

# *Port-Vendres*

## *French Sister City to Yorktown*



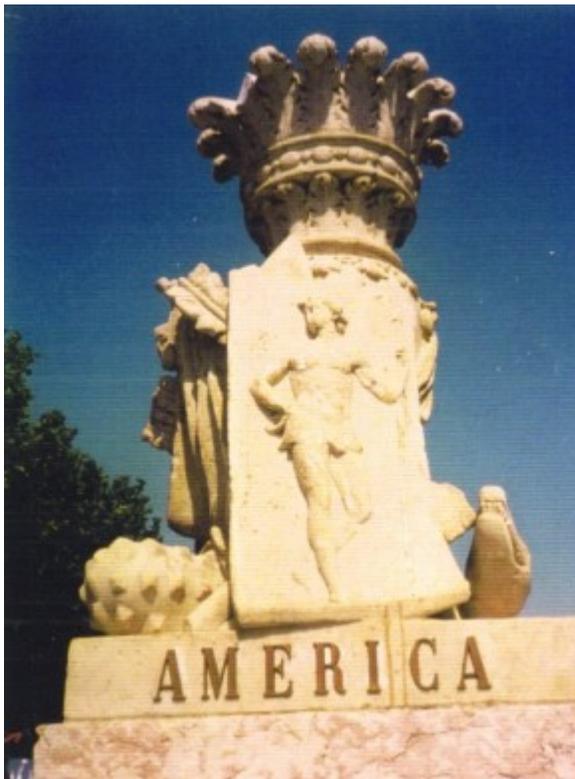
**Port-Vendres, *Port of Venus* in Roman times, is a tiny fishing village on a part of the Mediterranean Coast, known as the *Cote Vermeille*. You can easily imagine French volunteers, with weapons and materials, boarding ships at this port and going to the aid of the American rebels.**



In the 1770's, Comte de Mailly, Lieutenant General of the province of Roussillon, envisioned a new and grandiose town with a magnificent seaport, open to all nations and under the protection of Louis XVI, and an elegant Louis XVI royal square with an Obelisk in its center. With the king's approval, work started on the Obelisk in September of 1780, according to the plans of the architect de Wailly. Constructed of pink and white marble, it rises 100 feet above the waters of the harbour. It is crowned by a globe of the earth and topped by a fleur-de-lis with its petals curling downward, symbolizing to all nations that the port is a refuge under the protection of the King of France. It is classified as an historical monument in 1920.



At its base are **four bronze bas-reliefs, representing the principal achievements of Louis XVI's reign: the Abolishment of serfdom, Freedom of commerce, the Rebuilding of the navy, and the Independence of America.** [See link at bottom of this page] **The last plaque depicts the King's ship, *La Sensible*, arriving in Casco Bay, Maine on April 12, 1778.** Copies of the Treaty of Alliance and the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which were drawn up in Paris on February 6, 1778, were brought to York, Pennsylvania, on May 2nd for Congressional signature by Simeon Deane, brother of the commissioner, Silas Deane. They were ratified by the Continental Congress on May 4, 1778. News of the alliance reached Washington in a letter from Deane on the afternoon of April 30th. [A second French frigate, *Nymphe*, brought another copy to Boston on May 5, 1778.]



Surrounding the Obelisk is a wrought iron fence embellished with four handsome allegorical trophies representing Europe, Africa, Asia, and America. [shown at left].

**This monumental ensemble is one of only two royal squares in France dedicated to Louis XVI, and is the only one paying homage to the early defenders of freedom and independence, French and Americans alike.**

In September 1988, the **New York Chapter of the Friends of the Vieilles Maisons Françaises**, including several members from New Jersey Chapters of the **National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR)**, traveled to the *Pyrenées Orientales*.

**Mme Caroline Lareuse**, of the Princeton Chapter of the New Jersey Daughters, organized and documented the trip in the following photographs.



**Dr. Simone Quintilla** (kneeling, left), President of the "*Port-Vendres d'Abord*" Association; **Caroline Lareuse** (kneeling center), leader of the group; and **Madame Jonquères d'Oriola** (kneeling right), delegate of the *Vieilles Maisons Françaises* for the Pyrenées Orientales. In the background is the broken bronze relief "*L'Amérique Indépendante*." A donation was made by the visiting DAR group for the restoration of the plaque.

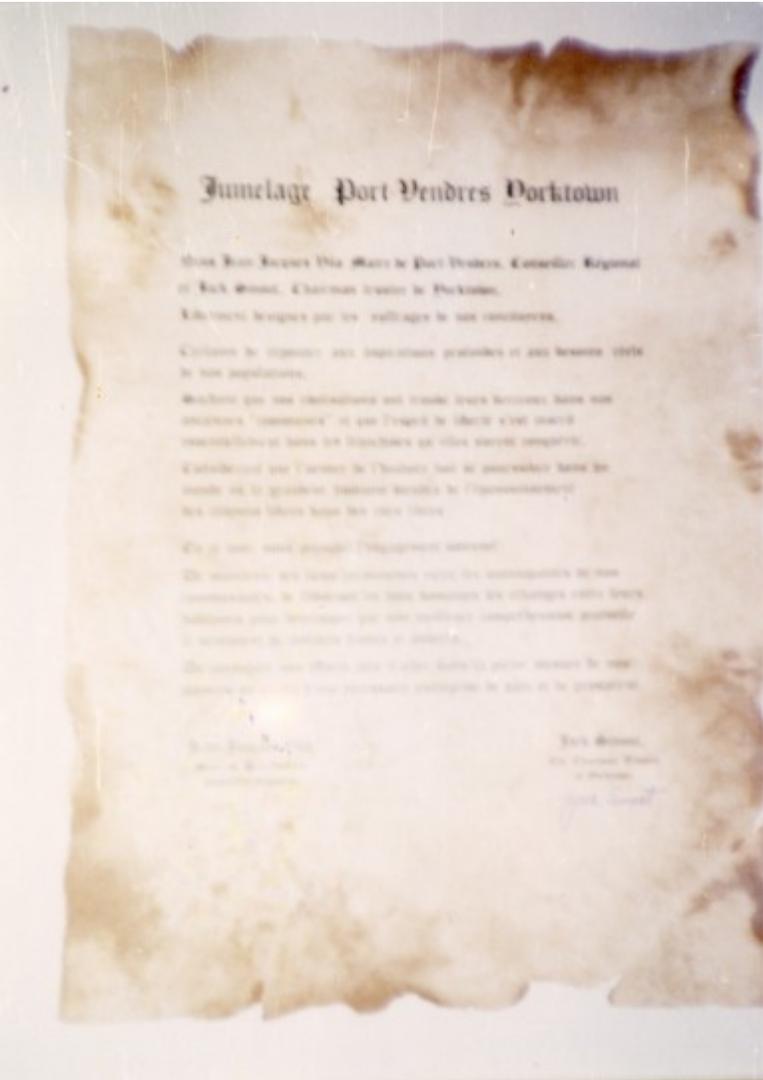
**On April 7, 1990, at the suggestion of Baron Michon-Coster, the first half of the Sister City ceremony took place in Williamsburg, Virginia, with several Trustees, Supervisors, the Honorary Consul of France, Nicole Yancey, and other important dignitaries attending.**

**The second half of the Sister City ceremony took place in Port-Vendres, on July 13, 1990. Monsieur Jean-Jacques Vila, Mayor of Port-Vendres, presents a replica of the Obelisk to Mr. Smoot, President of the Board of Trustees of Yorktown. It is made of the same material as the Obelisk, i.e. the base is Villefranche pink marble and the needle is white Estagel marble.**





Mr. Jack Smoot presents a panel of U.S. mementoes, i.e. Yorktown plate, Statue of Liberty plate, coins, etc.



Official Document of the "Jumelage", or Sister City Ceremony. [shown at left].





Mayor Vila and President Smoot placing a wreath on the 'Monument to the Dead' done by the well-known sculptor, Aristide MAILLOL.

**Mayor Vila and members of Port-Vendres delegation in front of the Yorktown Monument to Alliance and Victory on October 19, 1990.**



Members of the Port-Vendres d'Abord Association in front of the Duke of York Hotel in Yorktown. October 1994.



Members of the Port-Vendres d'Abord Association marching in the Yorktown Day parade. October 1994. **Mademoiselle Antoinette Quintilla**, current president of the Port-Vendres Association is carrying the French flag.



The new **225th Anniversary Banner** carried by Port-Vendres representatives in the Yorktown Day parade on October 19, 2006. **The banner's images associate the similarities of the Port-Vendres Obelisk and the Yorktown Monument to Alliance and Victory.** In addition it **displays the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route (W3R) Association's logo.**