burned, then returned to Fort Carillon.

There are those who may recall reading of the destruction of Fort William Henry in James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans*, the second and most popular of his five book series, *Leather Stockings*. In 1972 many faithfully tuned in to PBS week after week to watch the British adaptation of Cooper's novel and/or two decades later, viewed Academy Award winning actor

Daniel Day Lewis in the role of Hawkeye in the 1992 released film. This staple of American literature was first published in 1826. The date is significant, as this was the semi-centennial of the Declaration of Independence and three years following the opening of the Champlain Canal physically linking the Hudson north to Lake Champlain.

In early July of 1758 a British force estimated at 16,000 assembled at Fort William Henry, now partially rebuilt. Commanding General James Abercrombie was intent on capturing Fort Carillon. This was the largest force ever assembled on the North American continent up to this time. British regulars, troops recruited or conscripted in the colonies, the famous special forces-like Roger's Rangers, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders, Native Americans, and others prepared for battle.

French commander Montcalm had a force of 3,000. They mounted their defense at the French Lines. These troops were at a distinct disadvantage; outnumbered 5 to 1 and lacking an adequate food supply. And, the fort remained incomplete. Active fire began at 12:30 pm on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Wave upon wave of British were repulsed. By 4 pm the French had survived the fight. Many lay wounded or dead, the loss of life great. The crushed British retreated down Lake George to Fort William Henry and further south. The attempt to take Fort Carillon was the bloodiest battle in North America until the Civil War.

In 2019 the Fort Ticonderoga Association embarked on a study of the Carillon battlefield. The project was funded by an American Battlefield Protection Program Grant. The resulting 278 page report titled the *Preservation and Planning Assessment of the Carillon Battlefield* was released in 2021.<sup>1</sup> Featured on the fort's website is a timeline titled "1758: Decision at Carillon." It allows the user to explore events based on archival sources leading up to the July 8 battle, the battle and aftermath, coupled with featured artifacts and maps. The fort staff utilized the Esri StoryMap program, the same program championed by Ron Running and Tom Atchley for the Redlands Area Historical Society's Redlands timeline.

A well-known ghost story set at the Battle of Carillon, is retold time and again, each with subtle variations. Sometimes the main character is a Campbell and in other versions, a Cameron. Dean of Westminster, Arthur P. Stanley, wrote about it as well as others including renowned historian Francis Parkman in his 1884 account, *Montcalm and Wolfe*. The version most frequently quoted is *A Legend of the West Highlands* by Scottish novelist Robert Lewis Stevenson. His poem first appeared in the December 1887 edition of *Scribner's Magazine*.

Major Duncan Campbell of Inverawe is a member of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders or the Black Watch. Known for their distinctive black and green tartan, they will make a heroic stand at Ticonderoga where Campbell predicted his death in battle. A visit to the Black Watch Museum in Perth, Scotland tells the illustrious regimental history and the Royal honor bestowed upon the Regiment by King George III following the Battle of Carillon. Nearly 250 years later, members of the Black Watch stationed near Baghdad named their base Camp Ticonderoga honoring the Regiment's bravery in 1758.

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1 <https://www.fortticonderoga.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Preservation-and-Planning-Assessment-of-the-Carillon-Battlefield-Fort-Ticonderoga-PUBLIC.pdf>

Earlier, while in Scotland, Campbell encounters a man at his door pleading, seeking refuge. The man admits to killing another. Campbell assures the man, under oath, that he will hide him. A ghost appears to Campbell several times in his sleep. Over time he learns the man he is protecting killed his cousin or in other versions, his brother. The ghost pleads with Campbell to avenge his death. Campbell is honor bound to protect his cousins' murderer. The cousin's ghost then promises they will not meet again until Ticonderoga. Campbell's death is foretold at this unknown place. Time passes with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders now in North America. Campbell is wounded in battle. It is then he learns, too late, they are at Ticonderoga. Evacuated south about 50 miles to Fort Edward, Duncan surrenders to his wounds and is buried in a small Fort Edward, New York graveyard.

The following year, in 1759 the British, under the command of General Jeffrey Amherst, force the French to abandon Fort Carillon. They do so, but not before leaving the fort damaged by explosions. The fort, renamed Ticonderoga, remained in British hands and occupied by a small garrison. The Treaty of Paris 1763 is signed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. The Seven Years War or the French and Indian War is over. Fort Ticonderoga remained in British hands until May of 1775.

Unrest in the colonies continued to grow, to fester following the signing of the Treaty of Paris. The Sons of Liberty, the Boston Massacre of 1770, uprisings over perceived unjust taxes, the Stamp Act and "taxation without representation," the Tea Act and the subsequent dumping in Boston's harbor, single sheet broadsides posted for all to see, and incidents of tar and feathering followed. The British Parliament's passage of the Coercive Acts in March of 1774 sought to quell and punish uprisings in Boston. The first meeting of the Continental Congress soon followed in Philadelphia in September. Unrest continued to grow. Then, on April 19, 1775, the "shot heard around the world" at Lexington and Concord. British regulars engage the rebels. Less we forget, Longfellow penned the following:

Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear  
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,  
And the midnight message of Paul Revere. <sup>2</sup>

In the fall of 1974 I sat at a study carrel in the mammoth circular Readers Room of the British Museum. My course of study was British press views of America, a comparative examination of 1775 versus 1974. In my hands were newspapers of 1775. I looked for news of the colonies. A mystery continues to confound me. Reports of the events at Lexington and Concord appeared in the London press sooner than a ship typically could deliver news from Boston to the Port of Southampton.

Three weeks following the very day of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, rebels assembled in Vermont early in the morning of May 10, 1775. Their commanders were the flamboyant Ethan

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<sup>2</sup> Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *Paul Revere's Ride*, 1861 The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History [www.gilderlehrman.org](http://www.gilderlehrman.org)

Allen and the loyal American later turned traitor, General Benedict Arnold. Starting out near Larrabee's Point on the Vermont side, they shuttled back and forth across the lake. The number of participants limited by a lack of boats. They successfully captured Fort Ticonderoga held by a less than prepared small and inattentive British garrison. Their success came without a shot fired.

With the fort in the hands of the rebels, an opportunity presented itself. Artillery captured on May 10<sup>th</sup> was needed in Boston. In November of 1775, the Boston born bookseller turned colonial officer, Colonel Henry Knox, was determined to move the artillery to Boston. His was a daunting task. On December 9<sup>th</sup> three boats loaded with artillery were on Lake George ready to set sail. With sleds, oxen, and shallow-hulled batteau, and sailing vessels, Knox's men sailed, rowed and dragged 60 tons of artillery over a frozen landscape of ice, snow, and freezing streams, rivers and lakes through forests, swamps and icy waters to Dorchester Heights overlooking Boston. The 300 mile journey was accomplished in 53 days. The twenty-three year old Colonel's "noble train of artillery" helped drive the British out of the city.

The next year the British successfully take back the fort. The weakness in the original location and design was the downfall. Above this point where the La Chute River dumps into the Champlain is a mountain known by various names, including Sugar Loaf, Rattlesnake Hill and Mt. Defiance. Rising approximately 853 feet, there is a commanding 360 degree view from the mountain's crest. The Green Mountains of Vermont are to the east and the great Adirondack Park preserve to the south, north and west. This is an extraordinary and strategic vantage point. Below is the peninsula with the star-shaped fortress Ticonderoga and meandering Lake Champlain.

British General Johnny Burgoyne, better known as Gentleman Johnny, commands a force of 8,000 troops. They are in the north, near old Fort St. Frédéric and a more recently built British fortification, Fort Crown Point. Burgoyne is intent on capturing Ticonderoga commanded by General Arthur St. Clair. It was thought impossible to mount men and artillery on top of Defiance. It took Burgoyne's troops just two days to carve a road and drag artillery to the top. The fort was well within reach of British artillery. Due to the threat, St. Clair ordered the evacuation of the fort and the fortification across the lake on Mt. Independence. They did their best to damage both fortifications. Today, the road leading to the mountain's crest in essence follows the path created nearly 250 years ago. This was the last time the fort was captured. The fleeing Americans head south. Battles in Vermont, at Hubbardton and Bennington, soon followed. The great British defeat at the Battle of Saratoga in September and October 1777 signaled the basic end of action in the North.

If this account of artillery on Mt. Defiance sounds a bit familiar, it may to readers of Diana Gabaldon's epic historical fiction wrapped in time travel and fantasy or the Netflix adaptation, *Outlander*. In the newly released season seven we are introduced to the fort as Jamie Fraser, a member of a conscripted militia, and his doctor wife, Claire, journey to the land between two waters. They are prepared to help defend the fort from a pending northern British assault.

As Jamie and Claire approach the fort, we see the structures surrounded by growth; trees, shrubbery and other plantings. As noted earlier, the entire peninsula was clear cut. The layout of the fort appears somewhat out of scale, not quite right. It is as if they blended the fortification on

Mt. Independence with that of Fort Ticonderoga. And the story line is a bit off as well as the uniforms. It is after all, historical fiction. Should we excuse the inaccuracies? The production company never approached the fort during pre-production or prior to the July 2023 airing. We hear Jamie say, "Wherever a goat can go a man can go and wherever a man can go he can drag cannon or guns behind him." Jamie is referring to Mt. Defiance. The phrase is actually attributed to one of Burgoyne's junior officers, but one repeated by decades of Fort Ticonderoga guides and interpreters, including myself.

Despite the inaccuracies, the Netflix series ignited a new interest in the fort. Social media inquiries increased substantially. Those *Outlander* fans visiting the fort will encounter interpreters well-prepared to provide the documented facts and information while engaging in discussion and perhaps deflating some of the preconceived ideas. *Outlander* provides a valuable introduction and an opportunity to raise questions.

Fort Ticonderoga was one of several forts and outposts scattered up and down the water corridor. Abandoned after the war, the sites served as ample storehouses for stone, iron, wood, and other building materials, the closest thing to a Home Depot or Lowe's of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Whether traveling north or south from Ticonderoga, there are entire buildings, foundations, and other structures bearing a canny resemblance to elements and features of the old fort.

The Hudson Champlain waterway thrived in commerce and trade as transportation improved. The fledgling countrymen were discovering what the native people had long held of value; a valuable transportation corridor for the ease of travel, hunting and gathering, trade, and communication between nations. Settlement expanded along the corridor. Lumber, agricultural goods, fine stone, wool, and iron ore and graphite for polishing stoves, and later, lead pencils, and other commodities were transported up and down the waterway, bartered and traded. Less than forty miles from the Vermont shore were rich quarries of marble and slate, and granite sources in the middle of Vermont. By the 1880s and 1890s, 400 vessels plus Canadian water craft plied Lake Champlain with goods and merchandise. The War of 1812 caused some interference. Sixty miles north of Ticonderoga, near Plattsburgh, New York, the British and Americans engaged in the 1814 Battle of Lake Champlain, the last naval battle of the war leaving the Americans victorious.

The business of William Ferris Pell, a wealthy merchant, owner of a successful New York City auction house and a dealer in fine South American hardwoods and Italian marbles, traversed up and down the waterway. Pell was enamored with Ticonderoga's historic ruins, abandoned in the peace of 1783. Following the end of the War, Columbia and Union colleges were gifted the property by the Federal and New York State governments. The peninsula upon which much blood was spilled, where so much history occurred was purchased by in 1820. His actions set the stage for even more history and added to the legacy of one of this country's distinguished families. The purchase totaled 546 acres. Today the land under conservation is approximately 2,000 acres and includes portions of Mt. Defiance, Mt. Independence in Vermont plus an old outpost named Fort Mt. Hope. Little appears changed. The view sheds remain virtually intact.

The Champlain Canal opened in 1823, the same year as its sister, the Erie Canal. There was now a direct 60 mile link from the Hudson to Lake Champlain at Whitehall, once named Skenesborough and the birthplace of the U.S. Navy. Steam travel appeared on Lake Champlain fifteen years prior to the opening of the canal. The canal provided access to a new breed of individuals, the tourist. People were interested in exploring the northern regions of this new democracy, places written about in recently published guidebooks. Today we call this Heritage or Cultural Tourism. Just as people traveled to Europe on the great romantic, grand tours, there were those who thought much the same about the United States. People yearned to see, to explore the battlefields, the places where history was made, to tread where others had gone before and observe and appreciate the extraordinary landscapes. Fort Ticonderoga was one of the earliest North American tourist destinations.

Newly released guidebooks paved the way to explore the country. Author Theodore Dwight's *The Northern Traveller* [sic] with maps, engravings and written text described to the potential tourist what they would encounter, including at Fort Ticonderoga. Engravings of the fort show partial walls and piles of stone. The guide was released in several editions.

Artists were drawn to the beauty and the ruins. The Hudson River School's Thomas Cole was one of the first artists captivated by the old fort. In 1826 he completed a painting titled *Gelyna – View Near Ticonderoga*. The scene is of an American officer rushing to the aid of a wounded fellow officer at Ticonderoga during the French and Indian War. This oil on wood is part of the Fort Ticonderoga Association's collections.

Cole and others' artwork featuring the fort are reminiscent of work from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when artists journeyed to California to capture what was left of the missions, to capture what was still recognizable before the adobe melted into mounds of clay and straw. The artworks of the fort ruins and the California missions created interest and attracted the adventurous and curious. Photography emerged. The widely popular stereographs or stereo view cards of the 1870s to 1920s featured the extent of the damage and disrepair at the fort and along the El Camino Real. Eventually, visitors armed with a box with a ground glass lens would record the historic ruins.

Benson Lossing's *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*, published in 1852, reinforced the importance of the North Country's history as did the journals of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison reflecting on their 1791 visit to Fort Ticonderoga. Visitors connected a romance within the sacred battlefields. They sought the solitude, the serenity among the battlefields set within the scenic view sheds. I am reminded of a Washington Irving essay in a 1836 issue of *American Monthly Magazine* in which he wrote,

none waved now; where armies had struggled, so long ago that the bones of the slain were mouldered [sic]; where Peace had found a heritage in the forsaken haunts of War . . . How forcibly the lapse of time and change of circumstances came home to my apprehension! Banner would never wave again, nor cannon roar, nor blood be shed, nor trumpet stir up a soldier's heart, in this old Fort Ticonderoga. Tall trees had grown upon its ramparts, since the last garrison



marched out, to return no more, or only as some dreamer's summons, gliding from the twilight past to vanish among realities.<sup>3</sup>

Irving's essay reminds me of an incident in my own life far from Ticonderoga, an incident of similar serenity and reverence among the devastation. Within a week or so of the Loma Prieta Earthquake, the California Preservation Foundation board met in Oakland. In between meetings we found our way to the site of the flattened two level Nimitz Freeway. Others were there in small groups. We walked in among the debris; a chain link fence protecting access to the sacred site; the silence broken by quiet whispers or the click of a camera shutter. We were dwarfed by the magnitude, knowing there were buried under tons of concrete and steel, their lives ending at 5:04 p.m. or soon after on Tuesday, October 17, 1989.

Did the Northern tourists of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century have similar reactions as they picked their way over the remains of a fortification from the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars? Those visiting Gettysburg and Appomattox or the beaches of Normandy and Iwo Jima may have had or do experience similar responses to the enormity, the solitude and serenity at once bloodied battlefields.

William Ferris Pell's determination to protect the fort ruins is considered one of the country's first historic preservation endeavors. This statement is somewhat at odds with my 2018 Fortnightly paper, titled *Chained to a Bulldozer – Perspectives on Historic Preservation*, in which I credited Ann Pamela Cunningham of South Carolina and her Mt. Vernon Ladies Association for the first historic preservation project in the United States. The ladies acquired the home of our founding president in 1860, forty years following William Ferris Pell's purchase of Fort Ticonderoga. Although I presented a brief summary on the fort's preservation in the previous paper, I failed to fully acknowledge William F. Pell's early contributions and efforts, instead focusing on Pell's great-grandson Stephen Hyatt Pelham Pell and his wife, Sarah Gibbs Thompson Pell's restoration efforts beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Pell name is associated with American aristocracy, Mrs. Astor's New York 400, boarding schools, the Ivy League and private clubs, riding lessons, lawn tennis, debutante parties, and perhaps, a sense of privilege. The family has a long and distinguished history in the New World, beginning with British emigrant Thomas Pell's arrival in the colonies in 1635. A doctor, fur trader, and a leading citizen of Fairfield, Connecticut, Thomas purchased an estimated 200,000 acres in 1654 from Native Americans along the Long Island Sound of what today is most of Westchester

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<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Old Ticonderoga – A Picture of the Past", *The Snow-Image & other Twice-Told Tales*, American Monthly Magazine, 1836

County; the Bronx, New Rochelle, Pelham Manor, Larchmont, and Mamaroneck. The property was gradually sold off, some to Huguenot emigrants in search of religious freedom. A historic house in the Bronx, the Bartow-Pell Mansion, is a tranquil reminder of the family's nearly five century North American legacy, including saving Fort Ticonderoga.

Many Pell family members were unwavering in their loyalty to the Crown. Property was confiscated. Homes claimed by the opposing rebels. They were ridiculed and forced to uproot their families. An estimated 60,000 to 80,000 loyalists fled to Canada and other British-held territories during the Revolutionary War.<sup>4</sup> Nova Scotia and St. John in New Brunswick welcomed many of the expatriates, including William Ferris Pell. Pell returned to the states with a sizable fortune, living first near St. Johnsbury, Vermont in the state's Northeast Kingdom and then, in Burlington, Vermont.

The Pell name is also recognizable because of the Federal Basic Educational Opportunity Grant program or Pell Grants championed by the late Claiborne DeBorda Pell, Rhode Island's former US Senator. Claiborne was a faithful supporter of Fort Ticonderoga and served several years on the Fort Ticonderoga Association board. The senator was more blue collar than blue blood with a passion for the disenfranchised. His passion likely inherited, in part, from his father, Herbert Claiborne Pell Jr. The elder Pell was a friend of Franklin Delano Roosevelt dating back to their Gold Coast student days at Harvard. Herbert also attended Columbia, but never graduated from either college. Instead, he withdrew to travel Europe. He served one term in Congress and was chairman of the New York Democratic Committee. FDR named him Minister to Portugal and later, as Minister to Hungary. He successfully managed to smuggle Jews safely out of Europe. His convictions were in stark contrast to the opposition within the US State Department objecting to allowing Jewish refugees into the country. When war broke out between Germany and the U.S., a hasty retreat from the Budapest embassy commenced, including burning documents and other communications. Pell was later named as a United States representative on the United Nations War Commission.

Fort Ticonderoga was fenced to prevent further destruction and pilfering following William Ferris Pell's purchase. He was the steward, the protector of the sacred grounds claimed by Samuel de Champlain two centuries previously. Access to the site was not prevented, but encouraged. Pell welcomed visitors who journeyed from Saratoga Springs via horse and carriage. Others arrived by stage coach or at the fort dock having traveled by steamboat or other modes of water transportation. The Champlain Canal benefited Pell's business interests. Commerce and settlement benefited. Railroads would follow. The Delaware-Hudson Railroad wound its way north through towns like Fort Edward, on to Whitehall and north along the western banks of Lake Champlain. Continuing directly north beyond the fort was a challenge. The solution was to carve, blast a 439 foot long tunnel deep under the fort grounds below the old French Lines. Having achieved the objective, the train continued north along the lake to Montreal. Another rail line came west from Rutland, Vermont. This was the Adison Railroad. A floating trestle bridge across Lake Champlain provided access over the lake to the New York shore.

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<sup>4</sup> *Loyalists* <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/loyalists/#:~:text=Between%2060%2C000%20and%2080%2C000%20Americans,hardship%20in%20their%20new%20homes.>

In 1826 Pell built the Pavilion, a Greek inspired temple-like home with a large two story center structure supported by Tuscan columns and a loggia to the left and right connecting two small structures at either end. Painted white, it gives the illusion of marble. The Pavilion replaced an earlier home destroyed by fire. The home is documented as one of America's first summer residences, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and a National Historic Landmark.

Visitors would sometimes stay or take their meals at the Pavilion. In 1839 William was returning to Ticonderoga. His eldest son, Archibald, determined to give his father a grand welcomed, fired a cannon to greet his father. The weapon exploded. Archibald was killed. William Ferris Pell never returned to the fort ruins following the accident. The land was divided among the surviving heirs. From 1840 until about 1890, the Pavilion was leased to several innkeepers who operated it as a hotel. They welcomed tourists on the Great Northern adventure. Eventually the Pavilion served a less demanding clientele. It became a stable with livestock living inside the once grand home.

The rehabilitation of the Pavilion was part of the fort restoration initiated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Interior decorators and landscape architects were brought in, as well as architect Lord Alfred Charles Bossom. The latter was better known for the design of skyscrapers in the United States than in his English homeland. He created plans for the restoration of the fort and Pavilion.

The Pavilion was the summer home of Stephen and Sarah Pell and later, their son and daughter-in-law, John and Pyrma Pell until the late 1980s. John and Pyrma came for six weeks or so in the summer where they welcomed house guests, picnicked on Lake George and hosted afternoon teas. Occasionally the guide staff received invitations to tea. We joined Mr. and Mrs. Pell and at times, their guests, for ice tea and orange juice, delicate sandwiches and sweets. These were remarkable occasions. We thoroughly enjoyed our time and the conversations on the porch of one of the country's first summer homes as we looked out upon one of the great, scenic view sheds in America.

Other features added to the property in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century included a children's playhouse. The log structure, inspired by the great Adirondack camps, was given the name the *Yes Do* or *Y-D House* and built for Stephen and Sarah's sons, John and Robert. There was also a greenhouse, apple orchard, a large, two story garage, a brick-walled garden, an alle or Avenue of Trees, croquet lawn and a clay tennis court, boat dock, gazebo, a house for Stephen's brother, Howland Pell, and at the entrance to the garrison grounds, a stone gatehouse.

The garrison grounds with the stately Pavilion was the childhood playground for the young Stephen Pell. According to family accounts, on one of his adventures he unearthed a bronze tinder box. The discovery ignited a dream to restore the fort.

Various thoughts and ideas, including having the state of New York or the Federal Government acquire the property, were proposed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1908 Stephen and Sarah Pell stepped forward to restore the fort. They reached out to Sarah's father, Robert Means Thompson, for funding. Robert was a Naval Academy graduate, attorney and a successful Rhode Island businessman. He offered up to \$500,000. Sarah was a formidable partner for Stephen. She was on the nation's stage promoting Woman's Suffrage and Finance Chair of the National Woman's Party.

Politics were familiar to her. Her maternal grandfather was the Governor of Rhode Island, William C. Gibbs.

In early July, 1909, President William Howard Taft traveled to upstate New York to celebrate and mark the Tercentenary of explorer and cartographer Samuel de Champlain's exploration of the lake bearing the explorer's name. This was just a few months prior to the President's whirlwind afternoon automobile tour of the Inland Empire. Several days of activity were scheduled in the Champlain Valley. On July 6 Taft was the guest of Stephen and Sarah. An estimated 20,000 attended the ceremonies on the fort grounds despite heavy rains. Crowds filled the temporary grandstand to hear the Presidential remarks, as well as those of the New York governor and the ambassadors of Great Britain and France. The Presidential visit, as well, offered the first official look at the progress to restore the fort and the official opening of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum.

President Taft, Mr. and Mrs. Pell and other attendees gathered for a photo at the Pavilion. It is believed this was near where Champlain and his men along with Algonquin and Huron natives encountered, in a skirmish, members of the Iroquois nation in July of 1609. The peninsula, destined to play a crucial role in the the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, remains today, a significant stop along the the north south waterway.

Upon the death of William Ferris Pell, the property was divided among his ten surviving children. Stephen and Sarah consolidated the property and began restoration almost immediately with the assistance of Lord Bossom. They founded the not-for-profit Fort Ticonderoga Association in 1931. Stephen's discovery of the small tinder box led to an extensive collection assembled over the last 140 years. The collection is now in excess of 200,000 artifacts. A significant portion are searchable on the fort's website. Objects unearthed onsite during various stages of restoration, in archaeological excavations and acquired by donation and purchased over the years have resulted in one of the finest American and European 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century military collections in the world. As with most museums, only a small percentage of these artifacts are on exhibit at any one time.

Artifacts discovered in long ago buried trash heaps and junk piles are varied and indicators of diet, including food scraps, animal bones, fresh water shells, and pots and kettles. Shards of broken bottles, china and clay pipes often reveal if objects were imported or made domestically. The tattered remains of shoes, shoe buckles, buttons, historic clothing, including uniforms and head gear, are used by staff artifacters to craft footwear and clothing worn by interpreters. Other artifacts include points and other Native American tools, needles, shovel blades, ax heads, awls, the trigger mechanism for a single shot Brown Bess smooth bore musket, flints, and fine art. Additional artifacts include clumps of lime-based mortar, canteens, cartridge boxes, polearms, muskets, rifles, pistols, bayonets, broad swords, and knives. There are artifacts specifically designed for artillery such as the worm used to extricate debris from a cannon barrel. A musket ball in the collection reveals a purpose unrelated to the original deadly intent. Deeply cut into the soft lead are the clear impressions of teeth, evidence of the lack of pain relieving alternatives for amputation or other invasive battlefield medical procedures.

Another category of artifacts are items significant to the Pell family. These include furniture,

musical instruments, fine art, china, silver, and crystal. Among the delicate dinnerware are finger bowls used through the 1980s.

Powder horns are a highlight of the fort's collections. They are their own art form and highly decorative, often featuring maps, other images, the proud owners name, and perhaps the location and regiment or battalion. Several of the horns in the collections indicate specific associations with fort during the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars.

The powder horn is in many ways similar to scrimshaw crafted from whale bone and teeth by idle whalers. The horns could be made by the individual, but powder horn artisans were highly prized. A soldier would order a horn. He might asked for certain imagery and personalization. Crafting a horn is a tedious, time consuming process. The horn is boiled for several hours until the inner core softens and is loose enough to remove. Once the core is gone, the horn is scraped with a broken piece of glass, knife or similar tool; the goal is to achieve transparency. Lifting the horn to the light allows the viewer to see the level of powder. The narrow end is cut off and with a hot poker or other tool, a hole punched through. The cut off end can be carved to create a stopper. A large plug often made of wood is required at the base. Wax, rosin or other materials hold the plug tight and the powder dry. Charcoal is typically wiped into the etchings to make the artwork stand out and a paste of pumice or ash, oil, and spit rubbed into the surface creating a smooth, glass-like appearance.

Within the collection are approximately 160 pieces of artillery. These are mortars, howitzers, cannon, smooth bore and rifled, cast iron or bronze, British, French, Swedish, Spanish, and American. With the exception of two or three, none have a direct connection to the fort. There is an example of one found onsite when unearthed in the restoration process. A representative of Stephen Pell on a trip to the Caribbean successfully acquired several artillery pieces. President Moncada of Nicaragua and the Republic of Haiti gifted artillery. Other pieces came from Panama, the Dominican Republic and Saint Kitts. There are pieces donated by the British War Office, acquired at auction and purchased in France, Great Britain and sources in the United States.

Fort staff used authentic 18<sup>th</sup> century pieces for live fire demonstrations over several decades. The practice ended in the late 1990s. Firing 200 plus year old pieces repeatedly put them at risk as well as the user. These artillery pieces remain on display accompanied by explanatory text labels; a teaching moment as to why it goes against best practices to fire historic artillery. There is a cast iron mortar on exhibit or more correctly, what is left of the piece. During the Revolutionary War it split in half upon firing. Later used as ship ballast, it was recovered and returned to the fort.

The fort maintains an extensive archive open to researchers by appointment. Items include visual materials such as maps, postcards, Daguerreotypes, lantern slides, stereoviews, prints, and engravings, photographs, and glass negatives. Orderly books, correspondence, deeds, invoices, inventories, discharge papers, account books, and journals are part of the collections. Many are searchable on the online portal. To assist scholars, family members and others seeking information of those who did or may have served at Ticonderoga, the fort launched the *Ticonderoga Soldiers Project* to document the estimated 45,000 soldiers and citizens with connections to the fort.

I joined the guide staff on the eve of the Bicentennial, five years following federal legislation creating the bipartisan American Revolution Bicentennial Commission. It was to be a time of reflection and introspection. And it was a time to celebrate. How far had we come and what was accomplished over the 200 years? There were no plans for a world's fair as in 1876 and the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. The Bicentennial was more than celebratory events and parades. More local than Federally dictated. This was a grass roots, inclusive celebration, not one from the top down. In the end, there was a diversity of projects, initiatives, many local that continue to today.

Pageants and reenactments of historic events and anniversaries are common at Fort Ticonderoga. The tricentennial of Samuel de Champlain's 1609 discovery is an excellent example. Another date, May 10, 1775 is a highlight of the fort's annual calendar. The capture of the fort by Ethan Allen, Benedict Arnold and the Green Mountain Boys has been reenacted several times, including in 1875 and 1911 when the latter was recorded on film. For the Bicentennial reenactment, descendants of the original British and American participants were recruited. On Saturday, May 10, 1975 a large crowd assembled inside the fort. We crammed onto wooden bleachers, huddling in the 3 am chill. Flood lights illuminated the courtyard. The decedents in period clothing arrived on time, the same early morning hour 200 years prior; the small British garrison in place. The rebel and British reenactors were armed with functioning 18<sup>th</sup> century reproduction weapons. Allen's decedent, Dr. John Lattimer stood 6'4". Brandishing Allen's gold gilt sword, the Columbia University professor of urology charged up the stairs of the West Barracks. Pounding on the door, he demanded the surrender "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." The Captain Delaplace's decedent was at the door in nightshirt and candle in hand; wife at his side. Delaplace surrendered, relinquishing his command. No shot was fired, either on May 10, 1775 nor May 10, 1975. The small British garrison was of no help and easily overpowered. The fort and its valuable cache of artillery now belonged to the revolutionary rabble.

In excess of 40,000 attended the 1975 day-long event. On site delicacies for hungry included a spit-roasted ox, but it was gone before most people could savor even the smallest bite. A North Country chicken barbecue alternative filled the stomachs and souls of many attendees. The U.S Army's 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry ceremonial troops performed, including Fife and Drum Corps, Color Guard and Washington's Honor Guard – the latter in their buff and blue uniforms. New York State Governor Hugh Carey was on hand as well as network television.

Since the summer of 1973 the fort's program has featured a musical component. Members of a newly created fife and drum corps were recruited from Ticonderoga High School. This was one more step in planning for the Bi-Centennial. The corps performed several times a day, seven days a week. By end of the first season these talented young men were proficient and well - prepared to go on the road. Over Labor Day Weekend we marched in Washington, D.C at Fort Myer, Virginia, the U.S Army base adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery and home to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry or Old Guard. Fifty years later the fort's music program remains an essential component in the diverse multi-level interpretative schedule. A separate endowment dedicated to the corps provides annual funding. Painted on a large board mounted in the West Barracks are the names of the 160 members who have served in the corps over the past fifty years, including my own name.

A little aside. There is a Redlands connection to Dr. Lattimer who portrayed Ethan Allen on May 10, 1975. He was a collector with an eye for the obscure, sometimes the macabre. His 3,000 plus collection contained many mysteries, unknown following the Doctor's passing in 2007. Lattimer had a passion for Abraham Lincoln related artifacts. The president's blood soaked collar worn the evening of April 14, 1865 was in the collection. After Dr. Lattimer's death, his family placed a portion of their father's collection up for auction. The Lincoln Memorial Association ended up acquiring objects once owned by doctor.

### Conclusion

The Sesquicentennial is just two years away. How different in scale and scope do we anticipate this multi-year occasion when compared to fifty or even 150 years ago? What will be the lasting reminders, the concrete accomplishments from this period of introspection and appreciation of our nation's history? Will there be substantial, long lasting nationwide results? Of course, we expect the tchotchkes of fifty years ago, such as collectible coins, belt buckles, license plates, calendars, beer steins, crystal, patches, letter openers, postage stamps, pendants, Christmas ornaments, and the morass of items plastered with overused representative images.

The Fort Ticonderoga Association began planning for America250 or the sesquicentennial several years ago. They launched a \$70 million dollar campaign identifying three principle goals – the restoration and adaptive reuse of the Pavilion, the acquisition of a significant collection and funding a new museum. The Pavilion project began with planning in 2014 and the actual construction in 2019. Three years later with a few Covid hiccups the nine million dollar restoration and adaptive reuse was complete. Meanwhile, \$12 million was required for the acquisition of the 3,000 object Robert Nittolo collection of military objects from the 1600 to 1700s. Nittolo passed away in August. His passion for the Revolutionary War, inspired by a visit to Fort Ticonderoga in his youth, is finding a deserving home. Most of the money needed for the acquisition is in hand and funding for the new museum is well under way.

The growth and success at Fort Ticonderoga, especially over the last 12 to 15 years is remarkable. In a region where businesses often close in the winter, this is not the case at the fort. They maintain ambitious year round programming, in addition to the fort's seasonal May through October schedule. Online access and the creation of the Fort Ticonderoga Center for Digital History allows for a year round presence. One highlight is a virtual author series. Other programs include the Edward W. Pell Graduate Fellowship and the Ticonderoga Teachers Institute. An education affiliate program contains in excess of 520 K-12 schools and 125 universities.

The behind the scenes work is remarkable. Artifacters are busy hand making uniforms for the new season, including shoes. The Association applies best practice efforts to cataloguing, collections storage, photographing artifacts and scanning archival materials, and curriculum and lesson plan development for interpreters and classroom applications. The Fort Ticonderoga Museum was one of the first museums to received accreditation from the American Association of Museums (now, the American Alliance of Museums).

The May through October season is filled with activities. Each year the fort staff present a different year in their military history. One season could be 1757 representing the French role and another year, 1775 following the capture of the fort by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold. Uniforms change, language changes. Aside from the daily schedule of various themed tours and demonstrations, the season includes battle reenactments and living history, boat rides on Lake Champlain, an annual garden and landscape symposium, and other events and activities.

The fort has experienced increases in revenue over the past nine years as compared to expenses while continuing to implement new programming during that same nine year period. In 2013 the annual economic impact was monetized at \$9 million dollars. The figure keeps going up and by 2030 they forecast a conservative estimate of \$77 million annual impact.

In Theodore Dwights *Northern Traveller* [sic] he failed to address the legend of Champ, the sea monster sited as a distant cousin to the Lock Ness Monster. Dwights stated his impressions of the fort,

Ticonderoga is doubtless destined to become a favourite [sic] place of resort for strangers, as it possesses so many attractions in its scenery, its historical monuments and associations, and will hereafter [sic] offer so many conveniences, in being stopping place for the steam boats, and furnished with a large hotel.<sup>5</sup>

Although steam boats no longer cruise the waters of Lake Champlain, Fort Ticonderoga has a hotel on their wish list.

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<sup>5</sup> Dwight, Theodore, Jr., *The Northern Traveller*. (New York, A. T. Goodrich, J & J Harper, Printers, 1826), 180.