

LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN PROGRAM

Fact Sheet Series



Number 5

Historic Sites on Lake Champlain

Lake Champlain has been a busy waterway for thousands of years. Native Americans fished, hunted, and traded here centuries before Samuel de Champlain arrived in 1609. Because of the Lake's strategic position for trade and transportation, key military battles were fought here during the Seven Years War, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812.

From the mid-1700s and into the late-1800s, commerce thrived in small towns along Lake Champlain. Shoreline communities provided stone, iron, wood, and other materials needed for the growing country, its expanding railroad system, and increasing industrialization. Textile

mills used the water power of falls flowing from rivers emptying into the Lake. Marble and granite were quarried and used in buildings throughout the Northeastern United States. Apples, sheep, and cows provided important agricultural products.

A special type of vessel, the sailing canal boat, was developed to travel the Champlain and Chambly Canals connecting Lake Champlain to the Hudson and St. Lawrence Rivers. The boats traveled the canals sails down, raising them to sail along the Lake. Eventually waterborne commerce diminished when railroads began to cross the continent; some towns grew as rail centers and others lost some of their prominence.

Gary Randorf

Fort Lennox



Ethan Allen Homestead



Fort Lennox • Crown Point State Historic Site • Ethan Allen Homestead

Below is a partial list of some of the more than fifty historic sites in the region where you can explore Lake Champlain's history and experience the places along its shores that played key roles in the founding and development of the United States and Canada. Most are open seasonally, and hours vary, so please call ahead.

Sites in Québec

1 Fort Chambly, Chambly. This French fort has been restored to its 1665 appearance. A museum highlights the commercial, military, and cultural history of the Richelieu Valley. Bilingual. (450) 658-1585, www.parksCanada.pch.gc.ca/parks/quebec/canal_chambly/.

2 The Chambly Canal, running along the Richelieu River from Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu to Chambly, the canal was built in 1843. Today it serves pleasure craft and a towpath has been converted to a recreation trail. To obtain a lock schedule call: (450) 658-0681, www.parksCanada.risq.qc.ca/canaux/canal-de-chambly/en/.

3 Haut Richelieu Regional Museum, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. This site interprets Native American artifacts, exhibits of the military and commercial history of the region, and locally produced pottery. French only. (450) 347-0649.

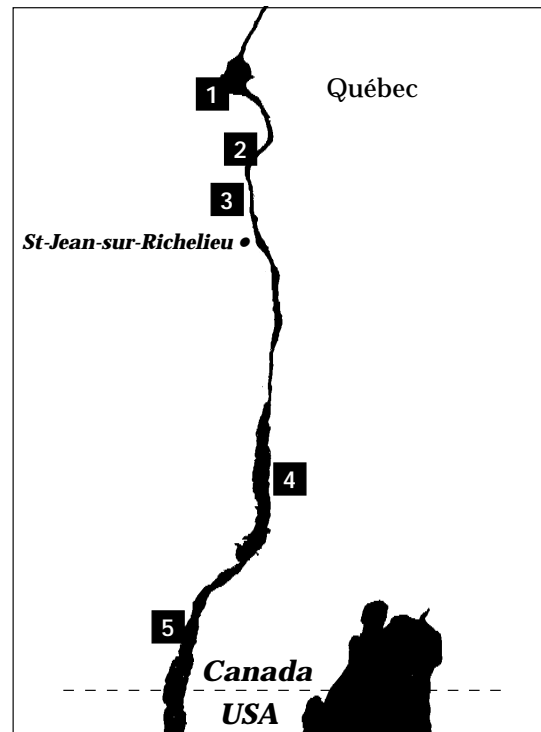
4 Fort Lennox, Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix. This well preserved British fort was built after the War of 1812. Re-enactors and displays interpret the daily lives of British soldiers on the island. Bilingual. (450) 291-5700, www.parksCanada.risq.qc.ca/fort-lennox/.

5 The Lacolle Blockhouse, Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix. This British blockhouse was built in Québec around 1780 as a military outpost and refuge for travelers. Bilingual. (450) 246-3227.



Photos Panoramiques

The Lacolle Blockhouse



Kent-DeLord House Museum



Historic postcard of the Kent-DeLord House.



Parks Canada

Historic photograph of the Chambly Canal; the towpath is now used for recreation.

Sites in New York

6 Fort Montgomery, Rouses Point. This American fort was built after the War of 1812 to protect Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River. It was nicknamed "Fort Blunder" because it was mistakenly built on Canadian soil. Later the fort was given to the United States through a treaty. Although on private property, it can be viewed from the Rouses Point Bridge.

7 The Alice T. Miner Collection, Chazy. A museum featuring an extensive collection of colonial and 19th century decorative arts. (518) 846-7336.

8 Kent-Delord House Museum, Plattsburgh. The Delord family home, with period furnishings and decorative objects, features displays of the potash and iron ore industries important in the early economy of Plattsburgh. Building served as British headquarters during the occupation of Plattsburgh in the War of 1812. (518) 561-1035.

9 Clinton County Historical Association, Plattsburgh. Housed in a building used as a British hospital during the War of 1812, the collection of military memorabilia, underwater artifacts, paintings and decorative arts chronicles Plattsburgh's history from Samuel de Champlain's exploration of the area in 1609 to the present. (518) 561-0340.



AuSable
Chasm

10 AuSable Chasm, Keeseville. The AuSable River flows through a deep Chasm on its way from Mount Marcy to Lake Champlain. Since the 1870s the chasm has attracted thousands of visitors for thrilling, scenic rides along high cliffs. (518) 834-7454.

11 Historic Bridges, Keeseville. Three exceptional bridges, including an 1842 stone arch, a through-truss, and a pedestrian suspension bridge can be found in Keeseville.

12 The Adsit Cabin, Willsboro. This log house built by Samuel Adsit in 1778 displays farming artifacts and tells stories of early settlement days. (518) 963-8668.

13 The 1812 Homestead, Willsboro. A working farmstead of the 19th century with a Federal style home and a one-room school house. This site also offers craft workshops and a nature trail. (518) 963-4071.

14 Greystone, Essex. A circa 1853 Greek Revival style stone mansion with period furnishings. (518) 963-4650.

15 The Iron Center and Railroad & Mining Heritage Park, Port Henry. This park and museum highlight the town's 19th century prominence as a transportation center for the region's iron industry. Besides ore and iron, the area produced nails, spikes, and horseshoes used by Union soldiers in the Civil War. (518) 546-3606.

16 Crown Point State Historic Site, Crown Point. This site interprets ruins of French Fort St. Frederic and the British fort known as "His Majesty's Fort at Crown Point." The grounds are open year round and a visitors center with artifacts recovered from the site is open seasonally. (518) 597-3666.

17 Penfield Homestead Museum, Crown Point. 19th century artifacts of the iron industry are displayed in a Federal style home located in the picturesque village of Ironville. (518) 597-3804.

18 Ticonderoga Heritage Museum, Ticonderoga. The museum offers exhibits on graphite extraction, paper and pencil manufacture, and native American artifacts. Classes and special events are offered. (518) 585-2696.

19 Hancock House, Ticonderoga. A replica of John Hancock's Boston mansion, this 1925 building is home to the Ticonderoga Historical Society. (518) 585-7868.

20 Fort Ticonderoga, Ticonderoga. Built by the French in 1755, the fort was seized by the British in 1759. Captured by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold during the American Revolution, the fort was restored by the Pell family in 1909. (518) 585-2821, www.fort-ticonderoga.org.



Mark Kuntz

Fort Ticonderoga

21 Skenesborough Museum, Whitehall. Located along the Champlain Canal, the museum highlights the community's past roles as a commercial port and the birthplace of the United States Navy. (518) 499-0716, www.adirondack.net/orgs/arcleader/skenes.html.

22 Skene Manor, Whitehall. This 19th century mansion overlooks the village of Whitehall. Proceeds from period tea room support ongoing restoration. (508) 499-1906.

Sites in Vermont

23 St. Anne's Shrine, Isle La Motte. The shrine was built in 1894 on the site of a 1666 French fort and is evidence of the first European settlement in Vermont. A small Victorian chapel is open to the public. (802) 928-3362.

24 The St. Albans Historical Society Museum, St. Albans. Housed in a grand historic school building built in 1861, the museum features local, military, and railroad history and Abenaki culture. (802) 527-7933.

25 Hyde Log Cabin Historic Site, Grand Isle. Circa 1783, the log home is considered to be one of the oldest in the United States. Home of settler Jedediah Hyde, it is interpreted with furnishings and household implements of Grand Isle County. (802) 372-5440.

26 Ethan Allen Homestead, Burlington. The museum, located on 300 acres of park land along the Winooski River, includes the restored 1785 home of Revolutionary War hero Ethan Allen. (802) 865-4556, www.ethanallen.together.com/.

27 Shelburne Farms, Shelburne. Now committed to agricultural and environmental education, the farm was once a large scale experimental farm developed in the 1890s by industrialist William Seward Webb and his wife Lila Vanderbilt Webb. The grounds include architecturally outstanding barns and the former home of the Webbs now operated seasonally as an inn. (802) 985-8686, www.shelburnefarms.org/.

Marshall Webb



Shelburne Farms

28 Shelburne Museum, Shelburne. Museum houses one of the world's finest collections of 18th and 19th century furnishings, crafts, fine art, and artifacts from New England's cultural and agricultural heritage in 35 historic buildings. Relocated structures on the grounds include the side-wheeler steamboat *Ticonderoga*, and the Colchester Reef Lighthouse. (802) 985-3344, www.shelburnemuseum.org/.

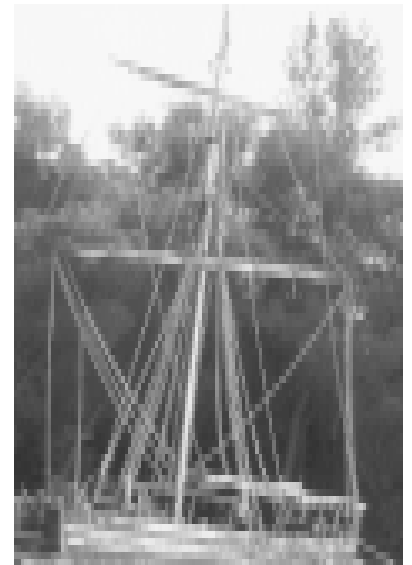
29 Rokeby Museum, Ferrisburgh. The museum offers a glimpse into the life of author, illustrator, and naturalist Rowland E. Robinson and his descendants through paintings, family furnishings, and archives from four generations. The site was designated a National Historic Landmark for its relationship to the Underground Railroad. (802) 877-3406.



LCBP

Rokeby Museum

30 Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Vergennes. The museum chronicles the maritime history of Lake Champlain. Exhibits include the *Philadelphia II*, a replica of the Revolutionary War gunboat used by Benedict Arnold and his fleet on Lake Champlain. Special events, demonstrations, and classes are available. (802) 475-2022, www.lcmm.org/.



LCMM

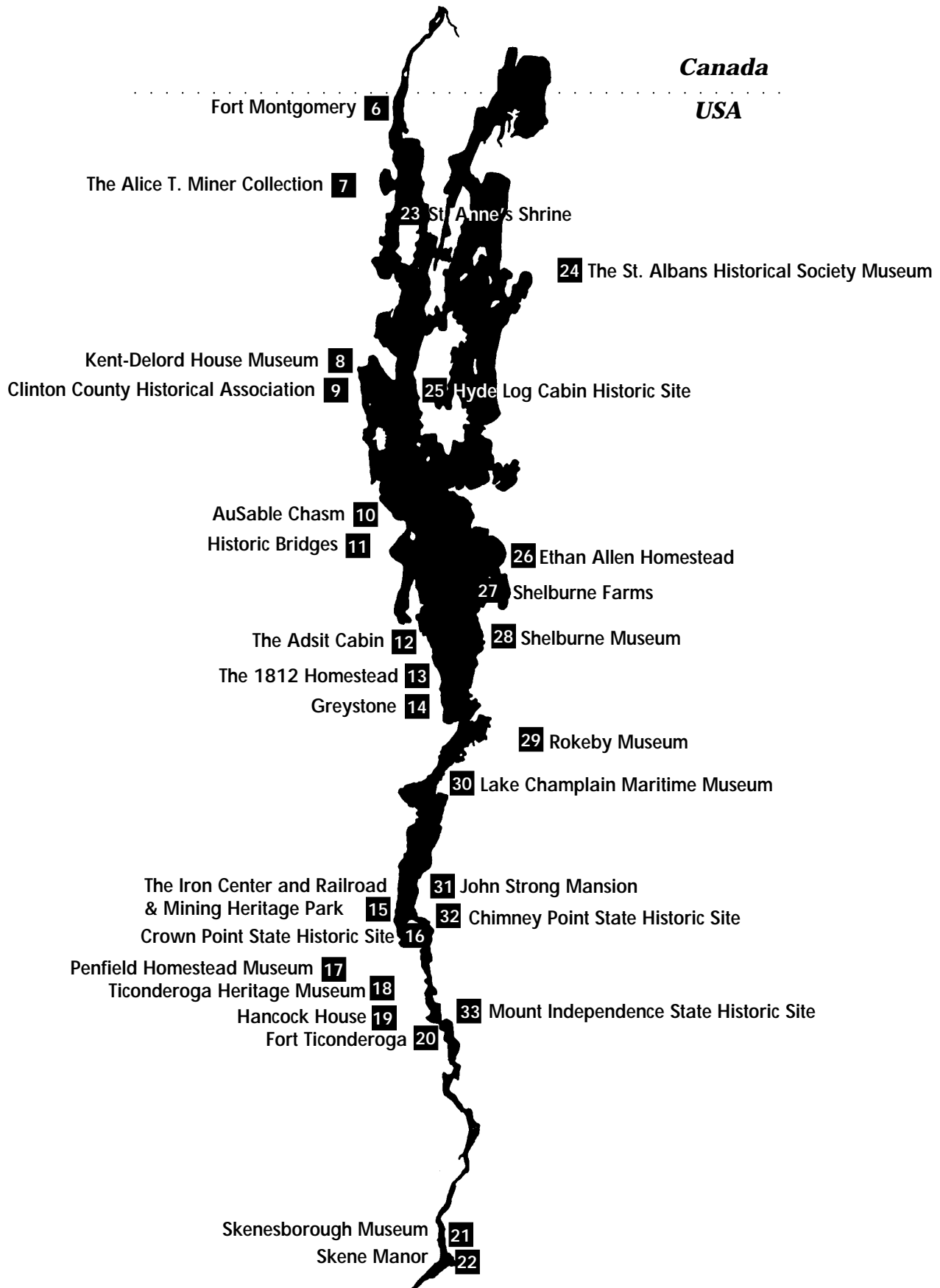
31 John Strong Mansion, Addison. This magnificent Federal style brick home of Green Mountain Boy, General John Strong, built in 1785, displays period furnishings and a colonial herb garden. (802) 759-2309.

Philadelphia II

32 Chimney Point State Historic Site, Addison. An interpretive center, housed in an 18th century tavern features the heritage of Native Americans and French settlers. Seasonal. (802) 759-2412.

33 Mount Independence State Historic Site, Orwell. This is the site of a major fort complex that was once linked to Fort Ticonderoga by a floating bridge across Lake Champlain. A visitors center interprets Revolutionary War action in the region. Hiking trails take visitors through the archaeological remains of the complex. (802) 948-2000.

Historic Site Locations



Cycling to Historic Sites



Lake Champlain Bikeways offers cyclists a network of interconnected, international bicycle routes around Lake Champlain in New York, Vermont and the Upper Richelieu Valley of Québec. For more information, contact the Bicycling Information Clearinghouse, RR 1, Box 220, Crown Point, NY 12928, lcvisit@capital.net, or go to www.lakeplacid.com/bikeways.

Lake Champlain Underwater Historic Preserve System

Lake Champlain's history can be told by the many shipwrecks on the lake bottom. Seven of these shipwrecks are part of an underwater preserve system. Dive sites in the preserve system include the *Champlain II*, a steamboat that went aground near Westport; the Burlington Bay Horse Ferry, the world's only known surviving horse-powered ferry; and five others. For information contact the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, (802) 475-2022, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, (802) 828-3051, or the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, (518) 897-1200.



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Additional Resources

Regional

Lake Champlain Basin History
(with special focus on military history)
www.geocities.com/~jmillard.

Lake Champlain Region Road Map and Recreation Guide
Vermont, New York, Québec, 2nd edition 1998-2000, published by Northern Cartographic, available at area stores or call (802) 860-2886.

Vermont

Historic House Museums in Vermont
www.vpa.org/museumsvm.html

Museums of Vermont
www.gmpvt.com/museums.htm

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
(802) 828-3211
www.uvm.edu/~vhnet/hpres/org/vdhp/vdhp1.html

Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance:
www.uvm.edu/~vhnet/hpres/org/VMGA/vmga.html

Vermont's State Owned Historic Sites
(802) 828-3051
www.state.vt.usldca/historic/news.htm.

New York

Adirondack Area Museums
www.adirondack.net/tour/museums.html

Adirondack Historical Sites
www.roundthebend.com/adirondacks/dackhist.html

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
(518) 474-0456, www.nysparks.state.ny.us

Department of Environmental Conservation
(518) 897-1200, www.dec.state.ny.us

The Lake Champlain Basin Program has developed a plan to insure that the Lake and its drainage basin will be restored, protected and maintained so that future generations will enjoy its full benefits. If you would like to learn more about the program or get involved with associated projects, contact us at: (800) 468-LCBP (within New York and Vermont), (802) 372-3213, or visit our web site at www.lcbp.org.

LCBP Fact Sheet Series

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- Number 2 – Nonpoint Source Pollution
- Number 3 – The Basin
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