

News Release



For Release: Immediate

Regarding: Canal Schooner *Lois McClure* Returns to Burlington Saturday

Date: August 6, 2008

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Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's *Lois McClure* Comes Home August 9th

(Public welcome- home reception at 5:00 p.m. Sat, August 9th at Perkins Pier, Burlington, Vermont – see details below)

GRAND ISLE, VT – After nearly two months of traveling the inland waterway in Quebec, the *Lois McClure* will return home to Burlington's historic Perkins Pier. She is scheduled to arrive on Saturday, August 9th at 5:00 p.m. and will be welcomed by officials, friends and well wishers, including many who saw her depart from this place on June 17th. Since June, the *McClure* and her crew have traveled hundreds of miles along the Chambly Canal and Richelieu and St. Lawrence rivers, visiting seven Quebec ports-of-call including Quebec City, which this year is celebrating the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's founding of that city and New France.

In 2009, the Champlain Valley will commemorate the 400th anniversary of Champlain's brief but profound journey from the St. Lawrence to Lake Champlain. This summer the *Lois McClure* served as the official ambassador from the Champlain Valley and the United States, reminding communities of the history we hold in common. During this northern tour, the *Lois McClure* hosted more than 25,000 visitors aboard its decks to learn about the shared heritage we enjoy along our region's interconnected waterways. This message was delivered by written bi-lingual materials and French and English speaking interpreters who engaged visitors in a perspective of all the events we share along the waterways.

The *Lois McClure* is an exact replica of two Lake Champlain canal schooners, both built in 1862, which later sunk and were then documented in Burlington's harbor. The *McClure* reminded visitors of a not-too-distant past, when hundreds of wooden ships transported all manner of regional cargos through the waterways connected by canals from New York City to Ottawa and beyond. Since her launching four years ago, the *Lois McClure* has visited more than 60 towns, villages and cities, all with a direct connection to the days when wooden ships were designed to fit the canals of the period. Today that same role is performed by the myriad of big trucks which travel our regions Interstate Highway systems. Unlike today's trucks, however, canal boats were frequently operated by families which actually lived aboard, often year-round, and made these boats their home. The recently re-published indexed second edition of the [Journals of Captain Theodore Bartley](#), perhaps tells this story in the most effective way.

With the successful northern journey at an end, the *Lois McClure* will hold public boarding days at Burlington's Perkins Pier from August 10-25th, 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m. She will then complete her season at the Lake Champlain Museum's main campus at Basin Harbor where she will be available for school programs and public boarding until mid-October. At the same time,

museum staffers are already working on a plan to take the schooner's historical outreach program back to the Richelieu River, Lake Champlain and Hudson River in 2009. The Quebec voyage of the *Lois McClure* received important support from the National Park Service through the efforts of Senator Patrick Leahy and New York's Congressman Maurice Hinchey.

WELCOME HOME EVENT: Come share the story of this amazing journey. A public reception is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. Saturday August 9th at Perkins Pier, Burlington, Vermont to welcome home the crew of the *Lois McClure*. Families are invited to bring their own picnic and sample cheese, chocolates and dessert, courtesy of Cabot, Lake Champlain Chocolates and Rhino Foods. The Champlain Brass Quintet will also provide entertainment. The event is free and open to the public.

For more information about the Welcome Home event, please call Colleen Hickey of the Lake Champlain Basin Program at (802) 372-3213.

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For further information about the journey of the *Lois McClure* and press photos, visit www.lcmm.org.