



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Eloise Beil, Director of Collections

Phone: 802-475-2022 x107

Email: eloiseb@lcmmm.org

Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Receives CVNHP Collections Grant to Share Story of Steamboat Pioneer

[Vergennes, Vermont, March 29, 2019]

This season, a Collections Grant from the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership is helping Lake Champlain Maritime Museum bring the remarkable story of Lake Champlain's pivotal role in the Steamboat Revolution to the public through new exhibits, "Jahaziel Sherman's Steamboats," and "The Archaeology of Lake Champlain Steamboats." In conjunction with the exhibits, a digitization initiative will help preserve and provide access to research resources that document the shipwrecks of this important era.

In the early 1800s, steam navigation transformed American culture, and revolutionized trade and transportation worldwide. Lake Champlain was central to the Steamboat Revolution. "The rediscovery of the long-lost portrait of Captain Jahaziel Sherman of Vergennes, Lake Champlain's steamboat pioneer, is the springboard for the new special exhibits and digitization initiative that will expand our knowledge and understanding of the Champlain Valley region's role in the birth of the Steamboat Era," says Susan Evans McClure, Executive Director of Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. "This only known likeness of Captain Sherman allows us for the first time to literally put a human face on this important chapter of our history."

Few details about the construction and operation of early steamboats survive, so the shipwrecks in Lake Champlain are a resource with special significance. "Captain Sherman was at the forefront of the world's steamboat revolution," says nautical archaeologist Kevin Crisman, Ph. D. who participated in field investigation of Sherman's *Phoenix* more than 30 years ago, and the 2016 discovery of *Phoenix II* at the Shelburne Steamboat Graveyard in 2016. "Sherman's *Phoenix* is the world's earliest studied steamboat shipwreck, and he also was deeply involved in steam navigation on the Hudson River, Lake George, and the St. Lawrence."

After running a steamboat on the Hudson River in competition with inventor Robert Fulton, Sherman moved to Vergennes in 1813 to command the first boat of the Lake Champlain Steamboat Company. He oversaw construction and operations of six Lake Champlain steamboats: *Phoenix I*, *Phoenix II*, *Champlain*, *Congress*, *Franklin*, and *Water Witch*. Two of Sherman's vessels survive as Underwater Historic Preserves, and a third was recently identified at the Shelburne Steamboat Graveyard. In addition, the 1814 gunboat *Ticonderoga*, which survives at Whitehall, NY, was begun in 1813 under Sherman's direction as a steamboat, was acquired by the U. S. Navy to serve in Commodore Macdonough's War of 1812 fleet, and was recovered in the 1950s as a relic of national significance.

Lake Champlain Maritime Museum
4472 Basin Harbor Road, Vergennes, Vermont 05491
(802) 475-2022

[Website](#) ~ [Media Center](#) ~ [Facebook](#) ~ [Twitter](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Visitors can explore Jahaziel Sherman's world and the dawn of steam navigation at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum from May 25 through October 13. Find special programs related to Jahaziel Sherman's Steamboats at www.lcmm.org.

About Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

Founded in 1985 to preserve and share the maritime heritage of the Champlain Valley, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum shares underwater discoveries and lake history with the public through engaging exhibits, dynamic hands-on learning opportunities, full-scale working replica vessels, and innovative on-water experiences. As a year-round educational service provider, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum connects with more than 2,500 Elementary and Middle School Students each year through valuable place-based learning, ecology and nautical archaeology experiences and other programming with museum educators. Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's 4-acre lakeside campus at Basin Harbor is open daily from late May through mid-October. Perkins Pier in Burlington is homeport for LCMM's canal schooner *Lois McClure*.



This project was funded by an agreement (P18ACO1302J) awarded by the National Park Service to the [Great Lakes Fishery Commission](#) to the [New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission](#) in partnership with the [Lake Champlain Basin Program](#). NEIWPC manages LCBP's personnel, contract, grant, and budget tasks and provides input on the program's activities through a partnership with the LCBP Steering Committee. The viewpoints expressed here do not necessarily represent those of NEIWPC, the LCBP Steering Committee, or GLFC, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or causes constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

