

s/v Gracie Emmett: Lake Champlain- Corridor and Cruising Ground, Part 1

Part 1. New York City to Lake Champlain

By: Duane Nealon

Many use Lake Champlain as an inland water route linking the St. Lawrence River with New York Harbor via a series of canals and rivers. Situated along the borders of New York and Vermont, Lake Champlain also offers excellent cruising grounds for sailors seeking uncluttered natural landscapes, quaint harbor towns, and secluded anchorages during the sailing season, which is usually from the end of May to the beginning of October. In 1998, Lake Champlain became the 6th Great Lake, with over 70 islands, measuring 120 miles long, 12 miles at its widest point, and 64 feet average depth (over 400 feet at its deepest).



New York City/East River and Hudson River scenes:





Lake Champlain is served by two canal systems, which many boaters use during their seasonal migration. The 60-mile [Champlain Canal](#) connects Lake Champlain with the Hudson River, and can be traversed in a single day; however, there is no need to rush, the [two-day canal pass](#) is affordable and provides plenty of time to [lock through](#). The 363-mile Erie Canal joins the Champlain Canal at Lock #1 just north of the Troy Federal Lock. The Richelieu River/Chambly Canal connects Lake Champlain with the St. Lawrence River.

Upon entering the canal system, usually the lock operators cluster each group of boats between each lock by waiting for the last boat in each group before flooding the lock, so there is no need for sail boats to try to keep pace with the power boats. Remember to make provisions for suitable supports for the unstepped mast. Many times marinas that provide mast stepping have a stockpile of discarded mast crutches, which you may be able to modify for your boat, but don't depend on it — be ready with lumber, tools, and hardware. Towing a dinghy in the locks is prohibited.





Traveling northbound up the Hudson River, and before entering the Canal, affordable mast stepping can be found at [Castleton Boat Club](#) or if you have more extensive needs, [Scarano Boats](#) is also a good option. Both are just south of Albany, New York. Unstepping the mast is recommended at Castleton, and if dock space is available, staying the night in Troy, New York (located just before the first lock). The day after, enter the Champlain Canal and dock free for the night at Whitehall, New York (located at the last lock) and take advantage of the community center facilities that include rest rooms and showers. Next day, after exiting the locks its an easy motor to Chipman Point Marina on Lake Champlain in Vermont, where mast

stepping is \$75 and a transient dock or moorings are usually available, along with fuel/pump-out/rest rooms/showers/laundry. (There are over 40 marinas on Lake Champlain.)

Whitehall, New York (the birthplace of the US Navy)



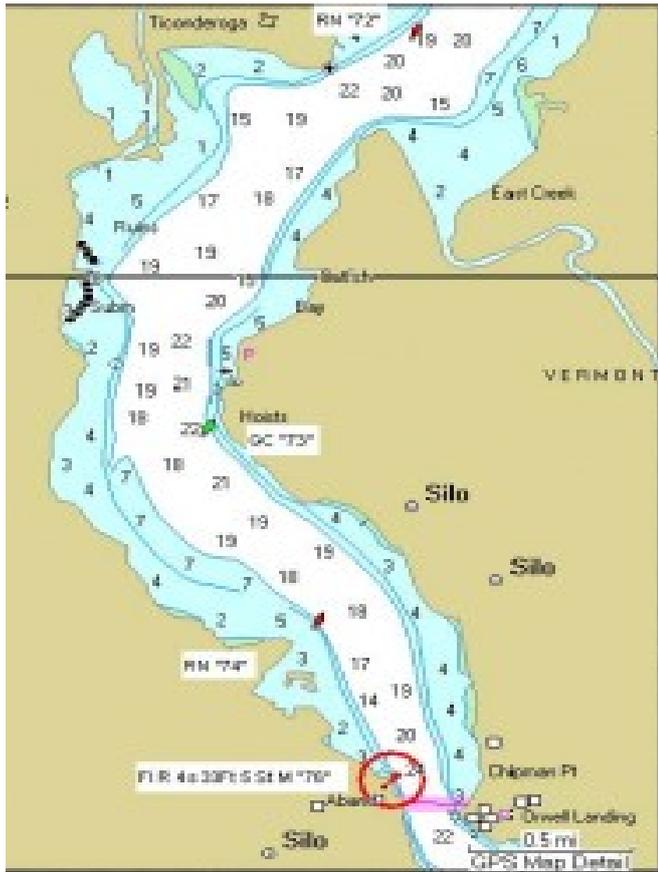
Chipman Point Marina, Vermont (On the National Historic Register)



Sailors that take the time for an extended cruise on Lake Champlain will be rewarded with leisurely day sails, a choice of numerous anchorages, historic sites, parks, and harbor towns along a shoreline that is framed by the Adirondack High Peaks

and Green and White Mountain ranges.

[Fort Ticonderoga](#) located just north of Chipman Point, is a good example of the region's rich historic claim. Time your visit to coincide with one of the many special events, including reenactments, and museum and garden tours. Ticonderoga is a secure, north wind anchorage, with a quick dinghy row to shore. Look for the path that leads to the wooden stairs at the southwest corner of the Fort.









(To be continued in Part 2. Lake Champlain Anchorages- Crown Point to Westport.)

Gracie Emmett DE 32 is for sale. Email: de32ge@gmail.com(see following link for extensive photos and detailed boat inventory):

<http://downeasteryachts.com/forums/boat-profiles/de32-gracie-emmett>

