

There have been many rumors of artifacts being buried on the grounds of the Fort Rodman/Fort Taber park for many years.

What if these rumors were true?

What if these artifacts could be recovered and displayed at the Museum?

Could the Museum engage in this type of project?

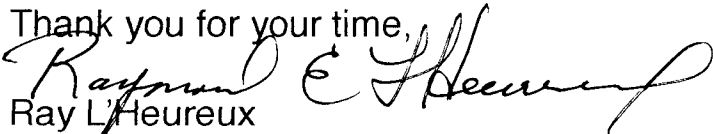
Mr. Al Benson, a museum volunteer and donator, has just such a project proposal. He has the expertise in dealing with the state and federal authorities. He has experience with the bureaucracies.

Mr. Benson has written a proposal for a cannon recovery project. The project is very detailed and has the Museum in the forefront of all the decision making in this complex process. Which could include local universities and schools. Media coverage would enhance our ability to fund raise and increase our visitor numbers.

I would like the board to invite Mr. Benson to present the project. If the Board does accept a motion to study the project I would ask the Board to set up a committee of three or five members to oversee the project. And present regular updates to the Board, again the Museum Board will have control of this project.

I'm sure that this project could have a very positive effects on our great little Museum in so many ways.

Thank you for your time,


Ray L'Heureux
Treasurer

Project Proposal-

Fort Rodman/Fort Taber Cannon Recovery

Executive Summary

This proposal is for the Fort Rodman/Fort Taber Historical Association (here-in-after referred to as the "Association") to support the development of an archeological study with the potential to lead to the identification of the location of the Fort's cannons. This study will require obtaining both the support and permitting from the Federal and State levels as well as the endorsement of the local community.

Based on local knowledge, the cannons were removed and buried in the proximity of the Fort coincident with the closing of the Fort in 1872. Assuming the Fort was fully armed, there would be at least 38 iron cannons, likely, 32 and 42 pound coastal defense guns.

If the Board of Directors of the Association (here-in after referred to as the "Board") endorses the project, work will be initiated to secure the permitting to conduct a non-invasive ground penetrating radar survey of the Fort's site and interpretation of the survey results. If favorable survey results are obtained, archeological based excavation permits will be developed and filed with the appropriate authorities. Upon receipt of the required permitting, excavation and recovery of the cannons will be initiated.

There are a number of benefits to locating and recovering, of at least some, of the cannons, including;

- The recovery of the cannons would generate favorable press for the Fort, the historical aspects of the city of New Bedford and the Association.
- The museum would be able to receive, mount and exhibit one or more of the cannon for internal or external display.
- The cannon display would likely increase attendance and interest in the Museum.
- This project offers the potential to be an excellent learning experience. Students at the high school, vocational school and local university levels could provide project assistance in at least the following areas: photographic and video histories of the project, archeology survey and excavation, artifact preservation and mount fabrication.

Historical Background

From the Revolutionary War until the Civil War, there were three rounds of funding/construction of U.S. east coast harbor fortifications. The construction of Fort Rodman on Clarke's Point, New Bedford was one of the 41 forts included in the third "system" or round of construction. Other forts included in this round included:

Charleston, North Carolina: Fort Sumter;
New Port, Rhode Island: Fort Adams;
New York City, New York: Fort Schuyler;
Norfolk, Virginia: Fort Monroe;
San Francisco Bay, California: Fort Alcatraz.

Armament for the third round forts typically included 32 and 42 pound coastal defense guns. The cannons were know as "Rodman guns" after Thomas Jackson Rodman(1815-1871), who developed the cannon casting technology(no relation to Lieutenant Colonel William Rodman for whom the Fort was named after) . Rodman guns were caste with cold water circulating through the center/ bore area. Internal cooling yielded a stronger gun versus the previous cooling from the outside inward toward the bore. Makers of Rodman guns included Cyrus Alger and Co., Boston.

The Fort was closed in 1872. At closure the Fort's cannons were obsolete in two major aspects:

- Post Civil War cannons were made of steel, which was materially stronger so less metal was required; a significant reduction in weight.
- Then current cannons were breach loading, which superseded the previous muzzle loading design, e.g. the Rodman cannon design.

Based on the above it is not out of the question that the Fort's cannons were buried in the proximity of the Fort versus being moved to another location or scrapped. Mr. Raymond L' Heureux was informed by an elderly New Bedford resident that he was familiar with the disposal of the cannons and that they were buried about six to eight feet deep in the proximity of the Fort.

Project Tasks ("T"), Milestones ("MS") and Critical Path Activities ("CP")

If the Board of Directors, after due consideration, elects to support an effort to locate and recover at least some of the cannons, project activities will include:

- Tasks ("T") or notable work activities.
- Milestone ("MS") or activities that will represent a major step toward project completion.

- Critical Path Activities ("CP") or activities that must be completed successfully to be able to have the project succeed.

Project activities are specified below in chronological order considered to be the most likely path to result in the favorable execution of the project.

(T) Brief the Board on the cannon recovery project (here-in-after referred to as the "Project").

(CP) After due consideration, the Board elects not to advance the Project and the Project is terminated.

(CP) After due consideration, the Board votes to advance the Project.

(T) Obtain a letter from the Board providing the authority to conduct discussions/negotiations with necessary state and federal officials and higher educational faculty necessary to advance the Project.

(T) Obtain a plot plan for the Fort.

(T) Meet with Commonwealth of Massachusetts archeological officials, to determine what, if any, state permits and permit costs are required to gain support for a non-invasive ground penetrating radar survey on the Fort's property. Obtain suggestions as to which higher education institution are likely to be interested in such an archeological survey and survey analysis.

(CP) Meet with the archeology professor to review the project and gain agreement that the professor and his students will conduct the survey and survey analysis. If this professor is not interested in the project, meet with an alternative professors until agreement is reached on the conduct of the survey.

(T) Prepare and submit a quarterly Project report to the Board. Prepare and submit subsequent quarterly Project reports not later than three weeks after the close of each respective quarter for the duration of the project.

(T) Meet with responsible officials at the General Services Administration (here-in-after referred to as the "GSA") to brief them on the proposed Project, gain GSA support and identify all documentation and permits and permit costs are necessary to conduct the ground penetrating radar survey only.

(CP) If local GSA officials are unwilling to support the Project, meet with regional GSA officials to seek and gain reconsideration for Project support.

- (MS) Prepare a memo to the Board on the outcome of discussions with GSA.
- If the GSA is supportive of the Project, advise the Board accordingly and gain Board approval for all permitting and other third party expenses above \$1,000.00. (One Thousand dollars has been committed to support the project by A.H. Benson)
 - If GSA will not support the Project, advise the Board and recommend that the Project be terminated.
- (T) Advise other Project participants of the outcome of discussions with GSA,
- (T) Work with the Association Historian to arrange photo and video coverage of the survey and subsequent project activities. Hopefully, students from the local high school and university can be involved in these activities.
- (T) Work with the other Project participants to draft documentation and permit applications.
- (T) Obtain the necessary signatures to file all permits and documentation at the state and federal levels.
- (T) Request Board assistance with the briefing of concerned City officials.
- (MS) Upon issuance/receipt of all necessary permits, work with archeology professor and Board assigned Board member(s) to lay out the survey parameters and agree on the survey schedule.
- (T) Conduct the survey.
- (T) Review survey results and analysis.
- (CP) Advise all project participants on the survey results.
- If the survey results are negative, advise Project participants accordingly and recommend to the Board that the Project be terminated.
 - If positive results are obtained, in conjunction with the archeology professor, meet with brief the permitting authority(ies) on the survey results.
- (T) In conjunction with the archeology professor, develop an excavation and conservation plan and budget. Attempt to maximize in kind contributions with particular attention to heavy excavation and lift equipment.

- (T) Develop a cannon distribution plan to be agreed to by key parties. This might call for some cannons to be left unexcavated.
- (T) Obtain Rodman cannon mounting diagrams.
- (T) Develop a budget and cost allocation based on distribution to be discussed with and approved by each of the participating parties.
- (T) In conjunction with the archeology professor and key students, meet with key permitting officials and brief them on the survey finds.
- (CP) Obtain, complete and file all permit applications necessary to gain authorization to excavate the cannons.
- (MS) Upon receipt of all necessary permits, advise all key parties of the completion of the excavation permit process.
- (T) Develop an excavation schedule to have cannon conservation equipment ready for use and excavation tools and equipment available. (Confirm that all equipment can handle the heaviest cannon plus a positive margin to account for encrustations.)
- (T) Develop a personnel budget to ensure that all necessary personnel will be available along with all personal safety gear. (Personnel will be limited due the potentially hazardous work conditions associated with the excavation and operation of heavy equipment.)
- (T) Draft press releases, concur on wording and provide the draft releases to all key parties. Include media outlets endorsed by the Board.
- (CP) Implement the excavation plan and begin cannon conservation.
- (T) Advise all project participants on the excavation, conservation and site restoration activities completed to date.
- (T) Develop a mounting plan, budget and schedule for Board review.
- (T) Obtain cannon mounting material, hardware and other necessary materials to mount the Association's cannon(s).
- (T) Upon completion of conservation procedures, implement the cannon mounting construction as authorized by the Board.
- (T) Upon completion of mounting activities, provide press releases in a manner approved by the Board.

(T) Coordinate presentations to the Board of the photographic and video histories of the project

(T) Terminate the cannon recovery project and provide all project documentation to the Treasurer.