

# VERMONT ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS

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*This occasional section alerts researchers to the rich resources acquired regularly by Vermont's historical repositories. For this issue of Vermont History, which marks the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's arrival on the lake that now bears his name, four repositories report on items in their collections that illustrate and illuminate the history of Lake Champlain.*

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## *Researching Lake Champlain Celebrations at the Vermont Historical Society*

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The Vermont Historical Society's Leahy Library houses several collections of interest to scholars researching the two major events that celebrated Samuel de Champlain's famous 1609 exploratory trip.

The early anniversaries of Samuel de Champlain's arrival at the lake that now bears his name had largely gone unnoticed by the inhabitants of Vermont. But by 1909, the 300th anniversary of the event, Americans had embraced milestone celebrations with unbridled enthusiasm. The 1876 celebration of the nation's centennial had kicked off the party, followed by celebrations to commemorate Columbus's arrival (Chicago, 1893), Pan-American unity (Buffalo, N.Y., 1901), and the purchase of the Louisiana Territory (St. Louis, Mo., 1904). Vermonters had celebrated with great aplomb the victory of native-son George Dewey (1899) and the centennial of the selection of Montpelier as the state capital (1905). As a result, the celebration of the tercentennial is much better

represented in the collections of the VHS library than other celebrations before (if any) or since. Leading up to the 1959 Champlain event, Vermont had celebrated its own sesquicentennial in 1941 with great flourish.

Documentation of the two Champlain anniversaries of 1909 and 1959 can be found in several formats including photographs, sheet music, broadsides, and manuscript collections.

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

The VHS is fortunate to have a collection of seventy-four glass plate negatives that capture the full exuberance of the 1909 celebration. These photographs document the parade in Burlington and the encampment of Indians on a floating island in the lake. They show the Champlain re-enactor who led the parade, a Scottish contingent in their kilts, a solemn crowd dedicating a stone monument, and dignitaries addressing the crowd.

The VHS photo collection also includes seven images of a much humbler tercentenary parade held in Swanton on July 3, 1909. These faded salt prints show several floats, all of which seem to be advertising a local business.

Our collection of photographs of the 1959 celebration portrays a much more serious affair. All of our seventeen photographs are related to the official activities of the Hudson/Champlain Commission as befits



*Indian village at Lake Champlain Tercentenary celebration, July 1909.*

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*Champlain 350th anniversary commission chair Perry Merrill in front of map of Lake Champlain. The man on the left is A. P. Beach, president of the Basin Harbor Club and Chairman of the Resorts, Recreation, and Tourist Travel Committee, Interstate Commission on the Lake Champlain Basin. The woman on the right is identified as “Mrs. Pratt? worker.” 1959.*

their source, Perry Merrill, chairman of the Vermont festival committee. Almost all of them show men in suits posing in official groups, although three photographs show a delegation of commission members observing operations at an apple orchard. The VHS pictures, however, do not tell the whole story of the commission’s activities; additional photographs at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration show celebratory activities, albeit with a 1950s flair.

#### POSTCARDS

Despite the fact that the Lake Champlain Tercentennial took place in the midst of the Real Photo Postcard (RPPC) era, the VHS owns but one RPPC of the extravaganza. It is an image of “Arrival of Champlain at Indian Village.” Although the explorer is not visible in the image, two long canoes paddled by natives dominate the center of the card

with the top a teepee sticking up over the man-made island to the right of the image.

#### SHEET MUSIC

The collections include two pieces of sheet music written in conjunction with the 300th event and one to celebrate the 350th. In 1909, George L. Hasseltine composed *Champlain, 1609–1909* with words supplied by John W. Kellette (Rutland, Vt.: Euphonic Music Co., 1909) while C. S. Putnam created *Champlain* in collaboration with D. D. Fisher (Burlington, Vt.: Bixby Studio, 1909). The former was advertised as the “official chorus” and featured an ornate cover. A separate sheet from the publishers announced that “Every band leader in the state will be furnished with orchestration free of charge if they communicate with the company.”

The 1909 event included at least one lengthy poem written for the event. Clinton Scolland penned *Song for the Ter-Centenary of Lake Champlain*, an eight-page celebration of heroism published as a pamphlet on heavy paper to signify its importance.

In 1959, Pauline M. Arnold of Burlington composed and wrote the lyrics for a short piece entitled “Samuel de Champlain Festival Song.” With its imagery of boating, fishing, swimming, and event skiing, it was more a promotional piece for the festival and the Champlain basin than a celebration of the historical event itself.

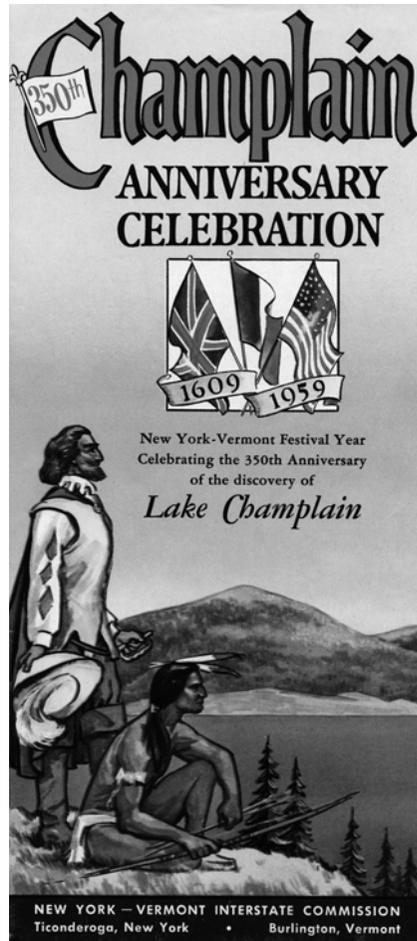
#### PRINTED EPHEMERA

While the 1959 celebration lacks some types of documentation, it makes up for it with a brightly colored poster and pamphlet. The 350th poster is especially striking with its simple, silk-screened graphics in bright blue, yellow, and green colors and its strong image of Champlain stepping out of the underbrush followed by two natives and a French soldier. The accompanying brochure shows Champlain and a Native American man with bow and arrow looking out over the lake. The colors are also bright but of a different palette than the poster. The brochure is folded in eight panels and contains a map of the region, photographs of attractions, and a twelve-month calendar of events.

The printed brochures for the 1959 event are numerous. The Society’s collection includes a large, attractive pamphlet entitled *A Profile of the Champlain Anniversary Festival*, which is a prospectus for the coming event. The document envisioned a “canoecade” of twenty-four birchbark canoes up Lake Champlain that “should attract as much public interest as has the Mayflower.” The 350th was to include celebrations of other events related to the history of the lake, including the 200th anniversary of Rogers Rangers’ battle with the St. Francis Indians in Canada.

Other items in the collection suggest that the 1959 celebration was relatively decentralized and included a variety of historical themes, not just the arrival of Samuel de Champlain. A piece of sheet music in the VHS collections entitled *Duxbury Days of Yore* was written for that town's "Festival Days" in August but has nothing to do with the lake or its "discovery." The Society's uncatalogued pamphlets ("uncat. pam.") collection includes several examples of local events including a brochure seeking participation from local groups, "Protestant Celebration of the 350th Champlain Anniversary," a program on August 8, 1959 for Champlain's visit to the Hyde Log cabin in Grand Isle, and another program for the St. Albans Festival Days the following weekend. The Society also has blank forms with the heading "l'Ordre du Bon Temps"—recalling an informal association of French settlers devoted to game hunting and feasting, founded by Samuel de Champlain in the winter 1606–07—presented to people who participated in the 350th celebration and the New York–Vermont–Quebec region's "contribution to modern living."

The 1909 celebration generated several programs. The broadside collection of the VHS does not appear to contain any posters for the grand event on July 4. However, the VHS files include a free, eight-page printed program for the tercentenary celebration in Burlington; a more impressive twenty-four-page program including advertisements and detailed schedules, and a fourteen-panel folded piece published by the



*Poster for the  
350th Champlain Anniversary  
Celebration, 1959.*



*“Champlain Tercentenary  
Celebration, July 4–10, 1909”  
Vermont Historical Society library,  
PAM 974.30 C358nc.*

states of Vermont and New York and the Central Vermont, Delaware & Hudson, and Rutland Railroads presenting the history of the region, a description of events being held, and a map showing railroad lines leading to the celebrations. Also in the collection are “An Order of Worship for Religious Services . . . Suggested for use in Church in the State of Vermont on Sunday, July 4, 1909,” and a program for the tercentenary festivities at Fort Ticonderoga on July 6, 1909.

The twenty-four-page program makes clear just how large an undertaking the 1909 celebration was. The event started in Vergennes and Swanton on Saturday, July 3, then moved to Burlington the next day with a variety of religious services. It continued on Monday with a major parade, two airship ascensions, a marathon race, band concert, and fireworks. Tuesday was the “Celebration of French Societies” with more band concerts, airship ascensions, and fireworks along with a smaller street parade and an illuminated boat parade. Wednesday was “Patriotic and Fraternal Society Day.” The centerpiece of the Queen City celebration

was the arrival of President William Howard Taft on Thursday, July 8, and the resulting parade and festivities. The celebration in Burlington continued through Saturday, July 10.

Meanwhile, there was a ceremony with dignitaries at Crown Point on Monday, July 5. President Taft arrived at Fort Ticonderoga the following

day via a special train from Albany, along with the Vice President, Speaker of the House, and the ambassadors from France and Great Britain. Taft and his party were in Plattsburgh, New York, on the following day. It was not until Thursday, July 8, that they arrived in Burlington. The next day Taft moved on to Isle La Motte for more ceremonies, resulting in four days devoted to presidential appearances and speech-making in the Lake Champlain basin.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

The manuscript collection at the VHS contains relatively sparse evidence of the Champlain celebrations. The collection includes one typescript of an address delivered at Isle La Motte on July 9, 1909, by Wendell P. Stafford, a famous Vermont jurist and poet.

Fifty years later, Flora J. Coutts served as the assistant director to the festival committee. Although she had served in the Vermont Senate for two terms, Coutts was hired to assist the all-male celebratory committee. Her extensive papers at the VHS contain just one item from her work there: a typescript entitled *What Is Vermont?* which was a collection of essay and poems for the youth of Vermont, written by members of the League of Vermont Writers in honor of the 350th anniversary of the discovery of Lake Champlain. The collection, which never seems to have been published, includes chapters under the categories “Vermont Is History,” “Vermont Is Home,” “Vermont Is People,” “Vermont Is Ideas” and includes contributions from some of the most prominent Vermont writers of the time, including Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

PAUL A. CARNAHAN

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### *Lake Champlain Materials in the Vermont State Archives*

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**I**n 1867 Vermont’s Fish Commissioners supported the restocking of our lakes and rivers with such “valuable” fish as “salmon, shad, herring, alewife, trout, black bass, striped bass and lamprey eel” (*Journal of the Vermont House*, 1867, page 437). The idea of restocking lamprey eel seems a little jarring to us today, given current efforts to protect Lake Champlain game fish from lampreys. Yet, reading fish commissioner reports during the late nineteenth century made clear their interest not only in the potential for commercial fishing but also for the health benefits of introducing more fish into the diets of Vermonters.

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA), as the repository of state government's archival records, holds numerous records and series related to Lake Champlain topics. While there are a wide range of records related to the Lake, a search of VSARA's online database to archival record series will produce just a handful of hits for a search by "Lake Champlain" (<http://vermont-archives.org/research/database/series.asp>). That is because few series exclusively relating to the Lake have been preserved to date. More often than not Lake-related material will be within other series, such as gubernatorial, judicial, or agency records (and, at this time, there are few agency archival series). As our new record management program helps agencies create more comprehensive and current records programs we hope to identify more records that can support research on the Lake.

Of those record series that can be found by searching by "Lake Champlain" there are several containing records from the 1909 and 1959 celebrations of Samuel de Champlain's 1609 arrival on the Lake. There are, for example, financial records relating to the 1909 celebration (Record Series PRA-468) and the records of the Interstate Commission on the Lake Champlain Basin (Record Series A-329) include pamphlets, photographs, and correspondence from the 1959 celebration. Our film collection includes one from the 1959 anniversary tracing points of interest around the Lake. There are some photographs of the 1959 celebration among the Department of Tourism and Marketing records as well (Record Series A-078).

Also in the database are the records of the Lake Champlain Bridge Commission, which include architectural drawings, correspondence, photographs, and clippings from the opening of the bridge in 1927. See Record Series A-058, Lake Champlain Bridge Commission, for a description of the records.

More often than not, references to Lake Champlain are found in series and records not entitled "Lake Champlain." The online Nye Index to the Manuscript Vermont State Papers covers the years from approximately 1770 to 1800 and shows various petitions and other records that reference the Lake (<http://vermont-archives.org/research/database/nye.asp>). The 1800 to circa 1850 Nye Index is not online but can be viewed at VSARA's Middlesex reference room.

The Henry Stevens Collection is another source. The collection holds various records germane to the Lake, including the Timothy Follett records, which contain records of the Lake Champlain Transportation Company.

The online, full-text, searchable gubernatorial inaugural and farewell addresses can locate references to the Lake in those addresses (<http://>

vermont-archives.org/govhistory/gov/govinaug/index.htm). The references range from Governor John Page's 1868 remarks on transportation costs to Governor John G. McCullough's 1904 remarks on pollution in the Lake to Governor Madeleine Kunin's similar concerns about Lake pollution expressed in her 1991 farewell address. Indeed, one value of the inaugural and farewell addresses is the ability to see the evolution of issues relating to the Lake over time.

The official correspondence of governors is also a source of Lake-related information. In the records from Governor Snelling's first administration (1977–1985) there are folders on a Lake Champlain Aquatic Plant Conference, the Lake Champlain Bridge Commission, the International Committee on Lake Champlain, and the Lake Champlain Coast Guard Abolishment. Researchers can also apply broader, non-Lake Champlain specific searches to find related topics; for example, Governor Snelling, and other governors, have files on the International Paper Company, whose impact on the health of the Lake has long been a concern.

That is the challenge to researchers who use VSARA to find "Lake Champlain" material. Often Lake Champlain may be only a part of a larger series or records. The opening quote from the 1867 Fish Commissioner report is an example, since the commissioners primarily looked at the Connecticut River and other rivers and streams, not the Lake. The Fish Commissioner reports were printed in the House and Senate journals and can be located using our *State Papers of Vermont* series Volume XXII, *Vermont Legislative Reports, An Index to Reports Found in the House and Senate Journals*.

VSARA also holds an index to Vermont fish and game laws from 1787–1900. Again, the index is not Lake Champlain-specific, but does provide useful information on fish laws that might apply to the Lake. Laws and legislative records in general have much Lake-related information, though again researchers will have to broaden their searches beyond direct reference to Lake Champlain. Legislative Council studies, searchable through the online record series database, provide examples such as the 1994–95 study on Agricultural Water Pollution. Lake Champlain does not appear in the study title, but obviously agricultural run-off is a major concern in terms of Lake pollution.

Research in archival records and manuscripts can be as exciting a voyage of discovery as Samuel de Champlain's 1609 probe into the Champlain valley. It can lead to startling discoveries such as the impulse to restock the Lake with lamprey eels or the realization that Vermont's nineteenth-century fish commissioners had a global view that included examinations of the benefits of fish to the diets of other cultures. The records let us rediscover the economic importance of the Lake, such as

Governor John Page's 1868 calculations on the reduced cost of transporting goods if a canal linked the Lake to the St. Lawrence River. Page's inaugural thoughts also underscore the Lake as an international border as he encouraged Congress to sign the treaties necessary to facilitate completion of the canal. Archival research can remind us of the persistence of issues such as Governor McCullough's 1904 call for the scientific study of the impact of pollution from paper mills and sewage on the health of Vermonters. It can also provide new views of our changing cultural awareness; the 1959 celebration use of Burlington students as stereotypic Natives, paddling into Burlington harbor was not repeated during this year's observances.

VSARA welcomes any researchers who want to embark on their own voyages of discovery within our records and will provide assistance in identifying sources for various Lake-related studies.

D. GREGORY SANFORD

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## *Lake Champlain Maritime Museum*

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**F**ounded in 1986 to preserve and share the rich maritime heritage of the Champlain Valley, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's collections encompass over 15,000 objects, images, and documents that powerfully communicate the history of the region. These collections closely reflect the interests, history, and cultural heritage of the Champlain Valley, and reflect the community's need for a central repository where personal and family possessions can be shared with the public. Materials in the collection date from pre-seventeenth century through the late twentieth century, and reflect aspects of social, cultural, military, commercial, and natural history. These include more than fifty historic small watercraft, maritime models, military objects, paintings, drawings, and prints, historic and contemporary photographs, historic structures such as an Adirondack-style camp building and a Coast Guard light tower, and thousands of archaeological artifacts.

By far the largest source of archival holdings at LCMM is the museum's active program of nautical archaeology fieldwork and related research and publications. Ten years of sonar surveying of the lake bottom, the exploration and documentation of over 300 historic shipwrecks, the ongoing survey of the underwater Revolutionary War battlefield at Valcour Bay, and occasional on-shore projects have generated

substantial holdings in both paper and digital media. However, access to these materials is limited by the need to protect fragile archaeological sites.

Special collections in the LCMM archives include unique materials from private donors. These often take the form of single items or small collections, such as ship manifests, letters, lake charts, post cards, and other ephemera. Among larger holdings are papers of the Lake Champlain Transportation Company, engineering plans and elevations of the Champlain Bridge, and family papers from Amy Welcher, the last private owner of Button Point and Button Island (now Button Bay State Park).

### SILVER-HEADED CANE, 1873

Gift of LeGrand Burns

2004.006

This silver-headed cane came to Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in 2004 as the gift of LeGrand Burns. For many years, it was among the furnishings at the Burns family camp on Appletree Point. The inscription on the cane reflects nineteenth century pride in the lake's role in Revolutionary War history: "From Flagship *Congress* Galley/Benedict Arnold Commander/Sunk in Lake Champlain/Oct. 13th, 1776/John A. Arthur, 1873." For many years, it was customary for Champlain Valley residents to make keepsakes from the wood of the historic shipwrecks found along the shores of the lake. These relics were carefully labeled with the name and date of the vessel, as well as the name of the maker or owner. The *Vergennes Vermonter* of February 8, 1861, noted, "It has become quite the fashion, within a year or two, for our young gentlemen to furnish themselves with walking canes, made from oak timber of this old relic of bygone days."





### BIRCH BARK CANOE, 1959

Gift of Wright and Cindy Preston

2008.022.001

In a gesture that honored both the Champlain Quadricentennial and family history, Wright and Cindy Preston presented to Lake Champlain Maritime Museum a birch bark canoe from the 350th Champlain celebration, complete with the original paddles and pitch pot, and a collection of family photographs and Champlain Celebration memorabilia. The canoe was made at the Maniwaki reserve in Quebec. Preston's father, William S. Preston, Jr., had served as co-chair of the "canoecade" during the celebration, and afterward acquired the canoe, which was used by the family for many years. Preston's grandfather, William S. Preston of Burlington, was Co-Chairman of the New York–Vermont Interstate Commission on the Lake Champlain Basin, and member of the Hudson–Champlain Federal Commission. In an article summing up the "Festival's Aftermath," the *Sunday New York Times* of September 20, 1959, commented, "The special anniversary events were triple-starred, and among these, the most spectacular as well as crucial, from a crowd-appeal point of view, was the *Sieur de Champlain's* Canoecade. It is not unfair to say that the entire Champlain festival was built around this almost month-long Odyssey of the play-actor Champlain, his two French companions, and some sixty Indians who paddled virtually the length of the lake in twenty-four authentic birch bark canoes with innumerable ceremonial halts."

ELOISE BEIL

*Eloise Beil is director of collections at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.*

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*Lake Champlain's Steamboats: Special Collections,  
Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont*

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For almost 150 years, steamboats plied the waters of Lake Champlain, transporting passengers for business and pleasure and hauling goods in and out of the Champlain Valley. Beginning in 1809, when the Winans brothers built and launched the world's second successful steamboat from their boatyard in Burlington and ending in 1953, when the sidewheel steamer *Ticonderoga* hosted its last excursion, steamboats were an important presence on the Lake Champlain waterway. The University of Vermont's Special Collections department houses a rich collection of company records, personal papers, and photographs that document the steamboat era, including the Guy Catlin Papers, the Champlain Transportation Company Records, P. G. Ladd's account book, the Rockwell Family Papers, the Ralph Nading Hill Collection, and the L. L. McAllister Photographs.

#### GUY CATLIN PAPERS

Guy Catlin and his brother Moses came to Burlington in the 1790s from Connecticut. They developed a mercantile business and served as agents for other merchants trading along the Champlain-Richelieu route connecting New York and Montreal. Active in the timber trade that dominated the Champlain Valley economy, they assembled large lumber rafts destined for Canada, where they exchanged timber for cash and goods. They benefited from illegal trade with Canada following the passage of the embargo acts of 1807–1808 and during the War of 1812.

The Guy Catlin Papers contain family and business papers related to Moses, Guy, and other Catlin family members. The collection contains numerous miscellaneous legal and business records generated while trading with merchants in St. Johns, Quebec, and elsewhere. This business primarily relied on sailing vessels and lumber rafts, but in 1813 Guy and Moses Catlin were among the organizers of the Lake Champlain Steamboat Company. One folder in the collection contains records of Guy Catlin's involvement with construction and operation of a steamboat in 1816–1817. The bills and receipts document fairly large payments to the partners of the pioneering Winans steamboat organization, perhaps for the engine and boilers retrieved from their steamer *Vermont*. There are also receipts for services and materials used in the construction and operation of the steamer *Champlain*. These materials can contribute to a more detailed understanding of one of Lake Champlain's

early steamboat companies and to the story of the *Champlain*, which burned late in 1817.

#### CHAMPLAIN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY RECORDS

The Champlain Transportation Company, founded in 1826, successfully competed with other Lake Champlain steamboat enterprises, and by 1835 had absorbed or bought up rival vessels. The company grew steadily, and despite occasional competition, dominated passenger transportation on the lake throughout the nineteenth century. In 1870, the Champlain Transportation Company passed into control of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. The railroad incorporated the lake steamboats into its Montreal–New York routes, a strategy that ensured their continued viability. As the Champlain Transportation Company focused on the lucrative excursion business, they built large and ornate passenger steamboats such as the *Chateaugay* (1888), the *Vermont III* (1903), and the *Ticonderoga* (1906). In 1937, after a number of years of declining revenues, Horace W. Corbin of Grand Isle purchased the company. Automobile travel increased while steamboat runs decreased, and in 1948 the Champlain Transportation Company ended steamboat service on Lake Champlain.

The extensive Champlain Transportation Company Records cover the years from 1812–1947. The ledgers, stock books, board meeting minutes, annual reports, correspondence, bills, and other documents pertain to all aspects of the company, including daily business, passengers, steamer specifications, finances, employees, inventories, leases, inspections, and so on. The records provide insights into the careers of notable Champlain Transportation Company officials such as Philo Doolittle, Thomas H. Canfield, LeGrand B. Cannon, Daniel Loomis, and H. W. Corbin. The collection includes many of the personal dairies that general manager Daniel Loomis maintained from 1884–1939, making almost daily notes about company activities. Visual materials include photographs and pictures of steamboats, company employees and officers, the marine railroad at the Shelburne Shipyard, and some miscellaneous blueprints.

The general history of the Champlain Transportation Company and its steamboats can be found in a number of sources, including Russell Bellico's *Sails and Steam in the Mountains*, which references many items in the Champlain Transportation Company Records.<sup>1</sup> The breadth and depth of the company records make them a significant resource for a variety of new research projects. The detailed annual reports and financial data could contribute to a more critical corporate history. Genealogists already consult the employee and passenger records, but a labor historian could use the time books and other records to explore the nature of

steamboat employment. Passenger lists can contribute to migration studies and research on travel patterns. Company records, in conjunction with advertising broadsides and schedules, could be used to analyze the nature and impact of the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century tourist excursions, including the origin of the travelers, marketing strategies, and coordination and partnerships with railroads, street-car lines, lakeside hotels and resorts, historic sites, recreation facilities, and special events.

#### P. G. LADD AND SONS ACCOUNT BOOK

This account book provides a close look at the effect the lake steamers had on the economy of one lakeside community. The book is attributed to P. G. Ladd and Sons at Benson's Landing, where a store, storehouses, and a hotel served lake travelers during the nineteenth century. Entries cover the period from 1849 to 1872, and in large part they record goods exchanged with passing steamboats, towboats, and other vessels. Vessel names—rather than names of individuals—are listed on the index page: Steamer Burlington, Steamer F. Saltus, Tow Steamer John Gilpin, etc. Many of the entries are for fresh food items such as butter, eggs, milk, and berries, most likely destined for the passengers. In one unidentified year, the account keeper lists the quantities of berries purchased daily from local women; for example, on September 20, 14 quarts, Mrs. Slavin. There are frequent entries for wood, often in large quantities. Careful examination may reveal that some charges are for storing goods, and some listings may be for items brought to the Benson's Landing store.

#### ROCKWELL FAMILY PAPERS

Numerous members of the Rockwell family, who settled in the Lake Champlain Islands, were involved in Lake Champlain's steamboat business. The Rockwell Family Papers consist of two cartons of letters, business papers, bound diaries and account books, photographs, newspaper clippings, and other papers, mostly covering the period from the 1850s to 1929.

The bulk of the materials relate to Ell B. Rockwell's many years of service on Lake Champlain steamboats. He began his career in 1842 at age twelve, and worked on lake steamboats as a pilot, mate, and captain until his death in 1928. Most of the material from 1880–1881 documents the construction of the steamer *Reindeer*, one of the few lake steamers that was never owned by the Champlain Transportation Company. The Grand Isle Steamship Company built the *Reindeer* in Alburgh, Vermont, and Ell Rockwell supervised the boat's construction and served as her captain through 1884. The collection contains exhaustive details

about construction specifications, vendors, design (including sketches), financing, and materials. In addition to his duties on the steamboats, orders and correspondence indicate that Rockwell and other members of the family were involved in commission and speculative sales of local agricultural products in markets as distant as New York City.

Several documents might be intriguing to food historians, including an 1879 request from a produce merchant “to load up some of those red apples I liked so much (famouse I think)” and to provide two other apple varieties (Snowflake and Prolifics) that he considered to be good stock.<sup>2</sup> An order book for the steamer *Reindeer* in account with Drew and Conger of Burlington lists all of the quantities and cuts of beef, pork, lamb, and turkey purchased during the month of November in an unidentified year.<sup>3</sup>

Toward the end of his life, Ell Rockwell himself became part of the excursion experience, as the company capitalized on his experience and age. The collection includes four folders of fan mail and photographs of Captain Rockwell with passengers from the 1920s. A letter Frederick H. Kohler wrote from Long Island in 1928 is typical, “I herewith enclose two snap shots of you which I had the pleasure of taking on your Steamer last week. Our trip through the Lakes and surrounding country and Canada was a most enjoyable one, and meeting and chatting with you is one of the bright spots of our trip long to be remembered.”<sup>4</sup> The letters and photos, in conjunction with company publicity materials, demon-



*Captain Ell Rockwell (center) and a group of travelers aboard the Vermont. Courtesy Special Collections, University of Vermont.*

strate that they developed a successful marketing strategy using the venerable captain as an icon.

#### RALPH NADING HILL COLLECTION

After reviewing an early draft of Ralph Nading Hill's book *Sidewheeler Saga* in 1942, literary agent Lurton Blassingame, trying to explain the source of the manuscript's shortcomings, told Hill "I think you fell too much in love with the lake."<sup>5</sup> In the 1950s, Hill's abiding interest in Lake Champlain's history, and especially her steamboats, prompted him to spearhead a campaign to save the *Ticonderoga*, the last sidewheel steamboat operating on Lake Champlain, from the scrap heap. While Hill's efforts to operate the *Ticonderoga* as an excursion steamer and then to bring the vessel to the Shelburne Museum are chronicled in his books *Sidewheeler Saga* (1956) and *The Story of the Ticonderoga* (1957), the Ralph Nading Hill Collection contains letters, reports, newspaper clippings, and other materials that more completely document the short-lived Shelburne Steamboat Company and the early years of the *Ticonderoga's* second life as a very popular museum attraction.

Three thick scrapbooks document the activities of the Lake Champlain's last excursion steamboat company, including fundraising and financial challenges, the search for experienced crew members, and the demands of maintaining a boat built in 1906. Other folders contain detailed correspondence and reports about moving the *Ticonderoga* to the museum in 1954–1955, restoring the vessel to its 1906 grandeur, and making it work as a museum attraction. After more than two decades on land, the *Ticonderoga* again needed restoration work, and in the early 1980s Hill spearheaded a second major campaign to raise funds and to educate a new generation about the significance of the only remaining vessel of its type in the world.

The collection includes many letters from fellow steamboat historians and from the readers of Hill's numerous books and articles that contain valuable historical information about steamboating on Lake Champlain and elsewhere. Hill worked closely with Electra H. Webb, the founder of the Shelburne Museum; their extensive correspondence in the collection demonstrates the vision and dedication that supported their herculean effort to save the *Ticonderoga* and their longstanding friendship. In their letters, Webb is frequently the Commodore, while Hill is the Seaman.

The material in the Ralph Nading Hill Collection is an important resource for researchers working on steamboat history, the development of Vermont's twentieth-century tourist economy, and the creation of an unusual historical museum. Although much has been written about the

*Ticonderoga* at the Shelburne Museum, this material could provide the basis of a detailed case study of a major—and extremely successful—historic preservation effort.

#### LOUIS L. McALLISTER PHOTOGRAPHS

Burlington area photographer Louis McAllister, who used his large-format view camera to record daily life and special events from 1910 to the early 1960s, photographed steamboats, ferries, and related facilities throughout his career. Included among the thousands of black-and-white prints in the Louis McAllister collection are shots of the steamers *Vermont*, *Chategeauy*, and *Ticonderoga* as well as images of the Shelburne Shipyard and the Champlain Transportation Company landing in Burlington.

The collection also includes about fifty photographs that document the *Ticonderoga*'s final journey out of Lake Champlain and on to land at the Shelburne Museum. McAllister was on site frequently to record



*In 1929, the Champlain Transportation Company installed a marine railway at its Shelburne shipyard. On October 24, several hundred spectators watched a test run as the steamer Vermont was hauled out of the lake in a cradle. Courtesy Special Collections, University of Vermont.*

the ship's slow progress toward its final resting place during fall, winter, and early spring in 1954–1955. The photographs provide a visual record of the technical solutions devised by project contractors Merritt-Chapman & Scott and W. B. Hill, some of the obstacles encountered, and project personnel and visitors. McAllister dated and numbered the prints, so the activities shown can be correlated with the progress reports in the Hill papers and with Hill's summary account of the move in *The Story of the Ticonderoga*. The McAllister steamboat images have been digitized and they can be accessed online through the UVM Libraries' Center for Digital Initiatives at <http://cdi.uvm.edu>.

PRUDENCE DOHERTY

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Russell Bellico, *Sails and Steam in the Mountains: A Maritime and Military History of Lake George and Lake Champlain* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 1992), 257–289.

<sup>2</sup>George W. Sabre to E. B. Rockwell, 23 May 1881, Rockwell Family Papers (Additions), Special Collections, University of Vermont.

<sup>3</sup>Order book, Steamer Reindeer in account with Drew & Conger, Rockwell Family Papers (Carton 1, Folder 53), Special Collections, University of Vermont.

<sup>4</sup>Frederick H. Kohler to Ell B. Rockwell, 24 July 1928, Rockwell Family Papers (Carton 2, Folder 1), Special Collections, University of Vermont.

<sup>5</sup>Lurton Blassingame to Ralph Nading Hill, 9 September 1942, Ralph Nading Hill Collection (Carton 22, Folder 1), Special Collections, University of Vermont.