

The Lake Champlain Islands: Vermont's Historic Island Paradise



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Lake Champlain Island facts

Five islands (South Hero, Grand Isle, North Hero, Alburg, Isle La Motte) make up Grand Isle County. Samuel de Champlain was the first to discover the lake and the islands within it.

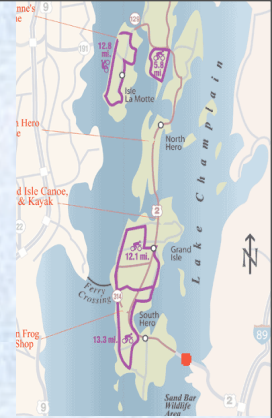
Lake Champlain and Islands were formed by receding glaciers carving it out of the earth.

The Lake Champlain islands served as a staging point for many crucial battles during the War of 1812. Each Island along our journey has some military history.



Currently the Lake Champlain Islands serve as a haven for resorts, tourism, and summer vacations.

The Sand bar Causeway



Constructed to allow passage by foot or car from Colchester to South Hero, providing a link to the main land. This is our first leg of our journey



The causeway rested on cut slabs of granite. This is a picture taken during winter revealing a frozen lake. **LS08780_000**



The causeway was prone to flooding after the ice melted as can be seen in this photo taken before the pavement was in place. **LS06554_000**

South Hero

South Hero is the Southern most island, and is actually part of Grand Isle, the island was just divided in half. This section of the island was inhabited by a large community of Abenaki Indians, who remained there to as late as 1870 when a census bureau listed them as “basket makers”. Ethan Allen spent his last night before his fateful cross over Lake Champlain in the tavern of his cousin Ebenezer Allen with a group of green mountain boy veterans.



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These side by side historic photos show a view from South Hero overlooking Keeler's bay. The older photo shows a relatively unpopulated land, while the other photo shows a more developed island.



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South Hero cont.

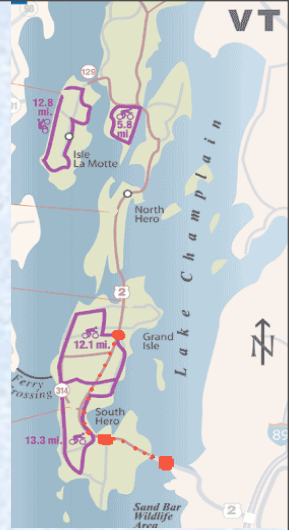


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This hand colored photo shows one of the island's oldest businesses, Robinson's hardware. Bought from the Keeler brothers by Juan Robinson, this business still is operating in its same location in the town of South Hero.

Grand Isle

Grand Isle was known as the “middle hero” until the townships were split up on November 7, 1798. Because of Grand Isle’s close proximity to Plattsburg, people could have had a view of the Battle of Plattsburg Bay on September 11th 1814.



View on Grand Isle.

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This picture shows two women walking along a sparse shore in Grand Isle, more recent photos show a more forested shore line.

Grand Isle cont.

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This picture is a view from a hill top in Grand Isle looking towards the green mountains and Colchester.



This colored photo is of the Grand Isle Lakehouse, formerly known as the Island Villa and Mary crest Girls camp. This mansion was initially built around 1900 as a high class retreat, which was then taken over by the Sisters of Mercy as a girl's camp. Recently it has been designated as a Vermont historic landmark and purchased by the preservation trust of Vermont to cater weddings and business retreats.

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North Hero

North Hero, as well as nearby Grand Isle and South Hero, originated as a land trust in October 27, 1779. This land trust was given as a means of paying back Ethan Allen and his relatives. This is the reason for it being called the “Two Heroes” in the name of Ethan and Ira Allen.



This is an aerial photo of the drawbridge that connects Grand Isle and North Hero.

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North Hero cont.

The photo to the right is of main street in North Hero, notice the lack of pavement and the small white cottages by the roadside.

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These side by side shots show a view from the middle of North Hero town to the lake. This area is relatively unchanged from past to present.

Alburg



Benedict Arnold anchored his fleet at Windmill point in Alburg before the Battle for Lake Champlain. The Indians allied with the British on September 6th 1776 and drove the Americans off onto the gondola Boston with several casualties. Off of Windmill Point the Thunderer was sank in 1777 carrying sick and wounded from the battle of Saratoga.

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These side-by-side photos are a good example as to how developed the islands have become. The wooden fence has been removed and power lines dot the road. The cabin on the right has remained relatively unchanged.

Alburg Cont.



This bridge connects North Hero and Alburg, the road to Isle La Motte is located immediately on the other side.

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This painting is of the construction of railroad tracks to Rouses Point in New York.

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R. R. BRIDGE, AT ROUSE'S POINT.

Isle La Motte



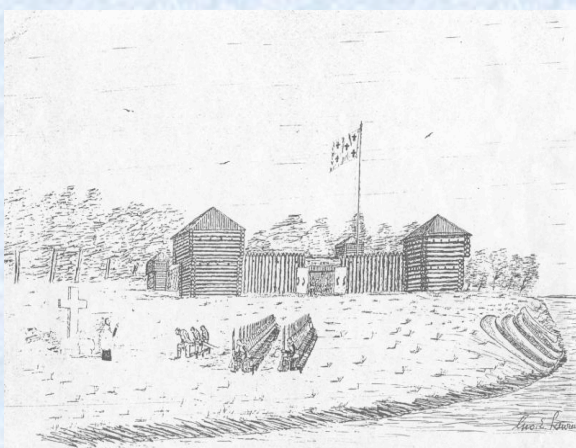
The last leg of our journey is Isle La Motte, and it contains several historic buildings. Fort St. Anne was established in 1666 by French soldiers and became Vermont's first white settlement. Presently there is a St. Anne's shrine near the site of the fort on the western banks of Isle la Motte. Fort St. Anne was a staging area for French soldier's military movements against the British and Mohawks.

St-Ann's Pilgrimage, Isle la Motte (Vt.)



How would you like to be here? Fred D. B.

From the Shrine of St Ann to the Lake



FORT ST ANNE-ISLE LA MOTTE-1690.
 IN 1690 THE GOVERNOR OF NEW FRANCE ORDERED CAPTAIN DE LA MOTTE TO TRAVEL TO LAKE CHAMPLAIN AND BUILD A FORT THAT WOULD BE A GUARD AGAINST THE RAIDS OF THE SAVAGE INDIANS AND ACT AS A CHECK TO ANY ENCROACHMENTS OF THE ENGLISH WHO HAD RECENTLY TAKEN NEW HARBOR FROM THE DUTCH AND CALLED IT NEW YORK. CAPT. LA MOTTE'S CHIEF OFFICE ON THE NORTH END OF THE ISLAND WHICH HAS EVER SINCE BORNE HIS NAME. THE SKETCH SHOWS CAPT. LA MOTTE, CAPT. GOSNEY, ANOTHER OFFICER AND THE CAPTIVES RECEIVING THE PRIEST'S BLESSING AT THE FIRST MASS EVER SUNG IN WHAT ARE NOW KNOWN AS THE NEW ENGLAND STATES, WHICH HAS PLACE THIS PLACE AS HISTORIC GROUND. WITH THE BUILDING OF THE FORT IN 1690 THE FORT GAVE ITS IMPORTANCE AND TOOK THE NAME.

A drawing of Fort St. Anne, troops marching in the foreground and canoes on the bank.

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St. Anne's Shrine looking towards New York. Notice the priests standing by the gazebo. **LS01738_000**

Isle La Motte cont.



St. Anne's Shrine outdoor services during Summer.

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The Islands have been host to many a crucial battle, and have played a decisive role in keeping Lake Champlain in America's hands. Today it is hard to believe that these now peaceful shores once witnesses cannon fire and Indian attacks. **LS10722_000**