UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

MORRISTOWN NATIONAL PARK

FILE NO.

FORT FREDERIC,
Crown Point, New York.

IMPORTANT

This file constitutes a part of the official records of the National Park Service and should not be separated or papers withdrawn without express authority of the official in charge. All Files should be returned promptly to the File Room. Officials and employees will be held responsible for failure to observe these rules, which are necessary to protect the integrity of the official records.

NEWTON B. DRURY,
Director.
Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One

Reference is made to previous correspondence regarding State Assemblyman L. Judson Norhouse's interest in Fort St. Frederic, Crown Point, New York.

Mr. Norhouse has introduced a bill in the State legislature asking for $7600 for the establishment of a commission to study the advisability of restoring Fort St. Frederic.

Francis E. Ronalds,
Coordinating Superintendent.
February 27, 1947

Mr. Francis S. Ronalds
Coordinating Superintendent
Morristown National Historical Park
Morristown, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Ronalds:

Thank you for your letter of February 12th and I am attempting to obtain the information which you have requested. I have recently introduced a Bill in the Legislature which will provide $7500 for the establishment of a commission to study the advisability of restoring Fort St. Frederic in Crown Point, New York. It is my hope that, if this commission is appointed, it will be able to come in with a favorable report which will be so strong as to require endorsement by the proper officials of the State.

I might also add that I would hesitate very much to suggest that the Conservation Department turn the site over to the National Park Service, unless a definite commitment as to restoration could be made.

As soon as I have more information, I will write you again.

In the meantime, with best regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

L.JM/dmw

P.S. State Legion and State Hist. Society have endorsed proposed restoration recently.
MORRISTOWN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK,
Morristown, New Jersey.

February 12, 1947

Mr. L. Judson Norhouse,
The Assembly
State of New York,
Albany, New York.

Dear Mr. Norhouse:

It would be greatly appreciated if you would let me know whether or not I was right in my remembrance regarding the question of alienating forestry land, such as the State forest in which is located the site of Fort St. Frederic, Crown Point, N.Y.

I have been advised by the Director’s Office that it cannot consider the acquisition of the area until the New York Conservation Department has indicated that it is willing or legally empowered to alienate the site. If this were done the National Park Service would certainly be willing to consider the acquisition of the fort but could not make any promises with regard to possible restoration of the ruins.

Perhaps it might be worth your while to ask the N.Y. State historian of the Department of Education, Dr. Albert Corey, to investigate the matter for you. He certainly should be in a position to determine the land status of the area.

If on your next visit to New York City you would care to get in touch with me I would be very happy to visit you in the city to discuss the various problems involved. My home telephone number is Morristown 4-3736.

Sincerely yours,

Francis S. Ronalds,
Coordinating Superintendent.
MEMORANDUM for the Superintendent,
Morristown National Historical Park.

Reference is made to your memorandum of January 9 enclosing a copy of letter dated December 27, 1946 from Mr. L. Judson Morhouse regarding Fort Frederic, New York.

Enclosed is a copy of Acting Director Coffman’s self-explanatory memorandum of January 29 regarding the subject. It will be noted that the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments at their meeting on March 25-26, 1937, declared Crown Point to be of national significance and recommended it for either acquisition or cooperative development. Secretary Ickes, on March 15, 1938, approved dropping the proposal to transfer Crown Point Reservation from the State of New York to the Federal Government, as the New York State Department of Conservation did not favor such a transfer.

In discussing the question with Mr. Morhouse, please be guided by the Acting Director’s comments, making sure that no commitments are made on your part.

Elbert Cox,
Acting Regional Director.

Encl. 571.
MEMORANDUM for the Regional Director, Region One.

This will reply to your memorandum of January 23, with enclosure from Superintendent Ronalds, regarding Fort St. Frederic at Crown Point, which has been proposed for consideration as a national historic site by Mr. L. Judson Morhouse, Assemblyman for Essex County, New York.

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments at its Fourth Meeting, March 25-26, 1937, declared Crown Point to be of national significance and recommended it for either acquisition or cooperative development. However, the minutes of the meeting show that the designation of this area was to be a part of a larger plan designed to include a group of related Revolutionary War areas in a system to be called the "Hudson-Champlain Battlefields."

In December 1937 the possibility of the transfer of the Crown Point Reservation from the State of New York to the Federal Government was considered. As our files are incomplete, we are unable to say how this project originated. Secretary Ickes was advised on March 11 that the matter had been taken up informally with Mr. Osborne, Director of the New York State Department of Conservation. As Mr. Osborne did not favor such a transfer, it was recommended that the transfer proposal be dropped. Secretary Ickes approved dropping the transfer proposal on March 15, 1938.

With regard to the present proposal of Mr. Morhouse, we foresee two difficulties: (1) The New York Conservation Department has not yet indicated that it is either willing or legally empowered to alienate the site; (2) Mr. Morhouse wishes to have the area transferred to the National Park Service because the State Department of Conservation is reluctant to restore the fort ruins, but the National Park Service is itself in no position to assure Mr. Morhouse or New York State that the buildings will be restored if transferred to the Federal Government. Such a restoration would certainly be very costly and the Service might decide, after careful study and consideration of the matter, that it would be better to preserve the fort and fort structures as ruins.

In discussing the question with Mr. Morhouse, Superintendent Ronalds might say that the Service will again consider the acquisition of the area if the State Department of Conservation desires to convey it to the Federal Government, but that the Service is unable to make any promises with regard to restoration. It will, of course, be necessary for this Office to secure
the approval of the Bureau of the Budget and the President before entering into negotiations with the State of New York in this regard. In view of the economy wave now getting underway, the present time does not seem propitious for the reopening of these negotiations.

(SGD) J. D. COFFMAN
Acting Director.

In triplicate.
MEMORANDUM for the Director.

There are attached a copy of Superintendent Ronalds memorandum of January 9 regarding Fort Frederic, New York, and a copy of letter dated December 27, 1946 from L. Judson Worhouse, Ticonderoga, New York, to Superintendent Ronalds on the subject.

You probably will wish to consult the file on this subject and confirm its status as determined by the Advisory Board. After this has been done, we would appreciate receiving your comments so that Superintendent Ronalds may be advised as to the recommendations of the Service with regard to the area. He, in turn, will wish to communicate further on the subject with Mr. Worhouse.

(Sgd) THOMAS J. ALLEN

Thomas J. Allen,
Regional Director.

Enclosure 296

cc: Washington
    Supt., Morristown N. H. P.
Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One:

Attached is a letter from L. Judson Norhouse of the Assembly of the State of New York, regarding Fort Frederic, New York.

Some years ago I was sent to New York to discuss this question with Mr. Lithgow Osborn, then Commissioner of the State Department of Conservation. If my memory serves me rightly Mr. Osborn wished to transfer the site to the National Park Service, but it was found that the fort was located on Forestry land and could not be alienated by the State. I also believe the site was recognized as of national historic significance by the Advisory Board. The files on the subject are in all probability in the Chicago office.

Associate Regional Director Cox visited the area and will recall some of the circumstances.

In the meantime, I have told Mr. Norhouse that I am referring the subject to you for advice and suggesting that he contact Mr. A. S. Hopkins of the State Department of Lands and Forests. Mr. Hopkins was very interested in Fort Frederic.

Iolo King must have recalled these early negotiations, otherwise I cannot imagine what he means by referring to the Service's interest in the site.

(SGR) Francis S. Ronalds

Francis S. Ronalds,
Coordinating Superintendent
Doctor Francis Ronalda
Morristown National Historical Park
Morristown
New Jersey

Dear Doctor Ronalda:

I understand from Milo King of Ticonderoga that the National Park Service would be interested in taking over Fort St. Frederic located at Crown Point on Lake Champlain in Essex County.

As the Assemblyman from Essex County, I have during the past year attempted to get some action from the Conservation Department of the State of New York towards restoring Fort St. Frederic. A detailed survey of this has been made and some very beautiful plans have been drawn, but as yet nothing has been done. The only answer that I get out of the Conservation Department is that they do not believe that the traffic is heavy enough to warrant the restoration. This obviously falls by the wayside in view of the figures at Fort Ticonderoga where over 50,000 visitors a year make a pilgrimage to that particular spot coming from every state in the nation and from innumerable foreign countries.

I should like to be able to go to the Conservation Department and say to them that if they do not do anything with Fort St. Frederic, the National Park Service is interested in taking it over and will do something with Fort St. Frederic in the line of restoration. Is there some way that I could get a statement from the National Park Service to this effect? If I could do so, I feel sure that this beautiful and historic spot would be restored by one or by the other and that the ultimate objective would be accomplished in some manner.

Your courtesy and assistance would be very much appreciated and anything that you can do regarding it, will be very helpful I am sure.

I would appreciate hearing from you on these particular ideas.

With best wishes for the New Year, I am,

Sincerely yours,

LJM/dmw
HORRISTOWN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK,
Horrirston, New Jersey.

January 8, 1947.

Mr. L. Judson Norhouse,
The Assembly,
State of New York,
Ticonderoga, New York.

Dear Mr. Norhouse:

I have received your letter of December 27, regarding Fort Frederic,
New York.

If my memory serves me rightly it was determined some years ago that
inasmuch as Fort Frederic was located in a State Forest the site could
not be alienated by the State of New York. However, you would be in
the best position to know whether or not this is true. Mr. A.S. Hopkins,
Lands & Forests, Department of Conservation was interested in Fort Frederic
and should know a good deal about the matter. May I suggest that
you contact him about the Fort.

In the meantime I am referring your letter to Regional Director
Thomas J. Allen for his advice.

The next time I am in Albany I will try to get in touch with you.
Will write the moment I hear from Mr. Allen.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) Francis S. Ronalds
Francis S. Ronalds,
Coordinating Superintendent.