

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New York	
COUNTY: Oswego	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.12.36.0013	12/18/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Fort Ontario

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
East 7th Street and Lake Ontario

CITY OR TOWN:
Oswego

STATE: New York CODE: 37 COUNTY: Oswego CODE: 075

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted * <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of New York

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Albany STATE: New York CODE: 36

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Oswego County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Oswego STATE: New York CODE: 36

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

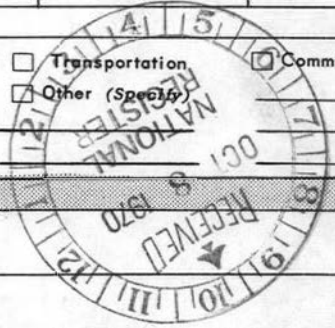
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

*Fort Ontario is open to the public during specified hours.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: New York
COUNTY: Oswego
ENTRY NUMBER: 70.12.36.0013
DATE: 12/18/70
FOR NPS USE ONLY

10-10-73

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Shape of plan: The fort is pentagonal in plan with five arrowshaped bastions, one at each corner. There is an inner courtyard, in the shape of an irregular oval, around which the powder magazine, the officers' quarters and post headquarters are clustered.

Wall construction: The walls of the fort date from 1860 and are constructed of cut stone blocks. The interior buildings are constructed of stone, wood and brick.

Notable features: The powder magazine was constructed of earth, stone and wood between 1839 and 1844. The west artillery casemate is filled with a battery of 24 and 32 pound howitzers.

The fort also contains other buildings and structures which are representative of the various periods of the fort's long history.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1839**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first Fort Ontario, built by the British in 1755 to challenge the power of the French in North America, was destroyed by a French Army in 1756. A much stronger and enlarged second fort was built in 1759. It was used actively during the Revolutionary War and remained in British hands until 1796. During the War of 1812, Fort Ontario was used to protect the supply routes to the naval base at Sackets Harbor. The fort was captured by the British in 1814 and was subsequently destroyed.

In 1839 a third Fort Ontario was begun in response to tensions arising from Canada's Patriot War. The fear that the British would intervene in the Civil War caused a similar upgrading of defenses again in 1860.

The fort also served as a training post between 1903 and 1905, a hospital camp in World War I, and a training installation for military police and anti-aircraft units in World War II.

After almost two hundred years of active military service, the fort was abandoned by the Army in 1946. It began its longterm development as an historical museum property shortly afterwards.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Heritage Foundation of Oswego. "Fort Ontario".
 Oswego, N.Y.: Heritage Foundation of Oswego, n.d.
 N.Y. State Education Department. "Fort Ontario". Albany,
 N.Y.: N.Y. State Education Department, n.d.

Oswego west
 4-23-76
 DMK

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds 43 ° 28 ' 04 "	Degrees Minutes Seconds 76 ° 30 ' 47 "		Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "	Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "	
NE	43 ° 28 ' 04 "	76 ° 30 ' 15 "				
SE	43 ° 27 ' 46 "	76 ° 30 ' 15 "				
SW	43 ° 27 ' 46 "	76 ° 30 ' 47 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 36 ±

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Chester Liebs**

ORGANIZATION: **New York State Historic Trust** DATE: **Aug. 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Executive Department**

CITY OR TOWN: **Albany** STATE: **New York** CODE: **-36**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *CS*
 Title: **Chairman, N.Y.S. Historic Trust**
 Date: **1870**

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Conrad A. Connelly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

DEC 18 1970

Date: _____
 ATTEST:
William J. Keeney
 Keeper of the National Register
DEC 7 1970
 Date: _____



NPS Number 70-12.36-0013

Title: Ft. Ontario

Loc. Oswego Co., N.Y.
Aerial view

①

NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC TRUST

TITLE Fort Ontario

ADDRESS

CITY Oswego

COUNTY Oswego

DATE Oct 1969

NEG. NO.

PHOTOGRAPHER

FILE COPY • DO NOT REMOVE

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT
WRITTEN PERMISSION OF
FORT ONTARIO

8
FB

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 70-10-36-0013

Title: Ft. Ontario

Loc. Orwery Co., N.Y. ①

Aerial view

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE New York	
COUNTY	
Oswego	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.12.36.0013	12/18/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Fort Ontario			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
East 7th Street and Lake Ontario			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Oswego			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
New York	36	Oswego	075
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: New York State Historic Trust			
DATE OF PHOTO: October 1969			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: New York State Historic Trust-Fort Ontario Historic Site			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
Aerial view looking north			



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
New York	
COUNTY	
Oswego	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.12.36.0013	12/18/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Fort Ontario
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

East 7th Street and Lake Ontario

CITY OR TOWN:

Oswego

STATE:

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY:

Oswego

CODE

075

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:

N.Y.S. Dept. of Transportation Quadrangle 7.5 minute series

SCALE: 1:24000

DATE: 1967

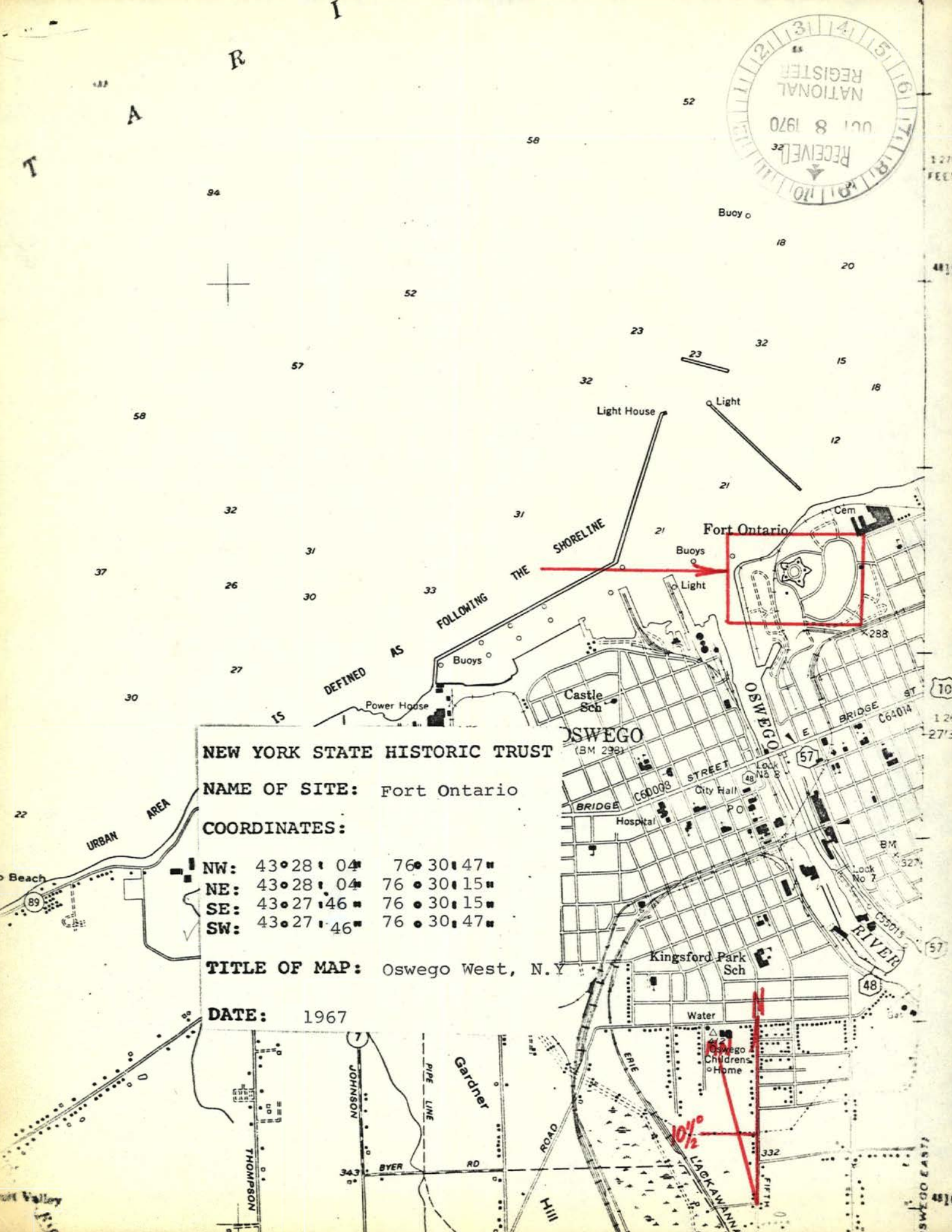
4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

PH0031119





NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC TRUST

NAME OF SITE: Fort Ontario

COORDINATES:

NW:	43°28'04"	76°30'47"
NE:	43°28'04"	76°30'15"
SE:	43°27'46"	76°30'15"
SW:	43°27'46"	76°30'47"

TITLE OF MAP: Oswego West, N.Y.

DATE: 1967

10 1/2

National Register of Historic Places

Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2018



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property:

historic name Fort Ontario Military Reservation
other names/site number Fort Ontario
Name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 1 East Fourth St. not for publication
city or town Oswego vicinity
state New York code NY county Oswego code 075 zip code 13216

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. See continuation sheet for additional comments. nomination

Signature of certifying official/Title [Signature] Date 6-15-2018
State or Federal agency and bureau D&H PD

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 8/6/2018

Fort Ontario Military Reservation

Name of Property

Oswego County, New York

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
17	3	buildings
1	1	sites
1	2	structures
3	2	objects
22	8	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE: Fortification; battlefield

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Commemorative Monuments

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Commemorative Monuments

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Various

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Various

walls Various

roof Various

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation Sheet

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1755-1954

Significant Dates

1755, 1756, 1759, 1766, 1775-83, 1796, 1813, 1814, 1821, 1839, 1841-2, 1844-5, 1867-8, 1885, 1891, 1893, 1903-05, 1906, 1917, 1921, 1927, 1940, 1944, 1946, 1949, 1953, 1954

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Primary location of additional data

- x State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property 62.75**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18				3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing	
2					4			

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Travis Bowman (Senior Curator, Bureau of Historic Sites), Paul Lear (Historic Site Manger), Jenny Emmons (Site Curator)organization Bureau of Historic Sits and Parks, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation date 7/15/15street & number _____ telephone 518-2682147city or town Waterford state New York zip code 12188**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservationstreet & number 1 E 4th St telephone (315) 343-4711city or town Oswego state NY zip code 13126**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET
Section number 8 Page 1

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego County, New York

Narrative Description:

The Fort Ontario Military Reservation is an irregularly shaped parcel of approximately 62.75 acres at the east side of the mouth of the Oswego River, encompassing the area of military activity on the site from 1755 to 1954. During the years of military use, the Fort Ontario Military Reservation was frequently adapted to fit the current needs of the military, and underwent several changes in terms of its size and the built environment.

This new nomination subsumes and replaces the 1970 nomination, which had rectilinear boundaries drawn to include part of the Oswego River and Lake Ontario and did not accurately reflect the lands or resources historically associated with Fort Ontario (see continuation sheet for original boundary map). The new nomination boundary includes only those lands significant to the portion of the original Fort Ontario Military Reservation, which still has integrity to its use by the United States Army, the US Coast Guard, the New York National Guard, and the New York State Veterans Housing Bureau.

The nominated Fort Ontario Military Reservation takes in numerous significant archaeological sites associated with military occupation of the site from 1755 to 1955, a number of plaques, memorials, and interpretive signs erected to commemorate or explain those events and their history on a local, regional, state and national level, various public recreational facilities, and twenty buildings that are extant from the various military occupations. The district includes a total of thirty-one features, twenty-two of which are contributing.¹ This includes one contributing site to encompass the full scope of its commemorative, archaeological and recreational landscape and thirty individual features.

Although the natural and built environment has changed much over the past 250 years, the geographical relationship with Lake Ontario and the Oswego River, the dramatic topography of the earthworks and its stone outer scarp walls, the fort's kidney-shaped parade ground—still ringed with buildings that were once functionally-related to the Fort Ontario complex—and its radiating roadways feeding in the city grid allow for an understanding that this significant military installation developed with the City of Oswego, and altered the land to fit its needs over time.

The property being nominated currently includes four tax parcels under the ownership of either the State of New York or the City of Oswego. The space fulfills a variety of recreational, educational, and civic functions—representing a partnership between the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the City of Oswego, and the City of Oswego Port Authority to protect this special part of a very historic city and to enhance the site's community, cultural and recreational facilities while respecting its historic character. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation maintains the Fort Ontario State Historic Site; an historic site since 1953, Fort Ontario offers various historical programming, demonstrations, tours, educational services, interpretive signs along with scenic views, picnic grounds, bike paths, walking paths and parking areas.

¹ Since the previous nomination of Fort Ontario was nonspecific in terms of the resource count, the total number of additional resources within the new nomination will be set at thirty.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET
Section number 8 Page 2

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego County, New York

The lands owned by the City of Oswego were transferred to the city in the 1950s, with covenants permanently restricting their use for “local park, recreation, playground, street or highway purposes only”

Annotated Property List

1. The earthworks, (1839, 1840's, and 1863-72), 1 *contributing structure*; A five bastioned, star-shaped fort enclosing a circular parade ground. One front faces the river, one the lake and three face landward; the landward front nearest the river contains the main entrance/stone sally port and the middle land front contained a demi-lune. The earthen ramparts (sloped parapet, breastworks, and scarp) were originally covered with wooden revetments of Kyanized timbers, but the scarp was finished with cut stone blocks during the Civil War. The bastions are furnished with casemates for artillery, and the scarp galleries are loop-holed for musketry. The outer works originally included an earthen glacis, but it was obsolete by the late 19th century and was removed. Casement entrances are stone construction, set into the earthen parapets, and are generally rectangular with stairs descending to a landing and a second flight descending into the stone casemate itself.

Inside of the earthworks

Inside of the earthworks there is a Powder Magazine, Enlisted Men's Barracks, Officers' Quarters 1 and 2, and a Storehouse—each sheltered by a bastion, two guardhouses flanking the entrance, and several non-contributing resources:

2. Powder Magazine, (1842), 1 *contributing building*; The Powder Magazine is a rectangular, one story, gable roofed building constructed of cut Medina sandstone blocks laid in regular courses. The building is built into the bastion, with a whitewashed vertical board retaining wall creating space between the building and earthworks. Fenestration is limited to a single entrance door on the gable end, facing the earthworks and three loop-holes for musketry. It is currently covered by a slate roof.

3. Enlisted Men's Barracks (1839-1843, 1885, 1893), 1 *contributing building*; The Enlisted Men's Barracks (EMB) is a rectangular, ten-bay, double-pile, two and half story, gable roofed building constructed of cut Medina sandstone blocks laid in regular courses. The building is built into the bastion, with a retaining wall composed of whitewashed vertical boards in some places and laid stone blocks in others; as with all the buildings in the fort itself, the retaining wall creates a space around the building, below grade of the bastion. Fenestration is regular and symmetrical, consisting of four entrances (two per story) and double-hung, 6/6, wood-framed windows, with large stone lintels and projecting stone sills. The main elevation features a double gallery supported by squared, fluted posts; the galleries stretch across the full width of the façade and have external stairs on each end. There are brick chimneys on each of the gable ends of the building. It is currently covered by a wood shingle roof. Flanking the ends of the lower gallery are two attached non-historic wooden privies—one shed-roofed and one hipped-roofed. The privies are vertical board construction on dry-laid stone foundations, and are historical reconstructions based on photographic and archaeological evidence.

3. Officers' Quarters 1 (1841-44, 1884, c1891, c1927), 1 *contributing building*: The Officers' Quarters 1 (OQ1) is a rectangular, five-bay, double pile, two and half story, gable roofed building constructed of cut Medina sandstone blocks laid in regular courses; ornamentation includes corner quoins and extruded mortar joints. Proportionally the building is tall compared to its footprint, giving it a vertical emphasis. The building is built into the bastion, with a whitewashed vertical board retaining wall creating space between the building and earthworks. Attached to the main block is a one story, shed roofed, frame privy addition, sheathed in clapboards. Fenestration on the entrance elevation is regular and symmetrical, consisting of a center entrance and double-hung, 6/6, wood-framed windows, with large stone lintels and projecting stone sills; four light the lower story, and five light the upper. Fenestration on the other elevations is regular, with two window openings lighting the attic, one lighting the upper story (rear bay), one lighting the lower story (rear bay) and one exterior door accessing the frame privy addition; windows are all of the type already described. Fenestration on the frame privy addition is irregular. The main block includes two brick chimneys on the gable ends, offset from the ridgeline towards the front bay. The building is currently covered in a wood shingle roof.

4. [Right] Entrance Guardhouse (1867-8), 1 *contributing building*: The entrance guardhouse is a small, one story, square footprint building of cut limestone blocks laid in regular courses. The building has a hipped roof and a projecting frieze band and cornice executed in stone. Fenestration is limited to the elevation facing the parade, and consist of a single door, surmounted by a three light transom, and one double-hung, 6/6, wood-framed window, with a projecting stone sill. The roof is currently covered in metal sheathing.

5. [Left] Entrance Guardhouse (1867-8), 1 *contributing building*: The entrance guardhouse on the left flank is of parallel construction, massing, and design to the example on the right flank, already described. The only exterior difference between the two buildings is that the left guardhouse has two loop-holes for musketry on the elevation facing the entrance.

6. Officers' Quarters 2 (1844-5, c1891, c1927), 1 *contributing building*: The Officers' Quarters 2 (OQ2) is of parallel construction, massing, and design to OQ1, already described. The only exterior difference between the two buildings is that OQ2 lacks the frame privy addition and OQ2 still has all four of its chimneys.

7. Guardhouse or Storehouse (1842-44, c1927, c1940), 1 *contributing building*: The Storehouse is a rectangular, five-bay, double pile, two and half story, gable roofed building constructed of cut Medina sandstone blocks laid in regular courses; ornamentation includes corner quoins, a slight projecting cornice with an unadorned frieze band, and extruded mortar joints. A single pile, two story addition projects from the northwest gable end; the lower story of the elevation is of cut sandstone blocks, matching the other buildings onsite, but the upper story is composed of quarry-faced Medina sandstone blocks, laid in regular courses, representing a later building phase. The building is built into the bastion, with a whitewashed vertical board retaining wall creating space between the building and earthworks. Fenestration on the entrance elevation is regular and symmetrical, consisting of a center entrance and double-hung, 6/6, wood-framed windows, with large stone lintels and projecting stone sills; four light each story. Fenestration on gable end without the addition is also symmetrical—one center window lights the lower story, two

light the upper story and one center window lights the attic; windows are all of the size and type already described. Fenestration on the addition consists of an entrance door and small, square, four light window on the lower story and one double-hung, 2/2, wood-framed window lighting the upper story. The main block includes two brick chimneys on the gable ends, offset from the ridgeline towards the front bay. The building is currently covered in a wood shingle roof.

Not enumerated in the resource count of the current nomination are several unsubstantial and non-significant replica features that are small in both scale and size. These will be mentioned in the narrative only for the sake of completeness; they include two reproduction gun platforms (c1994), a reproduction US Model 1839 18lb siege gun on a traversing carriage, a reproduction US Model 1861 Three Inch Ordinance Rifle, two c1987 reproduction wood hitching posts (in front of OQ1 and OQ2), a 1988 pyramid of cannonballs, and a reproduction frame sentry box (north of the west guardhouse).

Outside of the Earthworks:

Several later expansion campaigns associated with, and contributing to the fort's significance, took place outside of the earthworks. Several extant resources remain—buildings, objects and sites that were functionally related to the Fort Ontario complex, ringed around the fort's parade. Most of the extant buildings date to the 1903-1905 period, when the outer earthworks (ditch/moat, covered way and glacis) and several landscape features and many 19th century buildings were removed in preparation for a massive expansion of military operations onsite. The area was graded, and twenty-three new buildings were added, along with utility (water/sewer) lines. Extant buildings are listed here by their numerical designation as of 1941, and named in square brackets [...] by their function in 1941. Not enumerated are the removable/reversible, non-historic resources related to the recreational use of the spaces—namely the baseball diamonds and their associated dugouts (not located below the field level), bleachers and concessions stands.

8. Bathhouse (late 19th or early 20th c), 1 *contributing building*: The bathhouse is a rectangular, one story building, northeast of the core fortification. It is constructed of decorative cast stone or concrete blocks, surmounted by a gable roof; the CMUs do not extend fully—the pediment of the side gable is wood framed, sheathed in novelty siding. Openings include regular, square window openings just below the eaves, two on the gable ends and four on the long axes; the windows are enclosed with painted vertical board coverings. There are vertical board doors in the center of the north and east elevations, and two symmetrically-placed doors in the south elevation. The roof is covered in standing seam metal.

9. Rose-and-Crown Platform (1963), 1 *non-contributing structure*: The Rose-and-Crown platform is a triangle-shaped, concrete gun platform, 25' on each side. It is clad in fieldstone and set flush into the surrounding grade.

10. Safe Haven Monument (1981), 1 *non-contributing object*: The Safe Haven Monument is located south of the parking lot overlooking Lake Ontario, and is set into a small plot of dark soil planted with flowers. It is a rectangular piece of granite with a polished beveled face, containing the following inscription: "From 1944-1946 Fort Ontario /

Served as a Haven for / 982 Survivors of the / European Holocaust / Erected October 25, 1981, by / Syracuse Pioneer Women/Na'mmat / and the Jewish Community / of Central New York.

11. Cemetery (1903-1905, with earlier reinternments from previous post cemetery), 1 *contributing site*; The cemetery is located in the northeast corner of the nominated property, extending along the bluff. It consists of a rectangular (170 x 180), level parcel enclosed by a c1965 split-rail fence. Monuments are typical to the twentieth century, most are upright or slanted three-dimensional markers, rectangular with flat or semi-circular tops, constructed of either polished granite or marble with minimal bas relief epitaphs and artwork. Although the monuments vary some in size and color, and a few feature custom shapes, they are relatively uniform across the landscape.

12. Hearth of America Monument (1976), 1 *non-contributing object*; The Hearth of America Monument is near the southeast corner of the cemetery and is shaped to approximate an 18th century fireplace. It is 4' wide, 10' long and 14' high and composed of sedimentary rocks, varying in size shape and color, laid in uncoursed random rubble masonry. A granite mantel is inscribed with the words "From the Hearth of America, comes the Heart of America."

13. DAR Cemetery Monument (1906), 1 *contributing object*; Inside of the cemetery is a rectangular polished granite monument set on a two-step plinth of matching polished granite. The monument contains a rectangular bronze plaque. In bas-relief lettering, the plaque reads: "1776 – 1906 / In Grateful / Remembrance / of the Services of / Twelve Unknown / Revolutionary Soldiers / Who lie Buried Here / This Monument / is erected by / the Fort Oswego Chapter / The Daughters of the American Revolution / July 2, 1906" Between the dates is the DAR headstone emblem.

14. Building 25 [Former Barracks] (1903-05), 1 *contributing building*; Building 25 is composed of two blocks, attached and integrated at both the foundation and main story. The front block is pyramidal-roofed, roughly square, one story brick building, with an imposing entry portico creating a cruciform plan. The rear block is also of brick, rectangular in footprint and covered by a hipped roof. Overall, the building presents as a modified "t" plan. Windows openings on both blocks are symmetrical and regular and are arched—surmounted by jack arches, and filled with double hung, 6/6, wood framed windows with projecting stone sills; window openings are larger on the front block. Ornamentation on the two-story entrance pavilion with an oculus in the pediment, the whole supported by double sets of rounded columns on brick piers. Ornamentation on the rest of the front block includes a slight projecting cornice and overhanging eave, executed in brick, and a highly treated entrance flanked by side lights and surmounted by an elaborate fan light. Ornamentation on the rear block consists of recessed bays, surmounted by decorative corbelled courses. The building is currently known as the Anthony J. "Butch" Ponzi Recreation Building, used by the City of Oswego Parks and Recreation Department.

15. US Army Reserve Building, 60 E 9th St, (2003), 1 *non-contributing building*: The US Army Reserve Center is large, non-historic brick building with a modified “L” footprint. It is massed as front and rear sections with low-pitch gables, and a large, multi-story, center section of two opposing and offset shed roofs with a large clerestory.

16. Skateboard Park (1980), 1 *non-contributing site*: The skateboard park is part of a set of recreation facilities used by the City of Oswego. It is an asphalt slab, approximately 75 x 100’ and has a variety of obstacles, ramps, etc. The park is surrounded by grass and low-growing vegetation.

17. Building 34 [Former Post Shop] (1903-05), 1 *contributing building*: Building 34 is a rectangular foot print, one story brick building, covered by a gable roof. There is a shed roofed, one story, frame addition across the full width of the NE elevation (long axis). Window and door openings are regular and arched; the windows have projecting sills executed in cast stone. The building rests on a concrete foundation, with a projecting cast stone water table. Other ornamentation includes a slight unadorned frieze band at the eave and a decorative corbeled rain cap on the building’s single chimney. The roof is currently covered in slate tiles. The window and door openings are currently covered in plywood, as the building is used by the City of Oswego Traffic Department.

18. Parks and Rec Building [Former Fire Station] (1903-05), 1 *contributing building*: The Parks and Rec Building is a long (25 x 100’) rectangular frame building, clad in novelty siding. The building aligns NW to SE, and is covered by a gable roof; the SE gable end is clipped into a jerkin head. Fenestration is regular and consist of double hung, 6/6 wood frame windows, set into wooden surrounds (currently covered with plywood) and a large, non-historic garage door on the NW gable elevation; although the door itself is non-historic, it is a replacement for an historic example and the surround is intact. The building rests on a concrete pad. At the time of the nomination, the roof was being re-clad in asphalt shingles.

19. Recreation Building (1990), 1 *non-contributing building*: The Recreation Building is flat-roofed, rectangular building constructed on concrete blocks. It is fenced into the lot with the City of Oswego Parks and Recreation Department swimming pool.

20. Charles E. Gallagher Swimming Pool (1980), 1 *non-contributing structure*: The City of Oswego Parks and Recreation Department swimming pool is an in-ground, concrete, Z-shaped structure approximates 125 x 125’, aligned along a NW-SE axis.

21. Building 32 [Former Stables] (1903-05, 1985 addition), 1 *contributing building*: Building 32 is a long (40 x 150’) rectangular foot print, two story brick building, covered by a gable roof. There are two non-historic blocks attached to the 1903-5 building. The first is a small, one story, concrete block construction, covered by a gable roof, which is clad in asphalt shingles; this block projects to the east of the historic block. The second addition is the Anthony J. Crisafulli Ice Skating Rink—a massive, 100 x 235’, rectangular block, clad in corrugated metal, with a low-pitch gable roof, clad in standing seam metal. Window openings on the historic block are smaller and more squared than other extant Fort buildings, although they do have arched openings and projecting cast stone lintels; windows are

regularly spaced to light both the lower story and upper hayloft story. Door openings are also arched, and include a large vertical board opening and lift attachment on the upper (hayloft) story. The roof of the historic block is clad in asphalt tiles.

22. Building 22, 2 E 7th St [Former Guardhouse] (1903-05), 1 *contributing building*: Building 22 is a roughly square (47 x 59), brick, one story building, covered by a hipped roof, clad in asphalt shingles. Compared to other extant fort buildings, Building 22 is highly ornamented with a full-width, colonnaded entry porch, a boxed and molded cornice at the eave, a cast stone water table surmounting the quarry-faced stone block foundation, and a decorative corbeled rain cap on the building's single chimney; the porch pediment includes painted wooden shingle siding, squared brackets at the eave and a three-part Colonial Revival "Pallidum" style window. Fenestration is regular and symmetrical on all elevations. Window openings are arched and filled with double hung, 6/6 wood framed windows, with projecting cast stone sills. Door openings are also arched. The building currently houses the Safe Haven Museum.

23. Building 23 [Former Bakery] (1903-1905), 1 *contributing building*: Building 23 is a two block building, presenting an overall square footprint. The front block is a rectangular, one and half story brick building, covered by a gable roof, which is currently clad in asphalt shingles. The rear block is also a brick, one story in height, and covered by a hipped roof that intersects the gable roof of the front block to create a modified cruciform; the hipped roof is also clad in asphalt shingles. The front block rests on a decorative quarry-faced stone foundation, while the rear rest on a poured concrete foundation. Window openings on the both blocks are arched and filled with double hung, 6/6 wood framed windows, with projecting cast concrete sills; the exception are the paired, gable end openings that light the upper half story of the front block, which are quarter round in shaped, filled with wooden louvers. Door openings on both blocks are also arched. Ornamentation includes a decorative corbeled rain cap on the building's single chimney, and a moulded boxed cornice at the eave with returns on the gable end; the rear block features the same ornamented cornice.

24. Building 31 [Former Warehouse] (1903-05), 1 *contributing building*: Building 30 is a long (40 x 120') rectangular foot print, one and half story brick building, covered by a gable roof. Window and door openings are regular and arched; the windows have projecting sills executed in cast stone. The windows consist of 6/6 double hung wood farmed windows set into moulded wooden surrounds. Two gable-roofed dormers project symmetrically from the roofline facing the core fort; the dormers feature boxed cornices with returns in their pediments. Ornamentation includes a cast stone water table surmounting a quarry-faced stone block foundation, a decorative corbeled rain cap on all three of the building's chimneys, and a projecting brick cornice at the eave, with a wooden boxed cornice surmounting it; the boxed cornice terminates in returns on the gable ends. A small enclosed entry projects from the SE elevation, and has a cornice/eave treatment echoing the main building.

25. Building 31 [Former Commissary] (1903-05), 1 *contributing building*: Building 31 is of parallel size and shape to Building 30, already described. Building 31 lacks the enclosed entrance described on Building 30, and Building 31's

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windows are currently covered in plywood. The building currently houses the Oswego Players Incorporated and the Art Association of Oswego.

26. Maintenance Garage (c1955, 1966, 1980), 1 *non-contributing building*; The maintenance garage is south of the core fortification area. It is a one-story, L-shaped, concrete block building. Both blocks are surmounted by a gable roof, currently covered in asphalt shingles.

27. Building 37, Keeper's Cottage [Former NCO Quarters] (1821), 1 *contributing building*; The keeper's cottage is a one and half story, center-chimney, gable roofed building of cut limestone blocks laid in irregular courses. The main block is aligned on an E-W axis and is rectangular, with a later, one story, shed-roofed, addition projecting from the rear. Fenestration is irregular across all elevations; most windows are double-hung, 2/2, wood-framed examples, with large stone lintels. The main façade is dominated by a projecting enclosed entrance porch. It is currently covered in a standing seam metal roof. It is surrounded by a vertical board fence.

28. (DAR) Stone Marker. (1906), 1 *contributing object*; Just outside of the sally port/main entrance is large boulder with an inset oval bronze plaque. In bas-relief lettering, the plaque reads: "Fort Ontario / Built by English under Governor Shirley 1755 / Captured & destroyed by French under Marquis of Montcalm 1756 / Rebuilt by English under Lord Amherst 1759 / Destroyed by Americans 1778 / Rebuilt by English 1782 / Surrendered by English & garrisoned by United States 1796 / Captured & destroyed by English fleet under Admiral Yeo 1814 / Rebuilt of earth and timber by United States 1863-1870 / Post enlarged and built of brick by United States 1903-1905 / This tablet erected by the Fort Oswego chapter Daughters of the American Revolution / July 4, 1906"

29. US Coast Guard Storm Signal Tower (unknown date, prior to 1938), 1 *contributing object*; The Signal Tower is a 35' high painted steel, self-supporting structure with lights, a control box and an external ladder.

Archeology

It is understood that significant archaeological resources exist outside of the proposed boundary. Originally, land on both the east and west mouths of the Oswego River was used for military purposes, so it is likely that intact archaeological deposits representing known historic features like abandoned or demolished fortifications (Fort George, Fort Oswego), blockhouses, batteries, redoubts, ravelins, gardens, roads, landing places, camp and hut sites, housing, rifle ranges, buildings, human burials, etc., do exist, but they are outside of the scope of this current nomination. Proper background research, field survey, and archeological testing could identify a large number of archaeological sites, both related and unrelated to the documented standing structures (i.e. historic and prehistoric), and research questions could be formulated in light of current issues in archeology, anthropology, history, and other disciplines of study. Once additional studies are done to document the archeological information retained from the site, then the nomination form should be amended to add Criterion D, and, a new, larger, boundary drawn to incorporate the area of archaeological significance.

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Statement of Significance:

The Fort Ontario military Reservation is nationally significant for its contributions to American military history between 1755 and 1954. Over two hundred years, five major fortifications stood at the mouth of the Oswego River—an outlet to the vitally and strategically important Mohawk River-Oneida Lake-Oswego River to the Great Lakes. Built of earth, stone and logs, these forts were a scene of repeated conflict between the world's great colonial powers. Four times Fort Ontario repulsed an enemy or frustrated its attempt. Three times it was taken and destroyed—a record unparalleled by any other fortification in North America. The current fortification parallels the growth of the United States. From Native Americans and their dealings with fur traders through World War II, Fort Ontario has served as an offensive and defensive post, a recruitment center, training facility, a hospital, convalescent housing, an anti-aircraft artillery unit post and veterans housing.

Fort Ontario is also nationally significant in military and social history as the site of the only refugee camp for victims of the Nazi Holocaust and World War II. From August 1944 to February 1946, Fort Ontario was a temporary emergency refugee shelter operated by the U.S. War Relocation Authority. Many of the refugees had spent time in concentration camps. Most had already tried desperately and repeatedly to immigrate. They had been separated from family members, witnessed the deportation or death of friends and relatives, and spent many years fleeing from one country to another, evading capture or death. More than half already had relatives, including spouses, in America, and 14 had sons serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Although they arrived with unclear legal status and endured an indefinite form of semi-confinement at the Fort Ontario shelter, most of the refugees eventually became American citizens and made new homes across the United States, many in New York State. The shelter helped the refugees regain their health and move forward with their lives, beginning or resuming long-interrupted educations, careers, and other aspects of normal life.

The period of significance (1755-1954) spans from the building of the first Fort Oswego (1755) to the last disposal of Military Reservation property by New York State.

Historical Context

The following historical context is excerpted entirely from *Fort Ontario, Guardian of the North 1755-1946*, by Paul Lear and Jenny Emmons:

OUTPOST OF EMPIRE: 1720-1754

The French held a virtual monopoly on the Great Lakes fur trade until the 1720's when the Onondaga Nation granted New York's colonial governor William Burnet permission to establish a trading post and a fort at Oswego.² Albany based traders broke the French monopoly as they offered better quality goods at a lower rate of exchange.³ To protect the traders as well as Britain's claim to the area, Burnet ordered troops to build a "stone house of

² Rene Chartrand, *Montcalm's Crushing Blow: French and Indian Raids along New York's Oswego River 1756* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2014), 7.

³ In the 1720s, trade activity mainly between British subjects and Indians occurred in Oswego along Lake Ontario. At the time, Lake Ontario had been referred to as Lake Frontenac, which had been under the control of the French. Oswego, however, had been claimed to be within the realm and protection of Great Britain. This trade activity diverted business away from the French causing hostilities to arise. Chartrand, *Montcalm's Crushing Blow*, 6-7.

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strength” at Oswego.⁴ In 1727, construction of Fort Oswego began on the west side of the mouth of the Oswego River.⁵ The fort consisted of a three-story rectangular structure, which resembled a small medieval castle.⁶ By 1749, builders added an outer stone wall with two corner square turrets on the west side and a rounded curtain wall on the east side.⁷ The outer wall was made mostly of stone, mud and clay instead of mortar.⁸ This material lacked the strength to withstand artillery fire, and its walls crumbled whenever cannon were fired from within it.⁹ As tensions grew between Great Britain and France there would be adjustments made to Fort Oswego in order to improve the defenses in Oswego.

The French and Indian War, 1754-1763

The rivalry between Great Britain and France erupted into the French and Indian War in 1754.¹⁰ William Shirley, governor of Massachusetts, was commissioned a major-general and second-in-command of British forces in North America.¹¹ In 1755, Shirley arrived at Oswego with orders to cooperate with his superior, Major-General Edward Braddock, and to plan an attack on Fort Niagara.¹² After Braddock’s defeat and death in a preliminary campaign to capture Fort Duquesne at the Forks of the Ohio (Pittsburg), Shirley attempted to improve Oswego’s defenses through four projects: erecting outer earthworks around Fort Oswego; constructing Fort George on the ridge to the west of Fort Oswego; launching vessels of the Royal Navy’s first Great Lakes squadron; and building the first Fort Ontario on the bluff at the eastern side of the Oswego River’s mouth.¹³ Despite Shirley’s efforts to improve the defenses in Oswego, all three forts: Fort George, Fort Oswego, and Fort Ontario remained vulnerable to French artillery fire.¹⁴ To complicate matters, Shirley’s political enemies forced his removal from command before the 1756 campaign against Fort Niagara.¹⁵ Shirley’s removal left British forces at Oswego undermanned, poorly supplied, sick, and vulnerable.¹⁶

In 1756 the Marquis de Montcalm, newly appointed commander-in-chief of French forces in North America, organized a systematic campaign to isolate and capture Oswego.¹⁷ The effort opened on March 27 with a surprise

⁴ Chartrand, 7.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Chartrand, 8-9. Arthur Pound, *Lake Ontario* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1945), 246.

⁷ Chartrand, 9.

⁸ At Old Fort Oswego there had been a Blockhouse with a wall at a small distance from it, both made of dry rubble and Joints connected here and there with mortar. Stanley Pargellis, *Military Affairs In North America 1748-1765* (Archon Books: 1969), 190.

⁹ Guns had been mounted within the outward wall to fire through Loopholes in the rounding towards the River, but they could not be fired for fear of bringing down the wall, which had already been cracked in three places from top to bottom. Pargellis, *Military Affairs In North America 1748-1765*, 190.

¹⁰ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 747.

¹¹ William G. Godfrey, *Pursuit of Profit and Preferment in Colonial North America: John Bradstreet's Quest* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press: 1982), 57-58.

¹² Godfrey, *Pursuit of Profit and Preferment in Colonial North America: John Bradstreet's Quest*, 58-60.

¹³ Pargellis, 93-94; 120; 191; 196; 289-290. Pargellis, 93-94; 120; 191; 196; 289-290.

Fort George- also called “Fort Rascal”- was constructed on the high ground west of Fort Oswego, the site of Montcalm Park today. Ibid, 289-290.

The first Fort Ontario- also called “The Fort of the Six Nations”- took the shape of an eight pointed star. Eighteen inch thick log palisades surrounded the shape. Each log palisade had been flattened on two sides so they’d be joined more closely together. Builders constructed wooden barracks against the angles of the walls. These barracks had no loopholes to fire through. A gallery had also been built to provide a platform for defenders to fire small arms over the wall. Ibid, 190-191. 40.

¹⁴ Ibid, xvii; 188-192.

¹⁵ Godfrey, 85-86.

¹⁶ The winter of 1755-1756 posed challenges for troops stationed at the forts in Oswego. Cut off from Albany, neither supplies nor communications could reach the garrisons. Lt. Colonel James Mercer furloughed many men to save provisions. It had been estimated that one company of the 50th regiment lost thirty-nine of its fifty men to disease, starvation, and bad water and that eight additional companies lost above thirty men. According to a British captain who had left Oswego in July 1756, he stated that “the men that composed the garrison in the winter were mostly dead.” Pargellis, 287-288.

¹⁷ Chartrand, 45.

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attack at Fort Bull along the Oneida Carry.¹⁸ The fort was destroyed, which interrupted the flow of supplies to Oswego.¹⁹ By May harassment of Oswego's garrison began. Under the command of French Canadian military officer Louis Coulon, Sieur de Villiers, Canadian and Indian auxiliaries terrorized and isolated British and Provincial troops in Oswego.²⁰ Numerous soldiers and ship's carpenters were killed in various incidents.²¹ On June 16, Sieur de Villiers made an unsuccessful attack on Fort Ontario.²² A few weeks later, French vessels destroyed the *Alert*- one of the British schooners- in the first naval battle on Lake Ontario.²³ Early in July, "Battomen" under command of Colonel William Bradstreet brought supplies to replenish Oswego's forces. As Bradstreet's bateau column began their return trip upriver from Oswego, they were attacked by the French and Indians, but drove them off after a prolonged engagement.²⁴ About a month later, on August 10, Montcalm arrived in Oswego with his main force, including engineers and heavy artillery. The French began siege operations the next day.²⁵ The British evacuated Fort Ontario on August 13.²⁶ The abandonment of Fort George occurred on August 14 after French forces crossed the river to the west side.²⁷ Fort Oswego's commander, Colonel James Mercer, was disemboweled and killed by a cannonball as he contemplated a plan to break through the encircling enemy.²⁸ Surrender of the British garrison of about 1300 soldiers and civilian workmen came quickly, followed by a massacre of more than 100 sick and wounded in hospital by Montcalm's Indian allies.²⁹ After the fall of Oswego, British Lieutenant General Daniel Webb, fearing a French invasion of the Mohawk valley, ordered the destruction of the forts guarding the Oneida Carry.³⁰ King Louis XV of France considered Montcalm's capture of Oswego to be so important that he featured the achievement on a 1758 medal, which commemorated French victories in the four quarters of the world.³¹ Montcalm did not garrison Oswego, but returned it to the Onondaga Nation as a diplomatic gesture intended to gain their favor.³²

In the same year that Oswego fell to the French, a global conflict emerged in Europe. The Seven Year's War between Great Britain and France and their respective allies occurred from 1756 -1763.³³ During these years, Oswego, because of its location on Lake Ontario, once again became strategic to the British.

¹⁸ The Oneida Carry served as a major trade route in the northeastern part of colonial America. Supplies would be sent from the Atlantic Ocean into the interior of the North American continent via the Carry. From the ocean, supplies would be transported to the Hudson River. Then, they'd travel upstream along the Mohawk River to Rome and then would be portaged- carried across land to the water route: Wood Creek. This portage was known as the Oneida Carry. From Wood Creek, supplies would travel downstream to Oneida Lake, Oswego River, and Lake Ontario. Once supplies reached Lake Ontario, they could be transported to the other Great Lakes. Fort Bull resided along the Oneida Carry (in present-day Rome, NY). It had been one of a series of small forts erected to supply Oswego. Chartrand, 11; 32. Fort Bull resided along the Oneida Carry (present-day Rome, NY). It had been a small fort erected to supply Oswego. Ian Macpherson McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains: The Highland Regiments in the French and Indian War 1756-1767* (Fleischmanns: Purple Mountain Press: 2006), 11.

¹⁹ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, 11.

²⁰ Godfrey, 78. Chartrand, 40.

²¹ In the spring months of 1756, the posts in Oswego underwent continuous harassment by unseen enemies who would kill and scalp, and then disappear into the surrounding forests before help could arrive. Chartrand, 40. Almon W. Lauber, *Sir William Johnson Papers Volume IX* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1939), 432.

²² W. Seward Salisbury, ed., *Bicentennial Journal- Oswego 1976-1977*(Oswego: Beyer Offset, Inc., 1977), 3.

²³ "Oswego Chronology 1615-1799 Period," *Oswego Palladium-Times*, November 20, 1945.

²⁴ Salisbury, *Bicentennial Journal- Oswego 1976-1977*, 3.

²⁵ Chartrand, 50.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 54.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 62.

²⁸ Oswego fell to the French on August 14. Godfrey, 82. 41. Chartrand, 62-63.

²⁹ Chartrand, 63.

³⁰ McCulloch, 11.

³¹ C. Wyllys Betts, *American Colonial History Illustrated By Contemporary Medals* (Glendale: Benchmark Publishing Company Inc., 1970), 184.

³² Salisbury, 3.

³³ McCulloch, 3. Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 747.

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The British Return to the Great Lakes

In July and August 1758, British Army officer, Colonel John Bradstreet, led a sudden strike through the Mohawk-Oneida-Oswego passage and across Lake Ontario, which resulted in the capture of the important French post at Cataraqui, Fort Frontenac.³⁴ This fort contained a stockpile of trade goods and supplies for the French posts to the west.³⁵ After Fort Frontenac's capture, Bradstreet retreated to Albany, but the loss of foodstuffs, supplies, and trade goods severely compromised French relations with their Native Allies.³⁶ This loss became a significant factor in their subsequent withdrawal from Fort Duquesne and the Ohio Country.³⁷ In the same year that Bradstreet captured Fort Frontenac; the British began construction of Fort Stanwix along the Oneida Carry to guard the portage route during the war.³⁸

In June 1759, a British army under Brigadier-General John Prideaux and Major-General Sir William Johnson returned to Oswego where a temporary field fortification had been built on the site of the first Fort Ontario.³⁹ This fortification served as the base for a campaign against Fort Niagara.⁴⁰ On July 5, 1759, British Colonel Frederick Haldimand defeated an attack by Chevalier Saint-Luc de la Corne and Abbe Francois Pouchot on the field fortification.⁴¹ By stopping to pray after emerging from the woods surrounding the British defenses, the French had forfeited both the initial advantage of surprise and the opportunity to cut off the Prideaux-Johnson forces besieging Fort Niagara.⁴² Haldimand's success at Oswego coupled with the defeat of other French forces seeking to relieve Fort Niagara from the west sealed the fate of the garrison at the outlet of the Niagara River.⁴³ The French lifeline of supply and communication through Lake Ontario had become broken.

To protect the traditional British gateway to the Great Lakes region, Brigadier-General Thomas Gage began a new version of Fort Ontario in August 1759.⁴⁴ The second Fort Ontario was built larger and more complex than the previous defenses at the mouth of the Oswego River. Its form took the shape of a five-bastioned pentagon surrounded by a ditch or a dry moat and extensive outer works.⁴⁵ Provided with emplacements for 46 artillery pieces and designated for an initial garrison of 500 men, this version of Fort Ontario reflected the determination of the British to retain control of the Great Lakes region. Troops from Fort Ontario and Fort Stanwix built additional

³⁴ Godfrey, 115. The French erected Fort Frontenac, also called Fort Cataraqui, on the site of present-day Kingston, Ontario, Canada. McCulloch, 118.

³⁵ McCulloch, 118.

³⁶ Godfrey, 142.; McCulloch, 118.

³⁷ Godfrey, 115. Fort Duquesne had been established by the French in 1754. Its location had been on the current site of downtown Pittsburg, Pennsylvania where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers merged to form the Ohio River. It was long seen as important for controlling the Ohio Country. In 1758, the British destroyed the fort and erected Fort Pitt. McCulloch, 64; 118; 134.

³⁸ Fort Stanwix stood on the present site of Rome, NY. Construction began in 1758. McCulloch, 79-81. William M. Willett, *Eyewitness Accounts of the American Revolution: A Narrative of the Military Actions of Colonel Marinus Willett* (New York City: The New York Times & Arno Press: 1969), 43. 42

³⁹ Milton W. Hamilton, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson Volume X* (Albany: The University of the State Of New York, 1951), 120.

⁴⁰ Fort Niagara is located near present-day Youngstown, NY on Lake Ontario. It was built before 1749 to protect the interests of New France in North America and had undergone various transformations. Pargellis, 33. Hamilton, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 114.

⁴¹ Brian Leigh Dunnigan, *Siege- 1759: The Campaign Against Niagara* (Youngstown: Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., 1986), 30.

⁴² Capitulation of Fort Niagara occurred on July 24, 1759. Hamilton, 121-125.

⁴³ In July 1759, the British sieged Fort Niagara in the Battle of Fort Niagara. The battle took place in the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War between the British and the French. The goal was to remove French control of the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley regions. Dunnigan, *Siege- 1759: The Campaign Against Niagara*, 82.

⁴⁴ McCulloch, 159-160; 250.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 250.

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fortifications in the surrounding area, as well as a chain of small forts to protect the vital supply lines to Oswego. These included the Royal Blockhouse, Fort Brewerton, and Fort Bradstreet.⁴⁶

During the summer of 1760, the British commander-in-chief, Major-General Jeffrey Amherst, gathered an army of 10,000 troops and 1,000 Iroquois warriors at Fort Ontario to attack Montreal, the last major stronghold of New France.⁴⁷ In early August, Amherst sailed from Oswego and proceeded down the St. Lawrence River, taking French posts at La Galette and Fort Levis.⁴⁸ After meeting smaller forces that had moved up through Lake Champlain and from British-held Quebec, Amherst received the surrender of Montreal from the governor of New France.⁴⁹ Canada had become part of the British Empire, a fact confirmed by the Treaty of Paris in 1763, which formally ended the worldwide conflict between Britain and France.⁵⁰ Of the five campaigns vital to British success in the French and Indian War, three had been staged via the mouth of the Oswego River.

FRONTIER DIPLOMACY AND NEW POLICIES: 1763-1768

After the French and Indian War ended in 1763, the British encountered an uprising of western Indians led by the Ottawa chieftain, Pontiac. [Known as Pontiac's War or Pontiac's Rebellion, this war involved] Native American tribes who had become dissatisfied with British postwar policies in the Great Lakes region after the British victory in the French and Indian War. Numerous tribes joined the uprising to drive British soldiers and settlers out of the region, and some British garrisons to the west were overwhelmed.⁵¹ After sieges at Fort Detroit and Fort Pitt failed, Pontiac was forced to make peace with Sir William Johnson, the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs, at a month-long conference outside the gates of Fort Ontario in July 1766.⁵² A new policy set forth in London in 1763 sought to restrict western settlement and alleviate Indian fears of being displaced.⁵³ The Treaty of Fort Stanwix, concluded in 1768, was intended to reassure the Iroquois that Europeans would not proceed past a fixed line on a map.⁵⁴ Although Fort Ontario remained a place where agents of the Crown and Traders dealt with Indians, the bulk of trade activity fell to Montreal-based trading firms.⁵⁵ Simultaneously, the military supply route to British-occupied posts in the upper Great Lakes region had shifted largely away from the Mohawk-Oneida-Oswego passage to the St. Lawrence.⁵⁶ Other new policies adopted by the British government produced intense resentment in many areas and necessitated a shifting of troops from frontier forts, including Fort Ontario, to the increasingly restless seacoast

⁴⁶ The Royal Blockhouse resembled a small wooden castle and stood near modern-day Sylvan Beach on the east side of the Oneida Lake. Fort Brewerton stood near the western end of the lake. Its earthworks and ditches can be visible at Brewerton, NY. Fort Bradstreet was erected at Oswego Falls, now Fulton, NY. Dunnigan, 21-22.

⁴⁷ Godfrey, 145-146; 156. Pargellis, xx.

⁴⁸ Godfrey, 154. The Fort de La Présentation, also known as Fort La Galette, had been built in 1749 by the French to strengthen alliance with the Iroquois- to combat the British. The fort was built at the junction of two rivers: Oswegatchie River and the St. Lawrence River in Canada. After British victories in 1760, the British renamed it Fort Oswegatchie. When northern boundaries changed after the American Revolution and with the demands put forth in the Jay Treaty of 1796, the location had been renamed Ogdensburg, NY. The French built Fort Levis on the St. Lawrence River in near present-day Ogdensburg, NY in 1759 to defend the river from the British. McCulloch, 251-252.

⁴⁹ *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association: The Fifteenth Annual Meeting, With Constitution, By-Laws And List Of Members Vol.XIII* (New York State Historical Association: 1914), 99.

⁵⁰ France surrendered to Great Britain all territories and claims in North America east of the Mississippi River except New Orleans and guaranteed unrestrained navigation of the river to all British subjects. Anderson, 505-506. 43.

⁵¹ Anderson, 535.

⁵² Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State 1763-1775* (Hamden: Archon Books: 1969), 104.

⁵³ *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, 101.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 105-106.

⁵⁵ Pound, *Lake Ontario*, 22-23.

⁵⁶ Carter, *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State*, 121-122.

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towns in the immediate years prior to the War for Independence.⁵⁷ Although some activity occurred at Fort Ontario through the 1760s, such as Pontiac's peace agreement, the fort remained lightly garrisoned during this time.⁵⁸

IN DEFENSE OF KING AND PARLIAMENT: REVOLUTIONARY WAR, 1775-1783

The outbreak of rebellion in Britain's North American Colonies posed severe problems for authorities of the Crown on the New York frontier. British Colonel Guy Johnson, appointed to succeed his uncle Sir William Johnson as Indian Superintendent, reacted to the news of Lexington and Concord by calling a conference of Iroquois leaders to meet with him at Fort Ontario in June 1775.⁵⁹ Over 1300 Iroquois listened to Johnson's plea for help against the rebels but they failed to give him their united support. Only the Mohawk Nation, led by Joseph Brant, pledged loyalty and many followed Johnson to Canada when the conference broke up in July 1775.⁶⁰ Fort Ontario became a place of temporary refuge for persons who remained loyal to the Crown as their rebel neighbors in the Mohawk Valley forced them to flee.⁶¹ The exodus of Loyalists through Fort Ontario during the war led to new settlements on the north shore of Lake Ontario and along the Niagara frontier.⁶²

Designed to exploit the waterways of New York, British campaign plans for 1777 offered a genuine opportunity for victory. Brigadier-General Barry St. Leger planned to move from Fort Ontario through the Oswego-Oneida-Mohawk route toward Albany.⁶³ There he would meet larger British forces coming south through the Champlain Valley and north up the Hudson Valley. On July 26, St. Leger and his army left Fort Ontario, but encountered unexpected resistance at rebel-held Fort Stanwix.⁶⁴ After a hard-fought battle near Oriskany on August 6 and the failure of days of bombardment to compel the surrender of Fort Stanwix, St. Leger abandoned his siege, gathered Fort Ontario's garrison and artillery and returned to Canada.⁶⁵ Other phases of the campaign met the same fate. British troops expected to move northward from New York City had been committed elsewhere, and Major-General John Burgoyne's army moving southward through the Champlain-Hudson route became stalemated north of Albany.⁶⁶ Without the presence of St. Leger or other British forces to provide support or to divert rebel forces, Burgoyne had to surrender at Saratoga.⁶⁷ The failure of the British campaign of 1777 enabled Benjamin Franklin to obtain a treaty with France in February 1778.⁶⁸ The treaty provided men, ships, supplies, and most importantly financial credit that ultimately enabled the United States to win its independence.⁶⁹

Fort Ontario remained without a regular garrison for some time after St. Leger's retreat, despite Iroquois requests for the return of British troops.⁷⁰ In July 1778, Continental troops from Fort Stanwix burned Fort Ontario's

⁵⁷ Carter, 248-250. Salisbury, 5.

⁵⁸ Carter, 90.

⁵⁹ Christopher Ward, *The War of the Revolution Volume Two* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), 480.

⁶⁰ Willet, *Eyewitness Accounts of the American Revolution*, 87.

⁶¹ Salisbury, 5.

⁶² Robert Malcomson, *Lords of the Lake: The Naval War on Lake Ontario 1812-1814* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press: 1998), 4.

⁶³ Ward, *The War of the Revolution*, 482.

⁶⁴ Ward, 482.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 490-491.

⁶⁶ George Wrong, *Canada And The American Revolution* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1968), 323-324.

⁶⁷ Ward, 535-539.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 540.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ "Oswego Chronology 1615-1799 Period." 44

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buildings.⁷¹ The ruined post subsequently became a base for Loyalist-Iroquois raiding parties that left a brutal impression on rebel frontier settlements.⁷² In the fall of 1780, Sir John Johnson, later joined by Joseph Brant, led a large force from Fort Ontario against the Schoharie settlements, Caughnawaga, and the Stone Arabia region of the Mohawk Valley.⁷³ A year later, Major John Ross, accompanied by Captain Walter Butler, moved from Fort Ontario to strike at Warrenbush and Johnstown.⁷⁴ In 1782, Major-General Frederick Haldimand, Governor-General of Canada, ordered Ross to rebuild and to garrison Fort Ontario for the third time.⁷⁵ Lieutenant-General George Washington, concerned that British reconstruction of Fort Ontario might be a prelude to another invasion of the Mohawk Valley, ordered Colonel Marinus Willett to undertake a surprise attack against Fort Ontario in February 1783.⁷⁶ Under severe conditions of wind driven snow and extreme cold, Willett's Oneida guide intentionally misled him or became confused within a few miles of the fort and arrived outside the fort at sunrise, too late to achieve surprise. Willett and his troops abandoned the effort and dragged themselves back to Fort Herkimer in the Mohawk Valley.⁷⁷ On February 14, King George III proclaimed a cessation of hostilities.⁷⁸ Willett's unsuccessful trek had proven to be the last campaign of the war to be ordered by the Continental Army commander-in-chief.⁷⁹ The United States had won its independence.⁸⁰ Yet, British Great Lakes posts, including Fort Ontario, remained in British possession.

AMERICAN SOVEREIGNTY COMES TO THE GREAT LAKES, 1783-1796

Fort Ontario and six other "Northwest Posts" from the head of Lake Champlain to the Straits of Mackinac were held by the British for thirteen years after the War for Independence.⁸¹ These posts controlled key water routes. Great Britain gambled that American independence would collapse, a reasonable expectation in the uncertain days of government under the Articles of Confederation but one that became less likely after adoption of the Constitution. British troops refused to allow Americans to settle near the mouth of the Oswego River. The Crown's customs officers also imposed stiff duties on American cargos of Salina salt shipped down the Oswego River to Canadian markets.⁸² British control of the posts and water routes ended with the enactment of the Jay Treaty in 1794. The terms of the treaty proclaimed for British army units to relinquish prerevolutionary forts that had been established on American soil.⁸³ By July 1796, United States troops under Captain James Bruff replaced Fort Ontario's last British garrison.⁸⁴

⁷¹ Ward, 481. Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1975), 174.

⁷² Ward, 646-647.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 647-649.

⁷⁴ Willett, 83.

⁷⁵ Larry Lowenthal, *Marinus Willett: Defender of the Northern Frontier* (Fleischmanns: Purple Mountain Press, 2000), 72.

⁷⁶ Lowenthal, *Marinus Willett: Defender of the Northern Frontier*, 72-73. Willett, 91-92.

⁷⁷ Lowenthal, 72-74. Willett, 92-93.

⁷⁸ Lowenthal, 74-75. Willett, 93.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ The Treaty of Paris in 1783 between the United States and Great Britain formally closed the Revolutionary War. The treaty defined the northern boundaries of the United States. John C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943), 505.

⁸¹ Salisbury, 5.

⁸² Malcomson, *Lords of the Lake*, 10.

⁸³ Salisbury, 6.

⁸⁴ Anthony Slosek, "British Troops Withdraw From Fort," *The Oswego County Messenger*, May 17, 1982.

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THE EARLY REPUBLIC: 1796-1812

Growth of a civilian community at Oswego, based on transshipment of goods from river to lake vessels, began soon after the American occupation of Fort Ontario in 1796.⁸⁵ Much trade was conducted with Canada through Oswego, and restrictions placed on foreign trade by the Jefferson and Madison administrations in an attempt to avoid growing problems with Great Britain and France produced strong local resentment. United States troops were removed from Fort Ontario after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.⁸⁶ Inland militia and briefly some regulars had to be called upon to occupy the fort and to enforce the unpopular Federal trade regulations in 1808-09.⁸⁷

WAR OF 1812

Relations grew increasingly hostile between Great Britain and the infant United States during the early 1800's. Issues surrounding federal trade regulations, impressments of sailors at sea, and British support for Indian raids on settlers in the Ohio country led to the War of 1812.⁸⁸ Another cause of the war involved the American dream of annexing Canada.⁸⁹ Yet, events in the Lake Ontario area, the main theatre of action during the war, offered little chance to achieve the latter ambition. Neither American nor British naval commanders were willing to risk a decisive fleet action to win control of the lake and the war quickly developed into a shipbuilding race.⁹⁰ Fort Ontario protected the Mohawk-Oneida Lake-Oswego River water route that carried essential supplies to shipyards, sailors, and troops at Sackets Harbor, and to army campaigns on the Niagara Frontier and St. Lawrence River.⁹¹ Oswego's lightly armed fort became a target for British attempts to win naval superiority by interfering with supply shipments and stores packed into government warehouses in the harbor.⁹² Major-General Sir George Prevost, the Governor-General of Canada, and Royal Navy Commodore Sir James Yeo attacked Fort Ontario on June 19, 1813 in a shoreline sweep, which included the burning of Sodus and a landing at Pultneyville.⁹³ Attempts to put British troops ashore were repulsed by defenders at Fort Ontario, saving Oswego temporarily.

⁸⁵ Malcomson, 8-10.

⁸⁶ Salisbury, 6.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ By the 1800s, hostilities once again emerged between Britain and France. In 1806, Napoleon issued the Berlin Decree, which allowed for the confiscation of British goods entering French ports. In response, Britain placed restrictions on trade with France. As a result, neutral nations, including the U.S., suffered as trade profits decreased. In 1807, President Jefferson enacted the Embargo Act, which prohibited the importing and exporting by Americans. This reaction further hurt the domestic finances in the U.S. The practice of impressment also hindered relations between Britain and the U.S. From 1803-1812, the Royal Navy reclaimed and seized British deserters (American sailors), which violated their rights as U.S. citizens and showed the British disrespect for U.S. liberties. To further hinder relations, the British armed Indians in the interior of the U.S. as way to maintain control over the Northwest Territory in the U.S. These factors led to the War of 1812. Malcomson, 11-14.

⁸⁹ John C.A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 4.

⁹⁰ In July 1812, a British squadron arrived at Sackets Harbor on Lake Ontario, but retreated as Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost- commander of the Royal Navy- maintained his policy of non-aggression. A similar incident occurred within weeks of the Sackets Harbor event. British vessels: *Moir* and *Gloucester* threatened the American schooner: *Julia*, but retreated. A temporary pause in hostilities ensued in August. By November another encounter with the Royal Navy witnessed by Commodore Isaac Chauncey- Lieutenant of the U.S. Navy- resulted in a British retreat. Malcomson, 31; 33-35; 48. In 1808, American naval Lieutenant, Melancthon Woolsey arrived in Oswego on Lake Ontario to supervise the building of the warship: *Oneida*. The British feared this threat and constructed the *Royal George*. Ibid, 17; 27.

President Madison granted Chauncey with orders to buy, lease, or build the shipping needed, to find and supply officers and crews for the vessels, and to transport men and munitions to the lakes- at Sackets Harbor and at Buffalo. He emphasized the importance of building up the Lake Erie force like the squadron on Lake Ontario and to maintain communication with the army so to ensure victory over control of the lakes. On the British side, Prevost approved the construction of two ships on Lake Ontario and one on Lake Erie to match the construction of ships at Sackets Harbor. As the war progressed new ship building projects emerged on both sides. Ibid, 43-48; 59-60; 260.

⁹¹ Lieutenant Woolsey chose Sackets Harbour as the main port for the U.S. Navy. Ibid, 8-10; 19.

⁹² Ibid, 31.

⁹³ Ibid, 146; 149-150; 166.

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On May 5 and 6, 1814, Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond and Commodore Yeo returned to Fort Ontario with a force of seamen, marines, and soldiers that out-numbered the American soldiers, seamen, and militia by more than four to one.⁹⁴ A naval bombardment on the first day followed by a landing attempt was thwarted by bad weather. After more shelling on the second day, successive assault waves reached the shore and stormed the fort. A climactic struggle over the inside of the fort and efforts to prevent the British from capturing the American flag nailed to the pole ended when Lieutenant-Colonel George Mitchell ordered United States forces to retreat and defend the naval stores at Oswego Falls (Fulton, NY).⁹⁵ The British mostly respected private property, but seized stores and destroyed wharves, warehouses, barracks, and Fort Ontario before leaving.⁹⁶ Yet, within two weeks supplies once again began being forwarded through Oswego to Sackets Harbor.⁹⁷ American troops made no effort to rebuild Fort Ontario before the end of the war, and it would lie in ruins for the next twenty-four years.

THE PATRIOT WAR: 1837-1848

In 1837, a rebellion against the British government of Upper Canada inflamed the northern frontier and threatened to lead to a third war between Great Britain and the United States. President Martin Van Buren sought to preserve peace through a policy of strict neutrality, which contrasted with the emotional response of many American citizens who saw an opportunity to free Canada from British rule.⁹⁸ Brigadier-General Winfield Scott endorsed a request to reactivate Fort Ontario on December 29, 1837 thirty days after Canadian loyalist authorities destroyed the American steamer *Caroline* at Niagara Falls.⁹⁹ Yet, lack of plans, troops, and money delayed rebuilding the fort. It was not until August 1839 that construction of the fourth version of Fort Ontario began under the supervision of Lt. Danville Leadbetter of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, a succession of incidents kept tensions high and emphasized the need for military force to support the administration's neutral policy. Along the border of British Canada, a number of vessels that frequented Oswego's harbor were fired upon by Canadian militia as they passed through the Welland Canal or the Canadian shoreline.¹⁰¹ Rebels seized and burned one steamer, the *Sir Robert Peel*, in the St. Lawrence River while it was on route to Oswego.¹⁰² A mob attacked a Canadian steamer, the *Commodore Barrie*, as it lay at an Oswego berth with British troops onboard.¹⁰³ Rebel sympathizers also took over the American steamer *United States* outward-bound from Oswego, met two schooners that had left the port a short time earlier, and attempted an invasion of Canada at Windmill Point near Prescott, Ontario.¹⁰⁴ Later incidents involving Oswego included the staging of a rebel raid to

⁹⁴ Malcomson, 266-271.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 271-273.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 274-276. 46

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁹⁸ Clarence O. Lewis, "Patriot War Instigators Sought to Annex Canada," *Niagara Falls NY Gazette*, August 1959.

Twenty-Eighth Publication of the Oswego County Historical Society 1966-1967 (Oswego: Oswego County Historical Society, 1966), 28.

⁹⁹ Pound, 218-219.

¹⁰⁰ *Nature of Workmanship, Materials, and Contingencies Fort Ontario, Oswego, August 1844*. In *Letters Received And Sent: 1791-1889*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives of the United States.

¹⁰¹ Salisbury, 6.

¹⁰² Pound, 219.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 322.

¹⁰⁴ Orwin Edward Tiffany, *The Relations of the United States to the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838* (Ann Arbor: Bentley Historical Library, 1905), 65-66.

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capture a bank in Cobourg, Ontario and an attempt to blow up the Royal Mail steamer *Great Britain* at an Oswego dock on June 6, 1840.¹⁰⁵

After the general-in-chief of the army, Major-General Alexander Macomb, inspected the ruins of Fort Ontario, United States troops were temporarily quartered in an Oswego hotel in July 1838.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, engineers proceeded with plans for a fourth version of Fort Ontario.¹⁰⁷ In November, a permanent detachment of troops arrived.¹⁰⁸ During the summer of 1839, a host of notables visited and conferred with local officials. They included Scott, Governor William H. Seward, Senator Henry Clay, Secretary of War Joel Poinsett, Secretary of State John Forsyth, and President Martin Van Buren.¹⁰⁹

Although the crisis passed and relations improved following the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842, construction of Fort Ontario continued until its completion in 1844.¹¹⁰ Regulars remained in garrison with brief interruptions due to the Mexican War and the Kansas crisis.¹¹¹

THE CIVIL WAR AND THE FINAL DECADE OF CRISIS; 1861-1871

Less than twenty years after the completion of Fort Ontario, the American Civil War broke out in 1861. Fear of British intervention to aid the Confederacy caused United States regulars to remain in garrison at the fort.¹¹² Fort Ontario served as a recruitment, training, and induction center throughout the war. The fort also acted as a hiding place for Federal records when resentment over the first United States draft law caused New York City riots in 1863.¹¹³

Tensions with Great Britain continued on the northern frontier following the end of the Civil War. From 1866-1871, Irish Nationalists (Fenians) conducted raids into Canada from the United States.¹¹⁴ The goal of the Fenians was to free Ireland from British rule.¹¹⁵ On at least one occasion, troops from Fort Ontario were dispatched by rail in an attempt to forestall a Fenian raid.¹¹⁶ The British government felt that the United States failed to act vigorously to control terrorist activities. New construction to improve Fort Ontario's strength, which included replacement of 1839-1844 chemically treated timber walls with stone, began in 1863 as a reaction to a possible British invasion.¹¹⁷ However, improvements stopped soon after the 1871 Treaty of Washington ushered in the modern era of truly peaceful Canadian-American relations.¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁵ Pound, 249; 289-290.

¹⁰⁶ Benjamin Homans, *The Army and Navy Chronicle Volume VIII From January 1 to June 30, 1839* (Washington City: B. Homans, 1839), 325.

¹⁰⁷ In 1755, governor William Shirley ordered the construction of the first Fort Ontario. In 1756, Montcalm destroyed the fort. Pargellis, 191. Chartrand, 54. In 1759, Brigadier-General Thomas Gage began a second version of Fort Ontario. McCulloch, 159-160; 250. In 1778, Continental troops burned Fort Ontario's buildings during the Revolutionary War. Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 174.

¹⁰⁸ *Twenty-Eighth Publication of the Oswego County Historical Society 1966-1967*, 29.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 47

¹¹⁰ Salisbury, 6. Pound, 230.

¹¹¹ Salisbury, 6.

¹¹² "Matters At The Fort," *Oswego Commercial Times*, October 22, 1861. "Oswego County," *Utica Morning Herald and Daily Gazette*, December 3, 1862. Salisbury, 6.

¹¹³ "The New York Riots," *The Commonwealth Frankfurt*, August 17, 1863. *Twenty-Eighth Publication of the Oswego County Historical Society 1966-1967*, 29.

¹¹⁴ Pound, 230.

¹¹⁵ Capt. John A. Macdonald, *Troublous Times in Canada: A History of the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870* (Toronto: W.S. Johnston & Coy, 1910), 7-8.

¹¹⁶ Macdonald, *Troublous Times in Canada*, 92.

¹¹⁷ *Twenty-Eighth Publication of the Oswego County Historical Society 1966-1967*, 29.

¹¹⁸ Salisbury, 7.

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THE DECLINE OF DEFENSIVE NEED; 1872-1901

As the imperative of defending the mouth of the Oswego River relaxed, garrison life assumed a different character. Interest shifted to the western Indian Wars, leaving duty at a post on the Great Lakes frontier rather routine. Congress refused money to complete the defensive improvements that had begun at Fort Ontario during the Civil War.¹¹⁹ As a consequence, the fortification showed increasing signs of deterioration toward the end of the 19th century. Changes in weapons and tactics as well as different strategic considerations left Fort Ontario outmoded as a defensive installation; it was temporarily ungarrisoned while undergoing sanitary improvements from 1881-1884, and again from 1894-1898 when the Spanish-American War prompted it reoccupation.¹²⁰

NEW PURPOSES IN A NEW CENTURY

Military Training Installation: 1903-1916 Although temporarily abandoned from 1901-1903, except for an Ordnance Sergeant who served as caretaker, Fort Ontario found renewed importance during the first half of the twentieth century. President Theodore Roosevelt and Secretary of War Elihu Root, both native New Yorkers intent on reforming army capabilities to serve the expanded interests of an emerging world power, personally intervened to convert Fort Ontario into a training installation.¹²¹ In 1902 the fort's outer works and dry moat were removed, and from 1903 – 1905 a battalion-sized complex of red brick officer's quarters, non-commissioned officers quarters, enlisted men's barracks, hospital, and support buildings were erected on the 75 acre Fort Ontario Military Reservation.¹²² Infantry units garrisoned the post until 1916 when Company A, 3rd U.S. Infantry was transferred to the Mexican border to counter raids by Pancho Villa, and the 123rd Coast Artillery Regiment, NYNG took over.¹²³

World War I: General Hospital #5 1917-1919

From 1917 to 1919 Fort Ontario was designated General Hospital #5 and dedicated to the treatment of medical, surgical, tubercular and venereal cases, and as a reconstruction hospital.¹²⁴ Thirty new buildings of frame material were constructed and the red brick buildings connected with corridors to accommodate large numbers of medical staff and patients.¹²⁵ Doctors, nurses, and ambulance companies trained at the post before being transferred to Europe. Thousands of sick and wounded soldiers from overseas were unloaded from ships at New York Harbor and placed on special hospital trains that arrived at on-post sidings. One hundred and sixty sick or injured soldiers from army posts around the United States were also brought to Fort Ontario, as well as civilians during the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918.¹²⁶ On September 1, 1919 Fort Ontario ceased functioning as a general hospital.¹²⁷

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Salisbury, 7.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ "Corporal S.C. Rhodes Dead At Fort Ontario," *Syracuse Post Standard*, April 3, 1916.

¹²⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Frank W. Weed, *The Medical Department of the United States Army In The World War Volume 5 Military Hospitals In The United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923), 501-504.

¹²⁵ Weed, *The Medical Department of the United States Army In The World War*, 503.

¹²⁶ "What Red Cross Accomplished," *Oswego Daily Palladium*, October 24, 1918.

¹²⁷ Weed, 504.

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Twilight of the Old Army: 1919-1940

In 1919, Fort Ontario was converted back to an infantry garrison post.¹²⁸ From 1933 to 1940, the fort served as Headquarters of the First Brigade of the United States Army, with a battalion of the 28th Infantry Regiment and Headquarters Company stationed at the post.¹²⁹ During this period, garrison units were commanded by the post commander and not by the general officers assigned to brigade command. In summer, the regulars left Fort Ontario for training at Stony Point or Pine Camp (now Fort Drum) and other locations, while National Guard Coast and Field Artillery units camped on the grounds in summer and practiced with their guns at nearby lakeside ranges.¹³⁰ The army belonged to a world of its own, but often strong relationships between civilians and soldiers in garrison towns developed and were often sealed by marriages with local women, as well as army pay spent in the community.¹³¹ Elsewhere, most Americans rarely or never saw a regular army soldier since the army was so small. Yet, the Oswego townspeople and tourists who often attended evening dress parades, retreat ceremonies, band concerts, and athletic events, experienced a rhythm of life and relationships attuned to the daily rituals of morning and evening guns and bugle calls.¹³²

Despite changes in America's position on the world scene and in the tools of warfare in the twentieth century before World War II, America's traditional antimilitary view remained essentially the same. The army remained modest in size during the 1920's and 1930's, and was frequently the target of budget cuts during the Great Depression. The army's situation drastically changed during the mobilization of 1939-1940 when President Roosevelt ordered an increase in the armed forces for defense and national security.¹³³ For the first time in the nation's history, a large peacetime mobilization and draft occurred, ending the days of small army garrison posts like Fort Ontario. The old army expanded from 189,000 in 1939 into a new modern army of over 1,850,000 officers and men by 1941, which required larger units and facilities for training and maneuvers.¹³⁴ In September 1940, the 3rd Battalion, 28th U.S. Infantry left the post for reorganization and a decade's old way of life vanished almost overnight.¹³⁵

SPECIAL TRAINING POST; 1940-1944

In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made minor concessions in the military to mollify African-American leaders. He pledged better access of blacks to commissioned ranks and to real opportunities in military specialties, as well as appointing Benjamin O. Davis the first African-American Brigadier-General in the army.¹³⁶ Davis fought army efforts to continue the practice of limiting blacks to support roles. He succeeded in converting the African-

¹²⁸ Steven E. Clay, *US Army Order of Battle 1919-1941, Volume I, The Arms: Major Commands and Infantry Organizations, 1919-41* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 30.

¹²⁹ Clay, *US Army Order of Battle 1919-1941*, 30.

¹³⁰ Clay, 30.

¹³¹ Sharon R. Lowenstein, *Token Refuge: The Story of the Jewish Refugee Shelter at Oswego, 1944-1946* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 39-40.

¹³² "Boxing Bouts at Fort," *The Oswego Palladium Times*, January 25, 1909. "Games at Fort Ontario," *Oswego Daily Times*, September 5, 1908. "Military Reception: Members of Twelfth Infantry Will Entertain Tuesday Evening," *Oswego Daily Times*, May 18, 1907.

¹³³ "Complete Text of President's Address on Neutrality," *Albany: Times-Union*, September 22, 1939.

¹³⁴ Edward C. Wayne, "King Carol II of Rumania Abdicates As Fascist Iron Guard Effects Coup; House Votes 60-Day Volunteer Plan Before Launching of Peacetime Draft," *The Interlaken Review*, September 13, 1940.

¹³⁵ Clay, 30.

¹³⁶ Steven D. Smith and James A. Zeidler, "A Historic Context for the African American Military Experience," *US Army Corps of Engineers Research Laboratories*, July 1998, 226. "Colonel Davis Honored At Review of 369th," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 11, 1938. "General Davis' Military Career Dates Back to War With Spain," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 31, 1948.

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American 369th Infantry to an anti-aircraft artillery regiment, an assignment blacks had previously been considered not intelligent enough to perform.¹³⁷ In 1940, the War Department decided that because of its proximity to Lake Ontario and other natural resources, Fort Ontario would be an ideal location for the establishment of an anti-aircraft artillery unit training facility.¹³⁸ When the 1800 men and officers of 369th Coast Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment began arriving at the post in January 1941, it severely tested the capacity of the small post.¹³⁹ The 198th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment, a white unit from Delaware, replaced the 369th when the latter departed the fort in September of the same year.¹⁴⁰ After the 198th left in September 1941, the 1212th Second Corps Service Unit arrived shortly afterwards, making the fort a training center for military police and quartermasters.¹⁴¹ In 1943, the 1212th SCSU departed from Fort Ontario.¹⁴² The War Department then established the 1210th Service unit which had been composed of professional educators drawn from other branches of the services as well as qualified new recruits.¹⁴³ The 1210th SCSU set up training centers at Fort Ontario and only one other army post in the United States for illiterate soldiers and those born and educated in foreign countries who could not read or understand English.¹⁴⁴ In February 1944, the 1210th SCSU transferred to Pine Camp.¹⁴⁵ Its departure marked the end of Fort Ontario as strictly a military post.

FORT ONTARIO EMERGENCY REFUGEE SHELTER 1944-1946

The following context is taken from Edward B Marks's (War Relocation Authority), *Token shipment, the story of America's war refugee shelter*, and a 2014 Bureau of Historic Sites and Parks (NYS OPRHP) exhibit, "Don't Fence Me In/A Grey Mass From A Grey Ship."¹⁴⁶

By March 1944, Fort Ontario was vacated by the army.¹⁴⁷ Four months later- in June, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by Executive Order, took advantage of this vacancy and established Fort Ontario as the only Refugee Shelter in the United States for mostly Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. The recently decommissioned Fort Ontario, with its unoccupied barracks, seemed the perfect location for a refugee shelter.¹⁴⁸ The shelter was established to further the long-range objective of the War Refugee Board of encouraging reluctant

¹³⁷ "Order General B. O. Davis to Ft. Riley," *California Eagle*, January 23, 1941.

¹³⁸ Salisbury, 7.

¹³⁹ "369th Recruits Will Start Basic Training Friday," *Oswego Palladium Times*, January 23, 1941.

¹⁴⁰ "369th Coast Artillery (AA) at Fort Ontario, First All-Negro Regiment, Has Fine Record And Holds Unique List of Famous Army Firsts," *Daily Sentinel*, February 12, 1941.

¹⁴¹ "198th Regiment Arrives At Oswego in Downpour," *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, September 6, 1941. 49. Delaware Military History: The Delaware National Guard Between the World Wars." Delaware Military Heritage and Education Foundation. <<http://www.militaryheritage.org/DARNGBetweenWars.html>>, accessed 21 Mar. 2016.

¹⁴² "An Army Interpreter Of French Language," *Evening Recorder*, October 23, 1944.

¹⁴³ "State Guard May Be Trained Here At Fort Ontario," *Oswego Palladium-Times*, March 28, 1942.

¹⁴⁴ Anthony Slosek, "Recent History At Fort Noted," *Palladium-Times*, November 29, 1988.

¹⁴⁵ "Military Police Will Not Remain At Fort Ontario: Pre-Basic Training of Special Importance Will Be Given at Post," *Oswego Palladium Times*, June 22, 1943.

¹⁴⁶ Lowenstein, *Token Refuge: The Story of the Jewish Refugee Shelter at Oswego*, 40.

¹⁴⁷ "Troops Prepare To Depart From Fort Next Week," *Oswego Palladium-Times*, February 17, 1944.

¹⁴⁸ Other sources include Lowenstein, *Token Refuge*; 2nd Lieutenant E.A. McCue, "Memorandum to All Civilian Employees from the Army Services Forces Second Service Command Fort Ontario, NY," 15 February 1944. Copy found in the archives at the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum. Mary Fultz, "Area Folks Remember The Refugees," *Oswego County Messenger*, October 26, 1981. "Refugees Arrive From Europe," *Life Magazine*, Aug. 24, 1944. "Last Refugees will Leave Fort By February 6th," *Oswego Palladium Times*, Jan. 19, 1946.

¹⁴⁹ Lowenstein, *Token Refuge*, 40. 2nd Lieutenant E.A. McCue, "Memorandum to All Civilian Employees from the Army Services Forces Second Service Command Fort Ontario, NY," 15 February 1944. Copy found in the archives at the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum.

¹⁵⁰ Lowenstein, 1; 55.

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Allied countries to accept refugees from war-torn Europe; it was administered by the War Relocation Authority and staffed by volunteer organizations.¹⁴⁹

Acting on his own responsibility and without seeking the approval of Congress, Roosevelt directed the army in Italy to select a group of 1,000 people from overcrowded refugee camps in Italy. The proposition carried risk of a public backlash both in the national press and the local community of Oswego. Both the composition of the group and the legal status of refugees were carefully managed to avoid provoking a strong reaction.

Roosevelt's instructions stipulated that the refugee group should "include a reasonable proportion of various categories of persecuted peoples who have fled to Italy [and] for whom other havens of refuge are not immediately available." The War Refugee Board representatives in Italy strove to choose family or community groups who were in greatest need and those whose skill set might make the refugee camp self-sustaining. Ranging in age from a few weeks to 80 years old, the 982 refugees included 457 females and 525 males in flight from at least 18 nations; most were from Yugoslavia, Austria, Poland, Germany and Czechoslovakia. While 874 were Jewish, the group's ranks were diversified by the addition of 73 Roman Catholics, 28 Greek and Russian Orthodox, and seven Protestants. Before their lives were catastrophically interrupted by the war they had been actors, artisans, bookkeepers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, merchants, musicians, painters, pharmacists, opticians, rabbis, sculptors, tailors, teachers, and writers.

Most, but not all of the refugees had fled from country to country, fleeing from the Nazi march across Europe—Germany to Austria, to Czechoslovakia, to Poland, to Yugoslavia and finally to Italy. Some fled across the Alps when the Nazis occupied France—making a three-day climb over a 9,000 foot pass, only to find the Nazis had occupied Italy after the latter's surrender; many of the French refugees were captured and deported to Poland, only 150 managed to make it to Allied lines. Living on the run, the refugees hid out, falsified documents, and watched as friends, neighbors and loved ones were dragged off into deportation and death. Many of the refugees had been captured themselves, escaping from the windows of moving railroad cars, from deportation centers, or even from the Nazi camps—almost 100 of the refugees had escaped from the notorious extermination centers at Dachau and Buchenwald.

As to the status of the refugees, it can best be summed up as indefinite confinement. Roosevelt assured Congress and the American public that the refugees would remain at Fort Ontario "under appropriate security measures" and then be returned to their homelands after the war—in fact, each refugee signed papers promising to return. As they would not technically be immigrants under US law and policy, the refugees arrived in America as "guests" of FDR.

Facilities at Fort Ontario were to be modified to provide year-round accommodations for family groups. Barracks were converted into small family apartments, additional fire exits were added and women's lavatories were constructed—all at a cost of almost \$250,000.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 21; 27-38; 40-41.

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The refugees sailed from Naples, Italy, on July 21, 1944. Lacking passports, they were identified by U.S. Army casual baggage tags. They sailed aboard the Liberty ship U.S.S. *Henry Gibbins*, accompanying a thousand wounded soldiers returning to America. To discourage attacks by Nazi bombers and U-boats, their naval convoy included two ships carrying German prisoners of war. They arrived in New York Harbor on August 3 and, after initial inspection and processing, traveled to Oswego aboard an overnight train, arriving on August 5.

At Fort Ontario, the refugees were registered and assigned to apartments in the army barracks. A refugee recalled:

“As they came into the fort in the early morning...the refugees presented a sorry spectacle. Their years of privation were accentuated by the discomfort of the sea voyage and the overnight ride to the shelter. Many looked haggard, unshaven and generally unkempt. A few wore conventional summer attire, but in many cases their clothing was frayed and soiled. The most noticeable lack was that of shoes. A large number of the children were barefoot and many adults wore the simplest kind of handmade sandals...”

After debriefing, fingerprinting, and a security check the refugees were subject to a quarantine period inside of the fort for several weeks. Outsiders were allowed to enter the fort for official business and mail was censored for security reasons—although all mail restrictions were lifted after 60 days. Phone calls, however, were allowed during the quarantine period, and the phones were busy, especially since the refugees’ names had been published in the newspapers of the day. As numerous refugees had friends and relatives in America, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) employees at Fort Ontario facilitated a large number of telephone reunions as the refugees reestablished contact. Although a 6’10” fence physically separated the refugees from the City of Oswego, a 1946 government report indicates there was a great deal of interaction between those inside and outside of the fort—exchanging conversations and goods was apparently commonplace. At the end of the quarantine period, an Open House event was held, attracting over 5,000 locals and out of town relatives, friends and well-wishers. On September 20, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited the fort. Roosevelt was accompanied by Elinor Fatman Morgenthau, the wife of the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau—who played a crucial role in conniving FDR to establish the US War Refugee Board, and thus helped save as many as 200,000 European Jews (and to bring 982 refugees to Fort Ontario).

A pass system was instituted, allowing the refugees limited access to the city, but the interactions between the refugees and the Oswegoians went so well, the system was changed to a simple curfew. Refugees were permitted to leave the fort for a maximum of six hours, and had to return before midnight—just enough time to return from the last showing at the local movie theater; school children were issued special passes covering daytime school hours. Under both the pass and curfews system, residents were restricting from leaving city limits.

While at Fort Ontario, the refugees were provided food, housing, medical care, clothing and education. The Oswego School system, down in enrollments because of a population loss during the war, agreed to absorb school age children into elementary, and junior and senior high schools; the Catholic children were invited to attend parochial school. Several private groups, like the National Council of Jewish Women, provided social services and

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amenities for the refugees. Although many of the refugees had working knowledge of English, the National Council of Jewish Women and the National Refugee Service instituted an English school at Fort Ontario; at one time, over 500 adult refugees attended English classes, and together with their interactions with other Americans and their children's instruction in public school, the refugee group as a whole gained a healthy proficiency in English. Since many teenagers had been out of school for years, younger children had never attended school, and adults needed to acquire new skills in order to find jobs, the refugees eagerly sought educational programs of all kinds. A "listening room" enabled students to hear recorded English. Books in English could be borrowed from a library. Weekly movie screenings also helped the students improve their English skills and learn about American history, civics, and culture. Freedom of religion was allowed, with buildings designated for religious services in any language. Two synagogues—one orthodox and one reformed—held services on the fort grounds, and the Protestants and Catholics attended church in the city.

Over time, the uncertain status of the refugees began to wear down spirits. The diverse population lacked an overall sense of community and an especially severe Oswego winter made things even bleaker. When spring arrived, the refugees pressed for a modification of their leave policy—adopting the tune "Don't Fence Me In," which was enjoying a resurgence on the radio at the time.

V-E Day (8 May 1945) brought the question of the refugees' status to fore, especially since they had lost their host, FDR, a month earlier. The refugees were supposed to return to their homelands at the end of hostilities, but many of the refugees apparently no longer identified with their country of origin, and wanted to stay in America. An official assessment of the 496 family heads revealed 304 wished to remain in the US, 68 wished to be repatriated, 31 wished to go to another county altogether, and 93 were uncertain. Many of those who wished to stay had relatives in the United States—parents, brothers, spouses, children, etc.—including some 22 families who had relatives serving in the US armed forces.

As noted, not all refugees desired citizenship and a small number of departures from the shelter would take place from 1944 to 1946. Mrs. Elsa Neumann, an Austrian, was the first refugee to depart; on February 27, 1945, she went to South Africa, where her children were living. On May 30 a group of 13 voluntary repatriates left for Yugoslavia; a second group of 53 Yugoslavs left for their homeland in July. One man, Ludwig Reis, was given passage to Uruguay in August, where he joined his son, and in October, Cecilia Melcer, a Czech, left for Paris—hoping to rejoin her husband in Prague.

On May 19, 1945, the refugee shelter director, Joseph H. Smart, resigned his position as director so he could concentrate more fully on securing citizenship for the refugees that desired it; freed of his governmental duties, Smart formed the Friends of Fort Ontario Guest-Refugees, Inc., and worked their behalf. Smart was joined in his endeavors by the majority of the people of Oswego. Since the shelter's inception, the residents of the City of Oswego had shown tolerance, kindness and acceptance of the refugees, and now many began to endorse full US citizenship for the men, women and children who they had come to know as neighbors and friends.

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On June 6, 1945 President Truman transferred administration of the refugee shelter to the Department of the Interior; subsequently, Brigadier General William O'Dwer submitted a report indicating that the subject of international law on displaced persons was unclear, and urged that refugees should remain in the United States. The effort to determine the refugees' fate intensified when a Congressional subcommittee visited Fort Ontario on June 25 and 26; again, the people of Oswego praised the refugees as model guests and excellent students—all traits that would make them attractive citizens.

A positive step for the refugees came on July 4, 1945, when it was announced that the travel restrictions would be relaxed—slightly. Refugees could now travel up to 20 miles from the fort; this was far enough to visit neighboring towns and swim at the beaches of two nearby State Parks, but not enough to visit nearby Syracuse, which was 35 miles away.

In September 1945, the Departments of State, Interior, and Justice conducted exploratory interviews with the refugees at Fort Ontario—the purpose of the hearings was to determine if it was practicable to return the refugees to their former countries of residence. During the interviews, they gathered background information, inquired extensively about individual and family situations, asked about the refugees' war experiences in Europe (including whether their families had been killed or if any were known to still be alive; the inquiry also asked the refugees about American relatives and their general hopes and fears.

The study proved a success, because three months later, President Truman stated that the Fort Ontario refugees all appear to qualify for citizenship under current immigration laws and that:

“it would be inhumane and wasteful to require these people to go all the way back to Europe merely for the purpose of applying there for immigration visas and returning to the U. S. * * *. I am therefore directing the Secretary of state and the Attorney General to adjust the immigration status of the members of this group who may wish to remain here, in strict accordance with existing laws and regulations.”

A horde of civil servants arrived at Fort Ontario in January of 1946 to make good on Truman's directive. Early 20th century immigration laws restricted US citizenship by establishing quotas on a per-country basis. Since the US anticipated receiving large numbers of applicants from war-affected European nations, it was decided to process the Fort Ontario refugees quickly during the spring of 1945—before the quotas ran out. Because immigration during the war had been virtually nonexistent, quotas were unfilled. Citizenship applications for the Germans, Austrians, Poles, Czechs, and Russians at the Fort Ontario shelter were all processed during January and February of 1946. Applications for the Yugoslavs—the largest nationality at the Fort Ontario shelter—had to be spread out over three months, to avoid the legal stipulation, which forbade using more than 10 percent of the allotted quota for any country in a month; as the annual Yugoslav quota was 845, only 85 persons could be allowed to apply per month.

A technicality prevented a person's actual immigration status change from changing unless they were *entering* the United States, so each refugee completed every step of the immigration process at Fort Ontario (fingerprinting,

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alien registration, etc.) and then departed for the American Consulate at Niagara Falls, Canada. Once at the Consulate, the refugees formally applied for an immigration visa and were issued temporary permits to enter the US while they awaited citizenship. From January to March 1946, 853 shelter refugees appeared at the Consulate and were granted temporary visas. Of these, 8 decided to immigrate to another country, 19 decided to repatriate and 19 were found to be inadmissible to the US for reasons of health. Finally, the 23 children born at the shelter were determined to be legal US citizens, by virtue of their birth on American soil.

There was some effort to help the new citizens integrate into the US. An individual resettlement plan was developed for each refugee, including advice about potential destinations, authenticating whether relatives and friends' offers of housing were *bona fide*, and trying to match individual skill sets with geographical locations where those skills might be in demand. A study of the refugees' destinations showed the 923 people went to over 70 communities in 21 states, and the District of Columbia. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the largest group of refugees (491 people) settled in New York City, but 82 others stayed in upstate New York—apparently gaining an appreciation for the people of the region after reading their newspapers and interacting with them for two years.

Today, a small museum across the street from the old fort, Safe Haven Inc., is dedicated to the memory of this camp, the only one allowed to exist on the North American continent. Freedom-loving Americans can look with pride upon this one example of humanity which stands in stark contrast to the countless atrocities and horrors of the Nazi holocaust. The museum held a 50th reunion of the refugees in August, 1994. Some fifty survivors were honored at the fort, and many recounted their experiences on video tape, courtesy of Safe Haven.

The last group of refugees left the post in February 1946.¹⁵⁰ With the refugees gone, the remaining staff worked vigorously to close operations and complete the paperwork. Essential shelter services were maintained until the last refugees left on February 5. Fort Ontario was turned back over to the War Department on February 28, 1946. Too small to meet the military's training needs in the age of nuclear warfare, Fort Ontario was decommissioned, and the flag was lowered for the last time as a regular army post on April 3, 1946.¹⁵¹

VETERANS HOUSING PROJECT: 1946-1953

In 1946, the Fort Ontario military reservation reverted to the State of New York in accordance with a unique law passed by the Legislature in 1839 requiring it to be returned when the army no longer needed it.¹⁵² From 1947 to 1953, the New York State Housing Authority administered the fort as a temporary housing project for World War II veterans and their families during the post-war housing shortage and baby boom.¹⁵³ Dozens of the red brick and other buildings outside the old fort and most of the stone buildings inside the old stone fort were converted into

¹⁵⁰ "Last Refugees will Leave Fort By February 6th," *Oswego Palladium Times*, Jan. 19, 1946. Lowenstein, 136.

¹⁵¹ "Fort Ontario to receive historic flag at ceremony," *The Patriot*, May 22, 1990. "U.S. Army Gives Up Fort Ontario As Military Post," *Oswego Palladium-Times*, April 3, 1946. "Old Glory Lowered As Army Gives Up Fort Ontario," *Oswego Palladium-Times*, April 4, 1946.

¹⁵² Salisbury, 7.

¹⁵³ "Army to Quit Fort Ontario?" *Amsterdam Evening Recorder And Daily Democrat*, October 17, 1953. Salisbury, 7. 50

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apartments.¹⁵⁴ Children of veterans grew up in this unique environment and played in the underground stone casemates at the fort.¹⁵⁵

FORT ONTARIO STATE HISTORIC SITE

In 1949 initial steps were taken to turn Fort Ontario over from the NYS Housing Authority to the New York State Education Department for development as a state historic site.¹⁵⁶ Restoration of the buildings inside the fort to their 1840's appearance began soon after.¹⁵⁷ Many of the beautiful early 20th c. red brick buildings outside the fort were demolished, and nearly all traces of the 1947 modifications made to the old fort's stone buildings for veteran's apartments were eliminated.¹⁵⁸ In 1967 the fort was turned over to the New York State Historic Trust, and in 1970 to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Since the mid-1980's efforts have been made to restore the fort to its appearance during the period of 1868-1972, the common age of its surviving buildings and a time for which there is a wealth of documentary and visual information.¹⁵⁹ In 1989, Friends of Fort Ontario, Inc., a not-for-profit charitable organization chartered by the NYS Education Department, was formed to promote and support programming and activities at the fort in cooperation with NYS Parks.¹⁶⁰

COLD WAR TO WAR ON TERROR

At the height of the Cold War in 1961 the United States Army returned to Fort Ontario and established a Reserve Center on a portion of the old 75 acre military reservation.¹⁶¹ Battery C, 3rd Howitzer Battalion, 40th Artillery garrisoned the post from 1959 to 1976, when they were converted to the 479th Engineer Battalion.¹⁶² In the last few decades, men and women of the 444th Engineer Company, 479th Engineer Battalion, USAR, veterans of campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, continue to occupy the Reserve Center and utilize the old stone fort's parade ground for military ceremonies and memorial services for fallen members.¹⁶³

Integrity

As evident from the historical context, the Fort Ontario Military Reservation was in a near constant state of change over its two-hundred year history as a military installation. In 1784, New York State reserved one square mile of land around the core fortification; in 1814, this reservation was reduced to a ½ square mile. The land was reduced in 1839 when New York State allowed use of the reservation to the United States Government, the latter never held permanent title to the lands. Further reductions to the reserved area occurred in 1852, when the southwest corner of the property was permanently leased, and in 1864, when the railroad was granted a right-of-way. At that time, the post still had pier facilities on the Oswego River and included the entire parcel on the northeast, a piece of land that

¹⁵⁴ "To Ask Slash In Rental Fees For Fort Apartments," *Oswego Palladium-Times*, January 28, 1948.

¹⁵⁵ FE Jones, "Fort Ontario," September 18, 2013. Message found in the Fort Ontario State Historic Site Research Center, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

¹⁵⁶ Salisbury, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Although the extant buildings date back to 1840, the room furnishings reflect the time period between 1868 and 1872. Ibid, 8.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 8.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 7-7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 7.

¹⁶¹ "Rouse Co. to Build \$160,000 Army Center at Fort Ontario," *The Palladium Times*, February, 20, 1960.

¹⁶² "Coast Guard in Oswego Goes Back to Sept. 1876," *Palladium-Times*, July 1, 1976. "411th Engineers Welcome General Edward Czmiuk," *The Fulton Patriot*, May 2, 1968.

¹⁶³ Gwen Bixby, "Local reservists honored for service," *The Valley News*, March 21, 1994.

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can be identified by drawing an imaginary line from the end of East 9th Street between Mercer Street and the railroad tracks, which formed the northern border of the nominated property. Civil War and post-Civil War era improvements included the construction of guardhouses, and the replacement of the sloped timber and earth outer walls with vertical stone masonry, and reshaping of the outer earthworks. Lack of funding in the 1870s, however, forced a decline in the installation's development. In 1903-1905, the reservation underwent a massive renovation. The outer earthworks—now outmoded by the introduction of effective breech-loading rifled artillery—were removed and leveled and several new buildings (brick and framed) were added around the parade. During WWII, the property reached its greatest extent in terms of the build environment, with 129 buildings on site. The vast majority of these were short-term, wood-framed buildings erected during the war and its buildup. Even before the reservation was returned to New York State in 1946, the Army began removing many of those buildings as it saw fit. New York State heavily altered the property during the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the majority of the buildings and circulation systems constructed on the military reservation during the early 20th century were removed. New York State removed many buildings in preparation to house returning veterans, and following the 1949 creation, and 1953 expansion of Fort Ontario as an historic site. In 1951 the veterans housed within the fort itself (OQ1, OQ2, EMB, etc.), as well as those housed in the Keepers House departed, and the buildings were transferred to the NYS Education Department and the NYS Department of Veterans Affairs still housed some veterans and families in buildings outside of the earthworks, but they left in early 1953. In 1954, the New York State Land Management Bureau began subdividing the reservation, selling portions of it to the City of Oswego, the Oswego Port Authority and a private owner. Given the changes and subsequent development of these parcels after they left state ownership, 1954 represents the end date for the period of significance and the nominated property represents the culmination of two centuries of development and use at the site.

Personalities of British, French, American and Indian History

Upon the grounds of Fort Ontario have walked important individuals who, for better or worse, made significant contributions to British, French, American and Indian history. One measure of the importance of Oswego's past may be gauged on how many famous figures came here at various times.

Father Simon Lemoyne, 1654, Jesuit Priest Explorer
Count Frontenac, 1696, French Explorer
Pierre Radisson, 1657, Courier de Bois (Runner of the Woods)
Col. Wolfgang von Romer, 1700, German Engineer
Maj. Gen. William Shirley, 1755, Brit. Comdr. in Chief
Louis Coulon, Steur de Villiers, 1756, French Bush Rangers
Ren LaForce, 1756, 1759, 1760, French Naval Comdr.
Marquis de Montcalm, 1756, French Comdr-in-Chief
Louis Bougainville, 1756, French officer, Explorer
Francois Pouchot, 1756, French Engineer
James Mercer, 1755-56, British Comdr at Oswego 1756
Sir William Johnson, 1750/1760's, Supt. Of Indian Affairs

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Walter Butler Sr., 1740/1750's, Trader
 Thomas Butler, 1750's, Trader, Indian Comdr.
 John Butler, 1750's 1780's, Loyalist Officer
 Walter Butler Jr, 1770's, Loyalist Officer
 Anne Grant, 1760 – 61, Author
 Francis Lewis, 1756, Commissary, Signer of Dec. of Independence
 Joseph Brant, 1760s - 1780's, Mohawk Chief
 Red Head, 1750s - 1760's, Onondaga Chief
 Silverheels, 1750s - 1760's, Seneca Chief
 William Steele, 1821 - 1835, Conf. General
 Maj. Gen. Alexander Macomb, 1838, U. S. Army Officer
 Elihu Root, 1903, U. S. Sec. of War
 Eleanor Roosevelt, 1944, First Lady
 Joseph Smart, 1944 – 46, Comdr of Emerg Shelter
 Daniel Claus, 1770s, Loyalist Officer
 Joshua Loring, 1750s - 1760's, British Naval Officer
 Col. Chauncey Hooper, 1941, African Amr. Officer
 Gen Nelson Miles, 1896, U. S. Army C - C
 Pearl White, 1915, Actress
 Lionel Barrymore, 1915, Actor
 Maj Gen Walter Short, 1930s, U. S. Army Officer
 Lt. John Woodruff, 369th A. A. A , 1936 Olympic gold medal winner,
 Jesse Owens, 1941 Olympic gold medal winner
 Russell Wooding, Director Apollo Theater Orchestra
 Simon Des Jordano, 179, Chamberlain to King Louis XVI
 Herbert H. Lehman, 1940's, N. Y. Governor
 Thomas Davies, 1760, Artist, Brit. Officer
 Sir James Yeo, 1813, 1814, Brit Naval Comdr
 Lt Gen Sir Gordon Drummond, 1814, British Officer
 Sir George Provost, 1814, British Officer
 Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, 1960s, N. Y. Governor
 Isaac Chauncey, 1813, 1814, U. S. Naval Comdr
 Walter Reed, 1910s, 1920's, U. S. Army
 Ruth Gruber, 1944 – 1948, Author of "Haven"
 Patrick MacKellar, 1755, British Engineer
 Thomas Sowers, 1756, 1759, British Engineer, Built 1759 Fort
 The Bunt, 1750s - 1760's, Onondaga Chief
 Son of Bunt, 1750s - 1760s, Onondaga Chief
 Sir John Johnson, 1770s - 1780s, Loyalist Officer

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Guy Johnson, 1770s - 1780s, Loyalist Officer
Brig Gen Barry St. Leger, 1777, British General
Frederick Haldimand, 1759, British Officer
Chevalier St - Luc de la Corne, 1759, Fr. Bush Ranger
Abbe Francois Picquet, 1756 - 69, Priest, Bush Ranger
Brig Gen Thomas Gage, 1759, British Officer
Maj Gen Jeffery Amherst, 1760, British Comdr - in - Chief
Pontiac, 1766, Ottawa Chief
Robert Rogers, 1760's, Amer. Ranger Leader
Major John Ross, 1782 - 83, British Officer
Col Marinus Willett, 1758, 1783, Amer. Officer
John Bartram, 1743, Amer. Naturalist
Col George Mitchell, 1814, Amer. Officer
Capt. Melancthon Woolsey, 1814, Amer. Naval Officer
James Fenimore Cooper, 1808, Author, Naval Officer
Col. John Bradstreet, 1750 - 1760s, Col. Comdr.
Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott, 1839 Amer. Comdr. In Chief
Major Daniel Appling, 1814, Amer. Rifle Officer
Alvin Bronson, 19th Century, Oswego Mayor
Lt. Danville Leadbetter, 1839, U. S. Army Engineer
Martin Van Buren, 1839, U. S. President
William Seward, 1839, U. S. Sec. of State
Henry Clay, 1839, U.S. Politician
Brevet Maj. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, 1850, Conf. General
Brevet Capt. Ulysses S. Grant, 1851, Union General

Military Units at Fort Ontario

A veritable parade of French, British, German and American soldiers have walked on these grounds for nearly 200 years. To visualize them all is to create a timeline of American history.

Date	Unit
1755 - 56	50th Regiment of Foot 51st Regiment of Foot Jersey Blues Royal Artillery
1756	Regiment L' Infanterie Bearn Regiment L' Infanterie la Sarre Corps of Engineers Corps Royal d 'Artillerie

Compagnies Franches de la Marine

1758

Independent Companies of New York
(Oglevie's & Gates)
Westchester County Militia
(Ogden's Company)
New York Militia (Dubois' Company)
Dutchess County Militia
(Bladgely's & Humphrey's Companies)
Queens County Militia
(Wrights Hewlet Companies)
Suffolk County Militia (Hands Company)
Richmond County Militia
(Arrowsmith's Company)
Ulster County Militia
(Seeley's & Clinton's Company)
Albany County Militia
(Yates' & Van Schaik's Company)

Boston Militia (William's Company)
Massachusetts Bay Militia (Doty's Co.)
Rhode Island Provincials
New Jerseys Provincials
Royal Artillery
Wendell's Rangers (Roger's)
Batteau Men

1759

44th Regiment of Foot
46th Regiment of Foot
60th Regiment of Foot (4th Battalion)
Royal Artillery
New York Provincials

1760

42nd Royal Highland Regiment
(1st and 2nd Battalions)
44th Regiment of Foot
46th Regiment of Foot
55th Regiment of Foot
60th Regiment of Foot (4th Battalion)
77th Regiment Of Foot (8 companies)
80th Regiment of Foot
Ranger Companies (Ogden & Waite)
(Roger's)
Royal Artillery (Williamson)
New York Provincial Battalions

	(LeRoux, Woodhull, & Corse) New Jersey Provincials (Lyman, Wooster, Fitcher, whiting) Connecticut Provincials (four un- Specified battalion)
1763 - 66	55th Regiment of Foot
1768	60th Regiment of Foot (Captain Wharton)
1777	34th Regiment of Foot 8th Regiment of Foot King's Royal Regiment of New York (Sir John Johnson's Royal Green) Butler's Rangers Anspach Jaegers (Anspach-Beyreuth)
1778	3rd New York Regiment, Continental Line
1782	34th Regiment of Foot King's Royal Regiment of New York
1796	Detachment of United States Artilleries And Engineers
1808	6th Infantry Regiment, N. Y. S. Militia
1813	16th Infantry Regiment. N.Y.S. Militia 22nd Infantry Regiment, N.Y.S. Militia 23rd Infantry Regiment N.Y.S. Militia New York State Militia (Onondaga County)
1814	3rd United States Artillery Regiment (Boyle, McIntire, Pierce, and Ansart, Co. Commanders) United States Navy Detachment New York State Militia (Onondaga Co.) Royal Navy Detachment Royal Marines Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles Regiment de Watteville
1838	Company A, 8th United States Infantry

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	Company E, 8th United States Infantry Company G, 8th United States Infantry
1839	Company G, 8th United States Infantry
1841	Battery G, 4th United States Artillery Battery C 4th United States Artillery
1843	Company G, 2nd United States Artillery
1848	Company F, 4th United States Artillery
1852	Battery C, 4th United States Artillery
1854	Battery H, 4th United States Artillery
1856	Battery E, 4th United States Artillery
1861	Companies C and D, 2nd Battalion, 16th United States Infantry
1862	147th New York Volunteer Infantry 21st Independent Battery of Light Artillery
1863	48th Regiment, New York State Militia
1864	Company H, 3rd Battalion, 16th United States Infantry
1865	16th United States Infantry Company E, 4th United States Infantry
1867	Company D, 42nd United States Infantry Company F, 42nd U.S. Infantry
1869	Battery A, 1st United States Artillery
1872	Battery F, 3rd United States Artillery
1878	Battery I, 2nd United States Artillery 10th United States Infantry
1881	Battery I, 2nd United States Artillery

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	Battery B, 3rd United States Artillery
1884	Company H, 12th United States Infantry Company D, 12th United States Infantry Company F, 12th United States Infantry
1887	Company C, 11th United States Infantry Company C, 6th United States Infantry
1892	Company A, 9th United States Infantry
1893	Company G, 9th United States Infantry
1898	Company C, 9th United States Infantry
1899	Company I, 7th United States Infantry
1900	Company G, 15th United States Infantry
1905	23rd, United States Infantry
1908	22nd Battalion, 24th United States Infantry
1917	Flower Hospital Unit, United States Army Medical Corps
1921	28th United States Infantry
1933	1st Brigade, 28th United States Infantry
1941	369th Regiment, New York Guard 198th Anti-Aircraft Regiment

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET
Section number 9 Page 10

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego County, New York

Wayne, Edward. "C. King Carol II of Rumania Abdicates As Fascist Iron Guard Effects Coup; House Votes 60-Day Volunteer Plan Before Launching of Peacetime Draft." *The Interlaken Review*, September 13, 1940.

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West, Benjamin. *Colonel Guy Johnson and Karonghyontye (Captain David Hill)*, 1776. Oil on canvas. 202 x 138 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. <http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg62/gg62-572.0.html>

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Willett, William M. *Eyewitness Accounts of the American Revolution: A Narrative of the Military Actions of Colonel Marinus Willett*. New York City: The New York Times & Arno Press: 1969.

Wrong, George. *Canada And The American Revolution*. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1968.

Yolles, Melanie A. *Gansevoort to Schuyler, July 10, 1778*. Philip Schuyler Papers, 1684-1851. New York: The New York Public Library Humanities and Social Sciences Library Manuscripts and Archives Division, 2008. <https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/schuylerp.pdf>

2nd Battalion, 24th U.S. Infantry, on dress parade at Fort Ontario, 1908. Photograph. COFOSHS, NYSOPRHP.

2nd Lieutenant E.A. McCue. "Memorandum to All Civilian Employees from the Army Services Forces Second Service Command Fort Ontario, NY." 15 February 1944. Copy found in the archives at the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum.

3rd Battalion 28th U.S. Infantry, Fort Ontario, N.Y., 1927. Photograph. COFOSHS, NYSOPRHP.

17th century map of waterways of the Great Lakes region, c.1720. Drawing. COFOSHS, NYSOPRHP.

24th United States Infantry, Field Inspection, Fort Ontario, 1908. Postcard. COFOSHS, NYSOPRHP.

"198th Regiment Arrives At Oswego in Downpour." *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, September 6, 1941.

"244th Regiment To Be Mobilized Under Army Plan." *Oswego Palladium-Times*, July 31, 1940.

"369th Coast Artillery (AA) at Fort Ontario, First All-Negro Regiment, Has Fine Record And Holds Unique List of Famous Army Firsts." *Daily Sentinel*, February 12, 1941.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET
Section number 9 Page 11

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego County, New York

369th Coast Artillery, Fort Ontario, 1941. Photograph. COFOSHS, NYSOPRHP.

“369th Recruits Will Start Basic Training Friday.” *Oswego Palladium Times*, January 23, 1941.

“411th Engineers Welcome General Edward Czrniuk.” *The Fulton Patriot*, May 2, 1968.

444th Engineer Company on Parade Ground, 2014. Photograph. Copy found in the COFOSHS, NYSOPRHP.

444th Engineer Company in Iraq, 2008. Photograph. Copy found in the COFOSHS, NYSOPRHP.

“759th Military Police Battalion.” Colorado Springs: Fort Carson. <http://www.carson.army.mil/759thMP/bn-history.html>

1763 Fort Ontario/French + Indian War Signed Document, Rhode Island Lieutenant. Copy found in the COFOSHS, NYSOPRHP.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET
Section number 10 Page 1

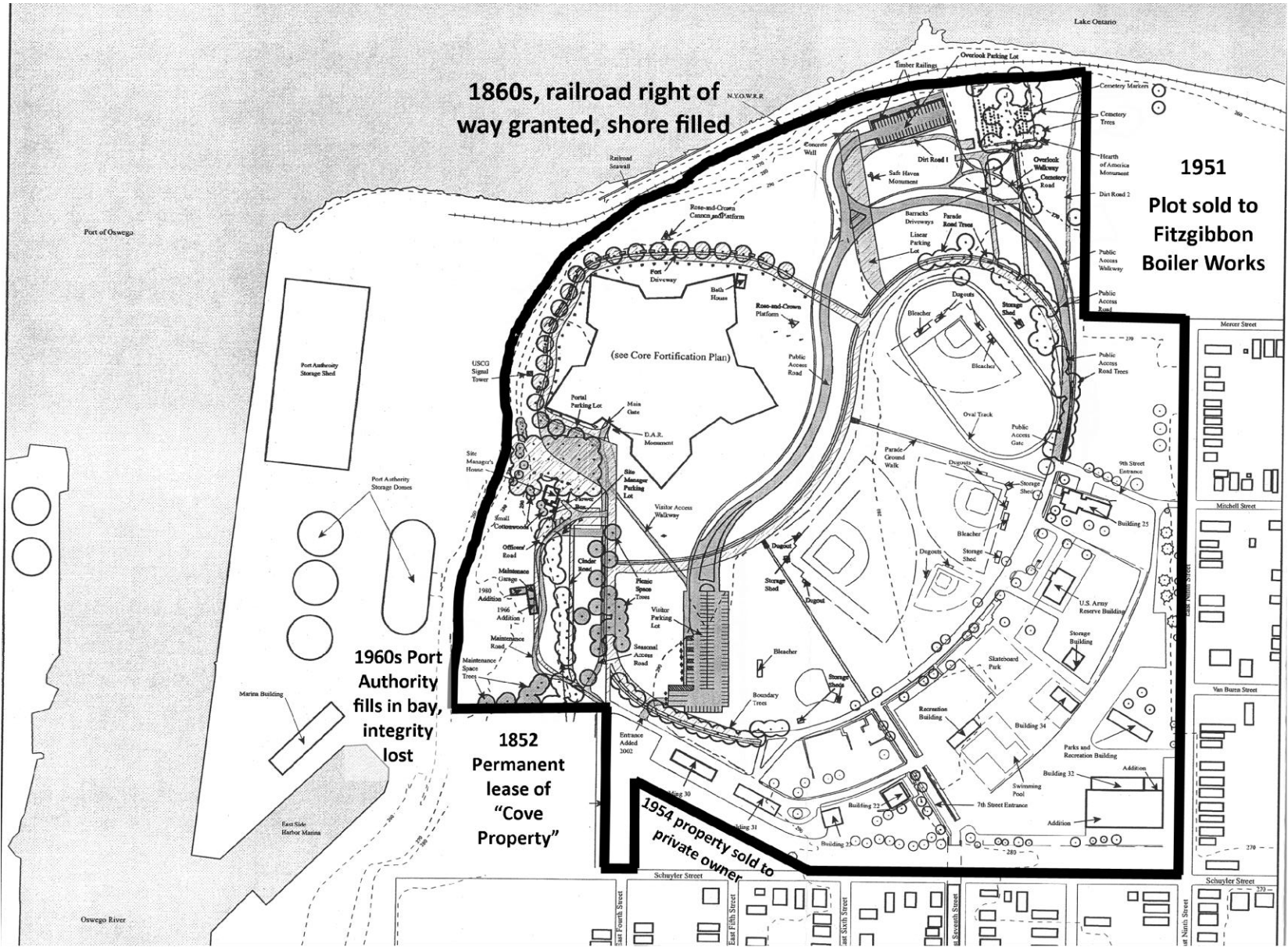
Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego County, New York

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundary was drawn to include all of the area with integrity to the period of significance within the property as it existed following subdivision in 1954 (the end date of the period of significance). It includes the core areas of the fortification, the cemetery, the parade and all extant buildings once associated with military activities onsite.

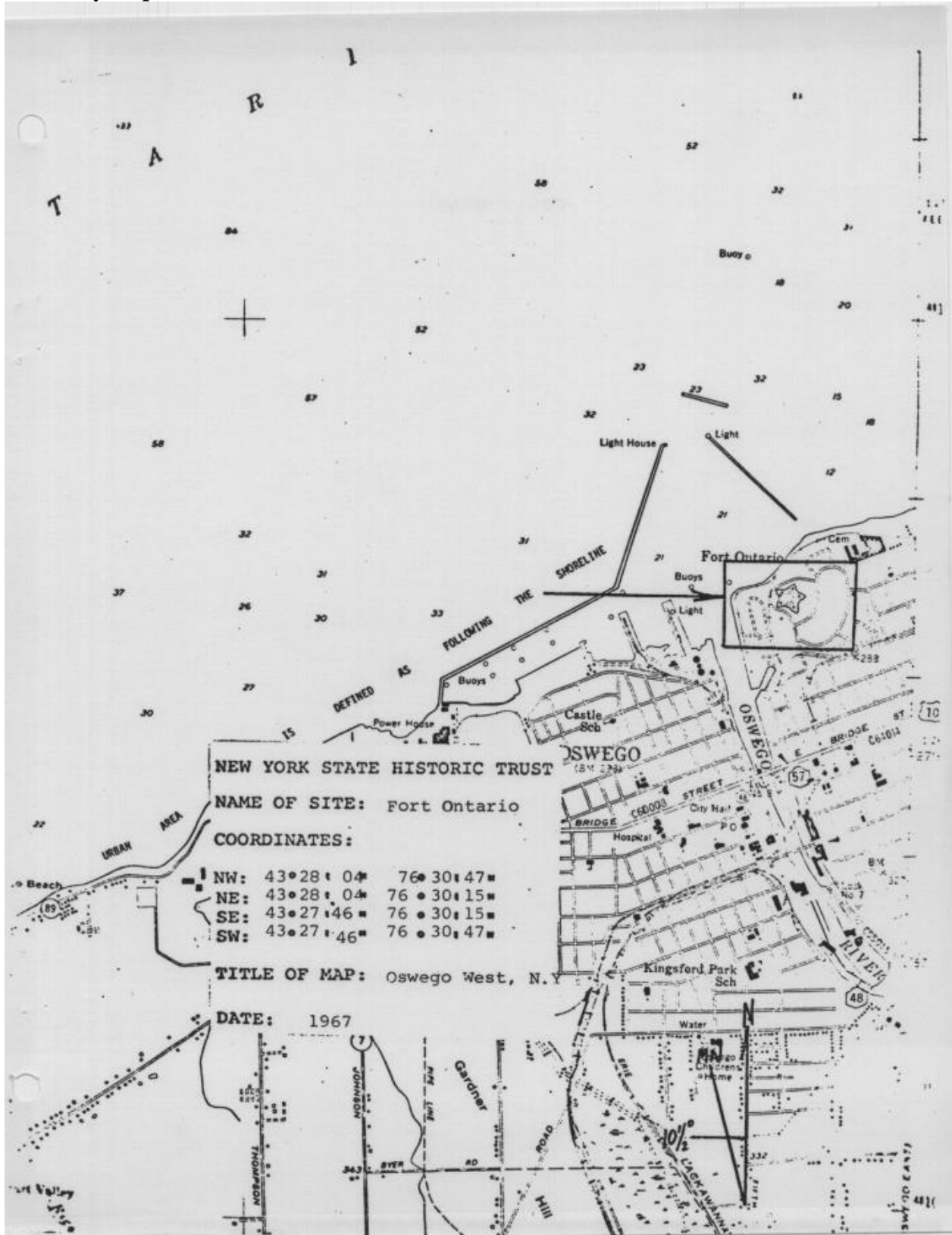


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego County, New York

Boundary map of 1970 nomination.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego County, New York

Photo Log (Prints from Digital Photos)

Name of Property: Fort Ontario Military Reservation

Location: Oswego County, New York

Photographer: Travis Bowman

Date: 10 February, 2015

Location of Negatives: CD-R Included

NY_OswgCo_FtOMiR

PHOTO LOG

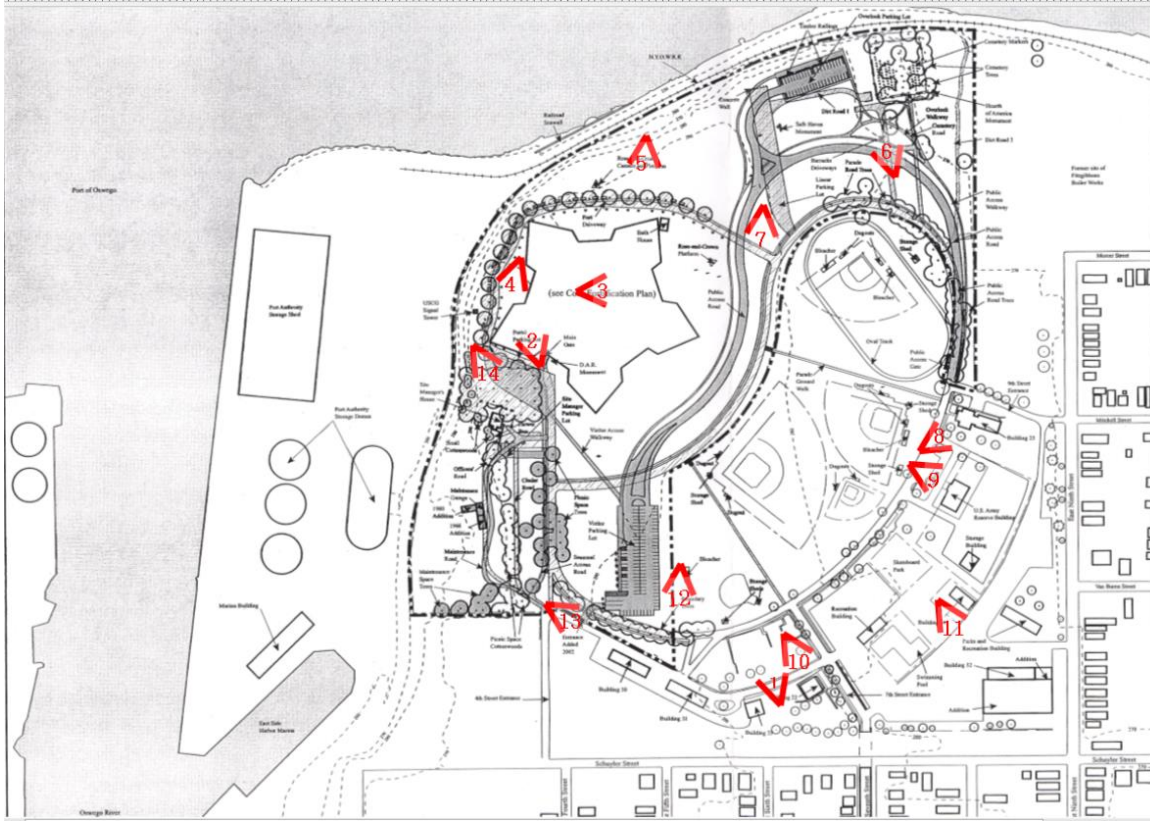
PHOTO	DESCRIPTION
0001	View NW of Core fortification; baseball fields in foreground
0002	View E of Officer's Quarters 1 & 2 inside of core fortification
0003	View E of Enlisted Men's Barracks and Powder inside of core fortification
0004	View SW of Bastion scarp wall; OQ1 and Coast Guard Signal Tower visible
0005	View S of core fortification; bathhouse in foreground
0006	View N of post cemetery; Lake Ontario in background
0007	View S of remnant of former post track; Building 30, 31 & 23 in far background
0008	View E-NE of Building 25
0009	View SE Non-Contributing Army Reserve Center
0010	View SW Building 22 Safe Haven Refugee Museum
0011	View SE Building 32
0012	View S Buildings 30 & 31
0013	View E along former RR track; Buildings 30, 31, 23, 22 visible
0014	View SE Keepers House; Buildings 30, 31 & 23 visible

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

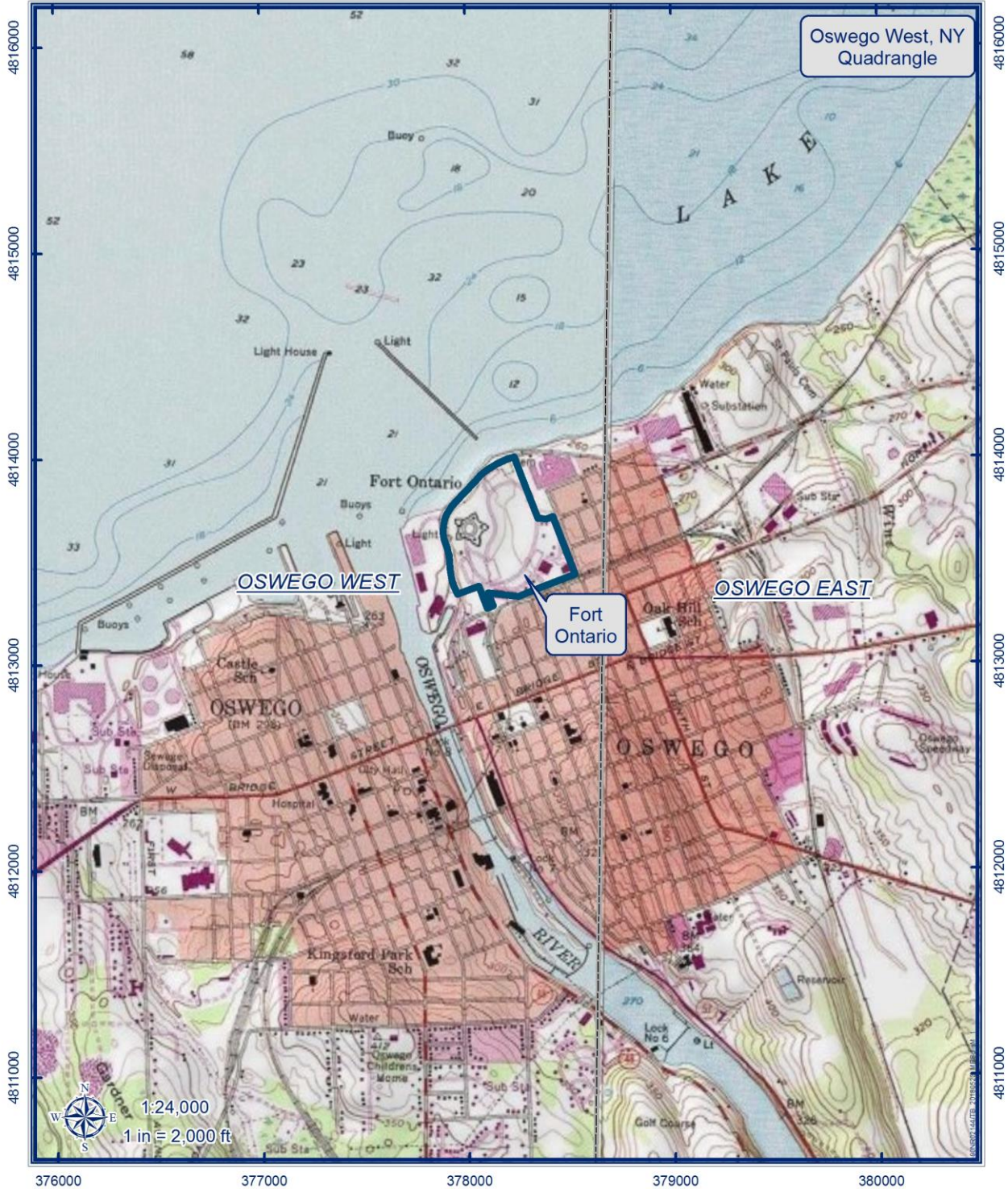
Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego County, New York

Photo Locations



Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego, Oswego Co., NY

1 East Fourth Street
Oswego, NY 13216



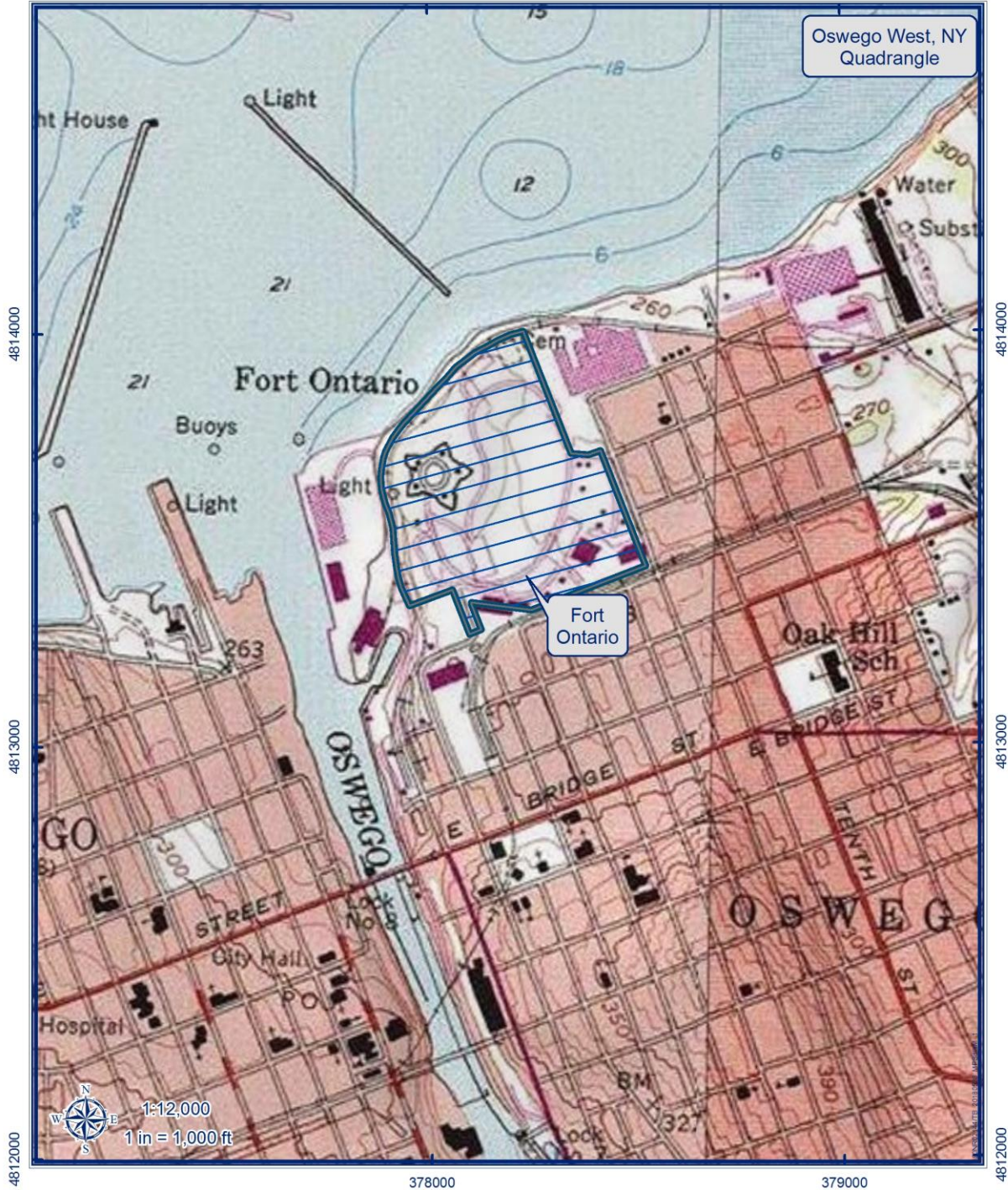
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego, Oswego Co., NY

1 East Fourth Street
Oswego, NY 13216



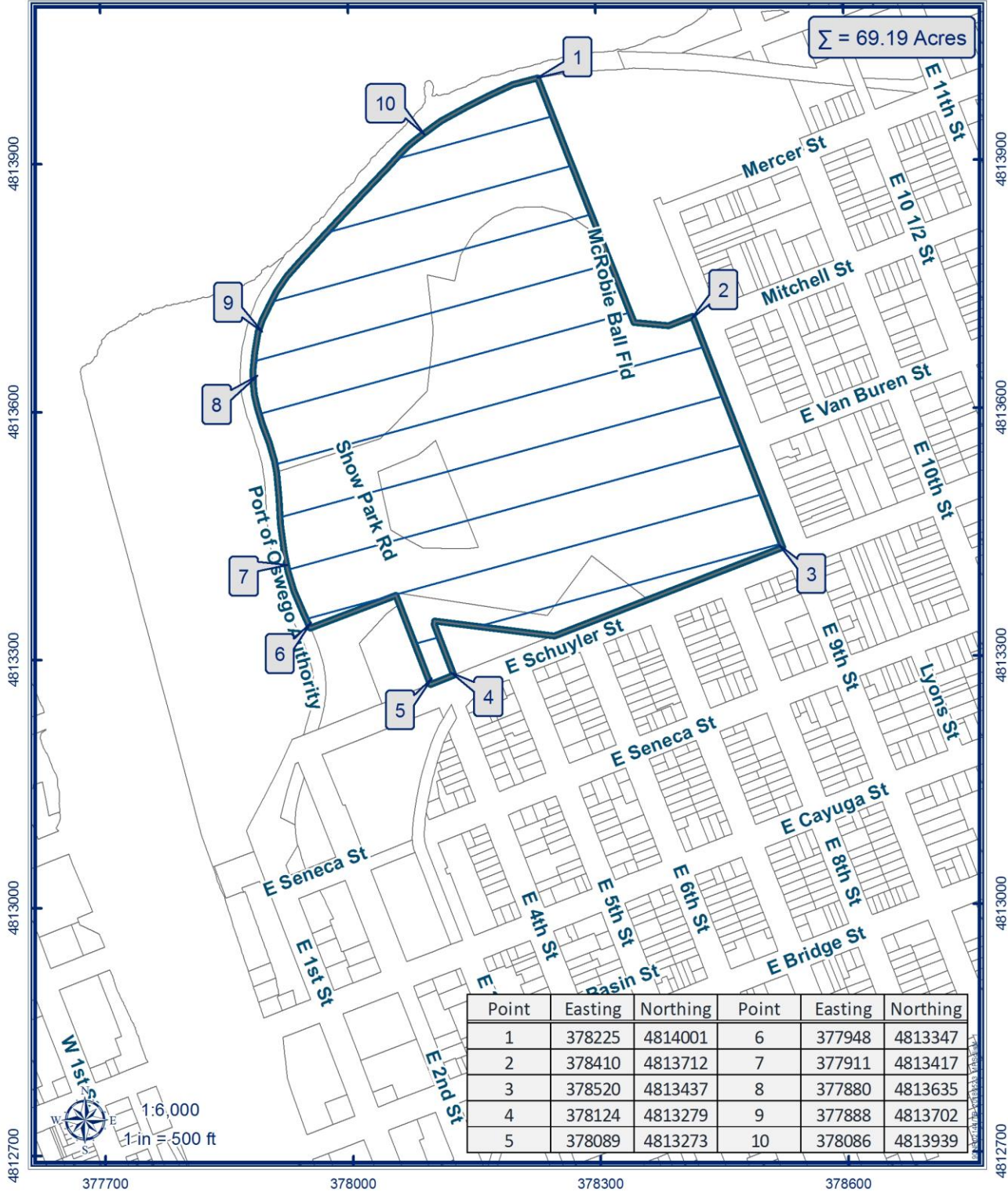
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego, Oswego Co., NY

1 East Fourth Street
Oswego, NY 13216



$\Sigma = 69.19$ Acres

Point	Easting	Northing	Point	Easting	Northing
1	378225	4814001	6	377948	4813347
2	378410	4813712	7	377911	4813417
3	378520	4813437	8	377880	4813635
4	378124	4813279	9	377888	4813702
5	378089	4813273	10	378086	4813939

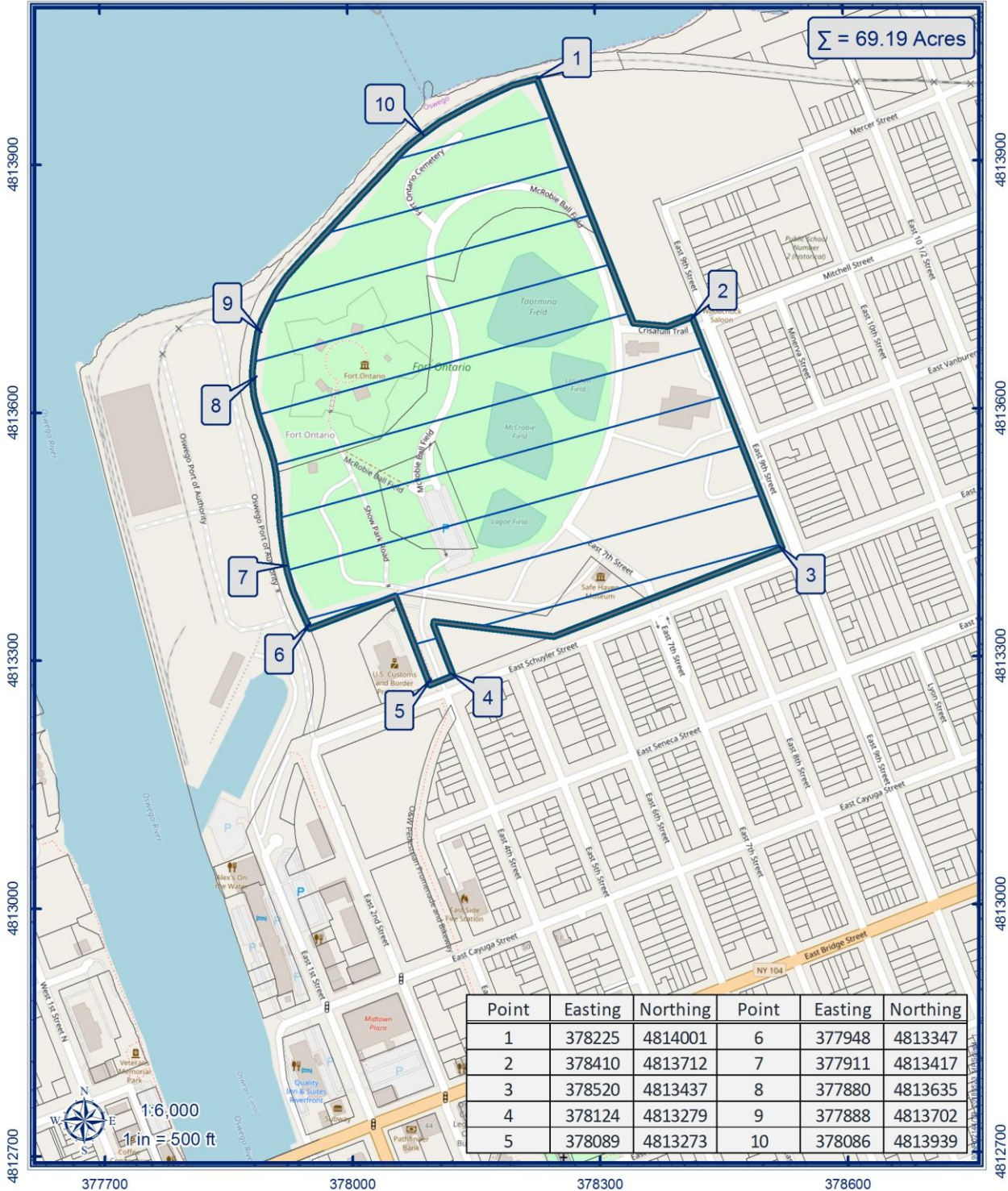
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego, Oswego Co., NY

1 East Fourth Street
Oswego, NY 13216



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

Fort Ontario Military Reservation
Oswego, Oswego Co., NY

1 East Fourth Street
Oswego, NY 13216



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

















THE ANTHONI
Butch Ponzi
RECREATION BUILDING

NO PARKING
ANY TIME

AND





State House
Open House

200
Open House









ART
ASSOC
OF
OSWEGO

THE
OSWEGO
ART ASSOCIATION
OFFICE
100 N. STATE ST.
OSWEGO, NY 13127
TEL: 315.338.1234
WWW.OSWEGOARTASSOCIATION.COM

ART ASSOC OF OSWEGO



National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

Fort Ontario

OSwego Co.
70000426

N.Y.

DATE OF RECEIPT 10/8/70 YES _____ NO _____ NUMBER _____ REGISTER NUMBER 70.12.36.0013 12/18/70

DATA PAGE _____

TITLE (S) _____ ✓

INDEX DESCRIPTION (S) _____ ✓

MAP (S) _____ ✓

MAP DESCRIPTION (S) _____ ✓

LOZED _____ ✓

ACKNOWLEDGE 10/8/70 _____

RESUBMIT _____

REVIEW OK. 5. Marwick
12/1/70

HISTORIAN ok Levy
12/2/70

HISTORIAN _____

ARCHITECT OK. Chambers
12-3-70

ART. DESIGNER _____

EDITOR ok Wm
12/7/70

EDITORIAL PROCESSING, EDITOR ok all
12-18
ok 12/2/70
ED

Federal Register Entry _____

Annual Edition Entry _____

Logged 12/18/70

Card 12/18/70

WORKING NUMBER 10-8-70-3



STATE OF NEW YORK

CONRAD L. WIRTH, Chairman
LOUIS C. JONES, Vice Chairman
JAMES E. ALLEN, JR.
SEYMOUR H. KNOX



JOHN H. G. PELL
LAURANCE S. ROCKEFELLER
MILDRED F. TAYLOR
WILBUR E. WRIGHT,
Executive Secretary

NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC TRUST

DIVISION OF PARKS
CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT, ALBANY, N. Y. 12226

October 20, 1970

Dr. William Murtagh
Keeper of the Register
Office of Archeology and
Historic Preservation
National Parks Service
801 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

Atten. Dr. Sidney Bradford

Re: National Register Form for Fort Ontario

Dear Dr. Murtagh:

The most recent package of National Register Nominations sent to your office by the Trust, included a form for Fort Ontario. Section One reads "Fort Ontario and Lake Ontario". The "and Lake Ontario" should be added to Section Two to read "East Seventh Street and Lake Ontario." We are very sorry for any inconvenience caused by this oversight. If you send the form back to us we will immediately correct it.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Chester H. Liebs'.

Chester H. Liebs
Curator of History,
New York State Historic Trust

OCT 22 1970

To: Staff

FOLLOW-UP SLIP

Date 12/1/70

Called Mark Lawton to get
acreage - 36 ±.

NOT TO BE FILED

Signature Sally

Fort Ontario
Orangetown Co, NY

SMarusin
12/16/70

DEC 18 1970

H30-HR

Dr. Louis C. Jones
Chairman
New York State Historic Trust
c/o New York State Historical Association
Cooperstown, New York 13326

Dear Dr. Jones:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic properties listed on the enclosure have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Senators Jacob K. Javits and Charles E. Goodell and the appropriate Representatives have also been notified. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed for each of the property owners. Please withhold any publicity on this until you have received a carbon copy of the Congressional correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Ernest Allen Connally
Chief, Office of Archeology
and Historic Preservation

Enclosures

Entered in the National Register DEC 18 1970

cc: HR 12/16/70 SMarusin:naf BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

Properties added to the National Register of Historic Places

NEW YORK

Fort Ontario
Pioneer Farm
Dutch Reformed Church

Oswego County, New York
Livingston County, New York
Orange County, New York

JAN 8 1971

H30-HR

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

Hon. James L. Buckley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Buckley:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic properties listed on the enclosure have been nominated by the State Liaison Officer appointed by the Governor for the implementation of the National Historic Preservation Program in New York and have been entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Senator Jacob K. Javits and the appropriate Representatives have also been provided with this information. By copy of this letter, the State Liaison Officer, Dr. Louis C. Jones, Chairman, New York State Historic Trust, c/o New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York 13326, has likewise been notified. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) GEORGE B. HARTZOG, JR.

Director

Enclosures

Entered in the National Register DEC 18 1970

cc: Dr. Louis C. Jones, Chairman, New York State Historic Trust,
c/o New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York 13326

Duplicate letter sent to: Hon. Jacob K. Javits
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

SMarusin:naf:12-16-70
FNP:Retyped:1jp:1-7-71

cc: Director, Northeast Region
LL - Mr. Melvin

TT
HR

Properties added to the National Register of Historic Places

NEW YORK

Fort Ontario

Pioneer Farm

Dutch Reformed Church

Oswego County, New York

Livingston County, New York

Orange County, New York

JAN 8 1971

H30-ER

Hon. Robert C. McEwen
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. McEwen:

We are pleased to inform you that Fort Ontario in Oswego County, New York, has been nominated by the State Liaison Officer appointed by the Governor for the implementation of the National Historic Preservation Program in New York and has been entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Senators Jacob K. Javits and James L. Buckley have also been provided with this information. By copy of this letter, the State Liaison Officer, Dr. Louis C. Jones, Chairman, New York State Historic Trust, c/o New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York 13326, has likewise been notified. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) GEORGE B. HARTZOG, JR.

Director

Enclosure

Entered in the National Register

DEC 18 1970

cc: Dr. Louis C. Jones, Chairman, New York State Historic Trust, c/o New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York 13326
Director, Northeast Region
FNP:merusin:naf:12-16-70
Retyped:FNP:bb1:1-7-71
BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

Lt. Mr. Man Melvin

T / HR

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 6/22/2018 Date of Pending List: 7/9/2018 Date of 16th Day: 7/24/2018 Date of 45th Day: 8/6/2018 Date of Weekly List: 12/17/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 8/6/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



18 June 2018

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am enclosing a new nomination for the following property to be considered by the Keeper of the National Register:

Fort Ontario Military Reservation, Oswego County

Fort Ontario was listed on the National Register in 1970 and the original nomination was poorly documented and mapped. This new, fully documented nomination replaces the original, revises the boundary, extends the period of significance, and adds a new area of significance. It has been reviewed and approved by the New York State Board for Historic Preservation (SRB).

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office