

# Vermont History at Home

Champ, the Lake Monster

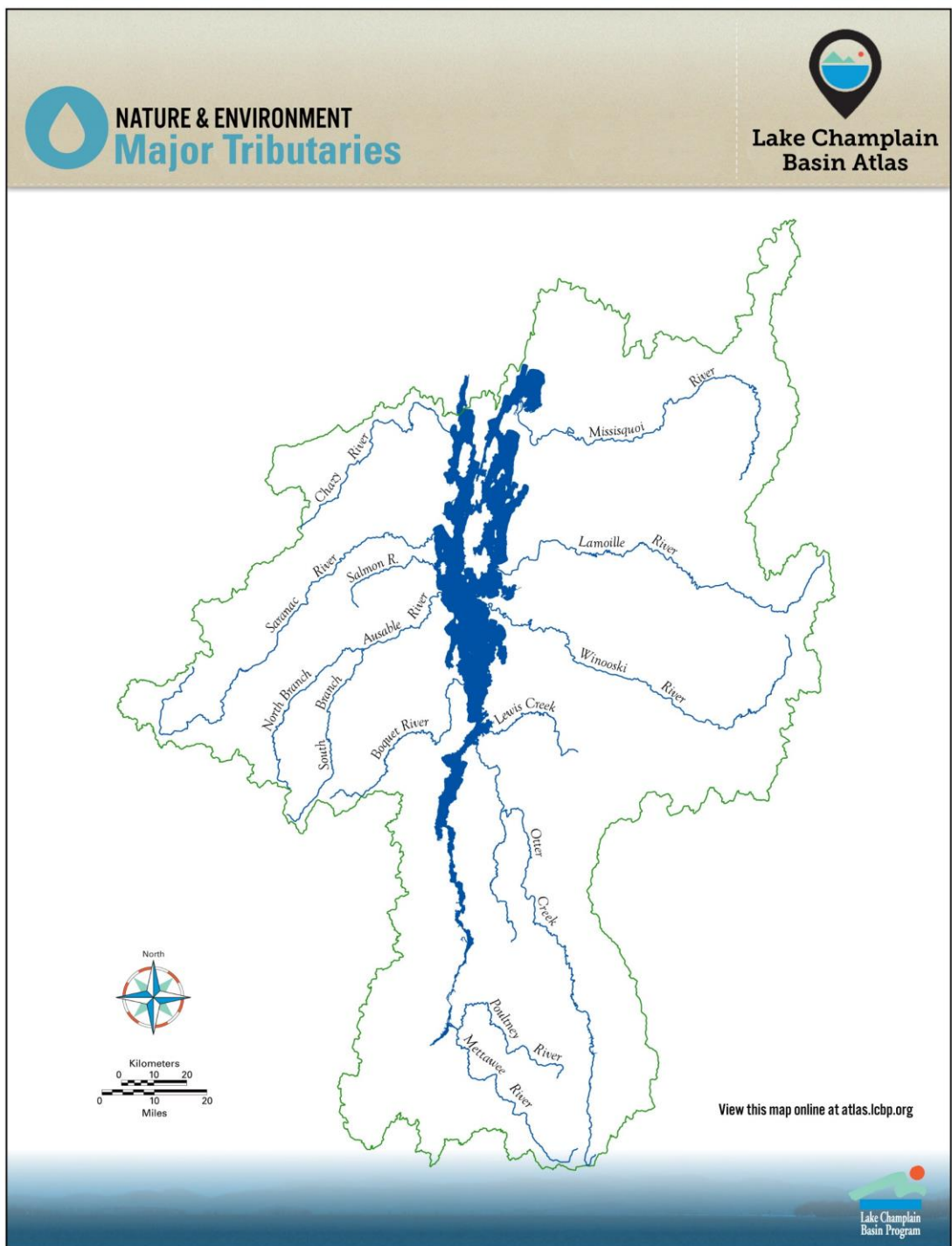


The Abenaki name for Lake Champlain is “Bitawbagok” which means “the lake between.”

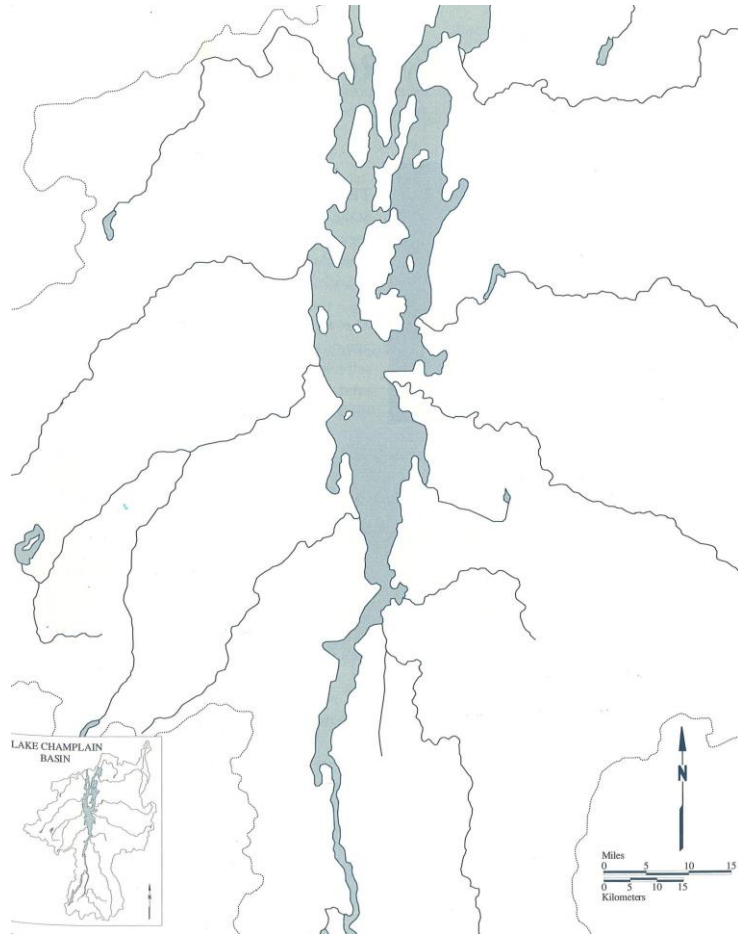
What land is the lake between?

What do you know about Lake Champlain?

<https://atlas.lcbp.org/nature-environment/watersheds-and-tributaries/>



New York



Vermont

Watch this video, called “Nebi, Abenaki Ways of Knowing,” to learn more about the creation of “Bitawbagok” (also known as Lake Champlain) and its importance to Abenaki people:

<https://www.uvm.edu/seagrant/resources/videos/nebi-abenaki-ways-knowing-water>

Why does the underwater serpent swim in the lake?

Map from This Lake Alive: Chapter 4: [https://store.shelburnefarms.org/product/this\\_lake\\_alive/education\\_resources](https://store.shelburnefarms.org/product/this_lake_alive/education_resources)

In the early 1600s, Samuel de Champlain made over 20 trips between France and what he called “New France.” The land was not new to the indigenous people who had lived on the land for thousands of years. In 1609, Samuel de Champlain travelled to what he called “Lake Champlain.” He kept a journal during his travels and drew maps, like this one.



Look at this map. Can you find Lake Champlain? Hint, it's near the bottom of the map.

Can you find the drawing of a sea creature in what is now Hudson Bay in Canada?

<https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/29628/carte-geographique-de-la-nouvelle-franse-en-son-vray-moridia-champlain>

Champlain described a chaousarou (sea creature) he saw in the water. It has "jaws two feet and a half long, and a double set of very sharp and dangerous teeth. The form of the body resembles that of a pike, and it is armed with scales that a thrust of a dagger cannot pierce; and it is of a silver grey color. The point of the snout is like that of a hog. This fish makes war on all others in the lakes and river."

Some people think what Champlain saw was a gar fish, not a sea monster. Does this gar fish match Champlain's description? Could this be Champ?

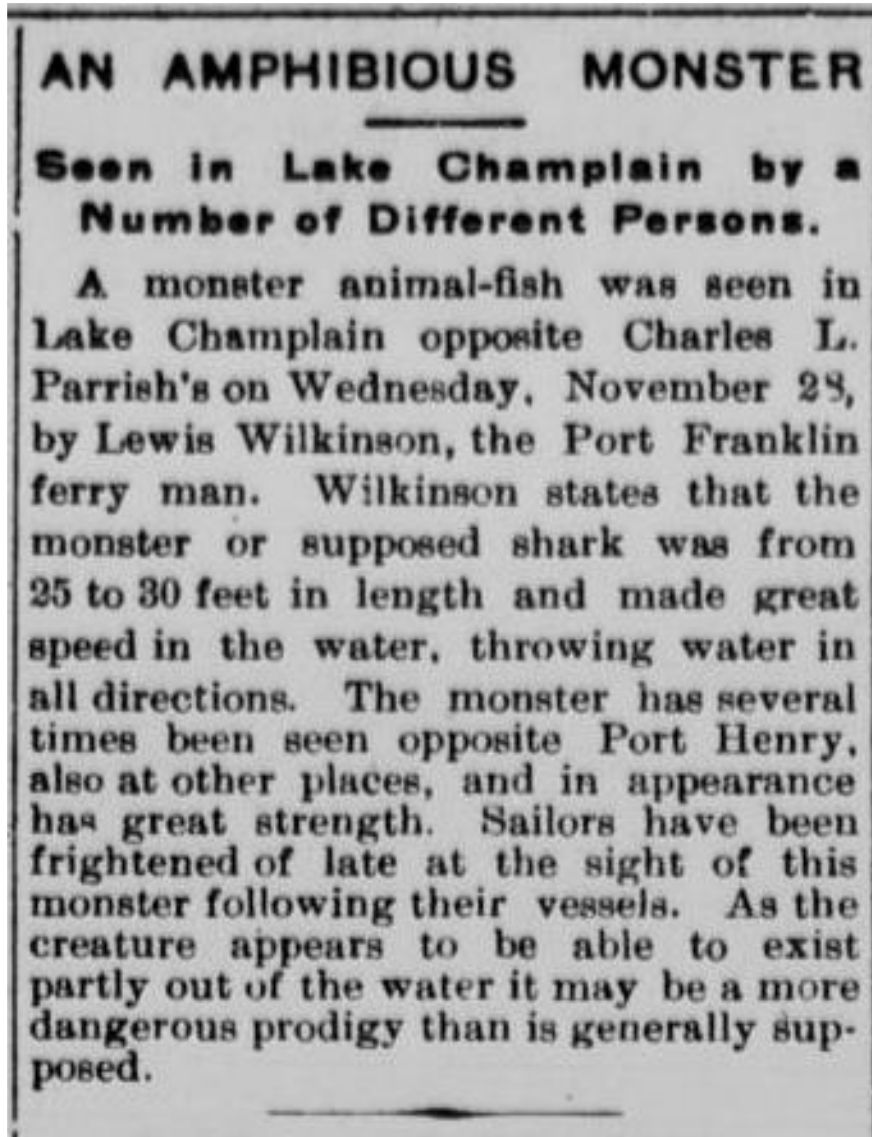
More about gar fish:  
<https://www.lakechamplaincommittee.org/learn/news/item/chaousarou/>



"Gar shedd" by I, Omnitarian. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gar\\_shedd.jpg#/media/File:Gar\\_shedd.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gar_shedd.jpg#/media/File:Gar_shedd.jpg)

Over the years, other people have seen a sea monster living in Lake Champlain.

Is this newspaper article evidence of Champ?



Middlebury register. December 14, 1906

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93063557/1906-12-14/ed-1/seq-3/>

Are these photos evidence of Champ, the lake monster?



Read this article about other sightings of a sea monster in Lake Champlain.  
<https://www.lakechamplainregion.com/heritage/champ>

What do you think? Is there a sea monster in Lake Champlain?

<https://www.milb.com/vermont/ballpark/mascotchamp>



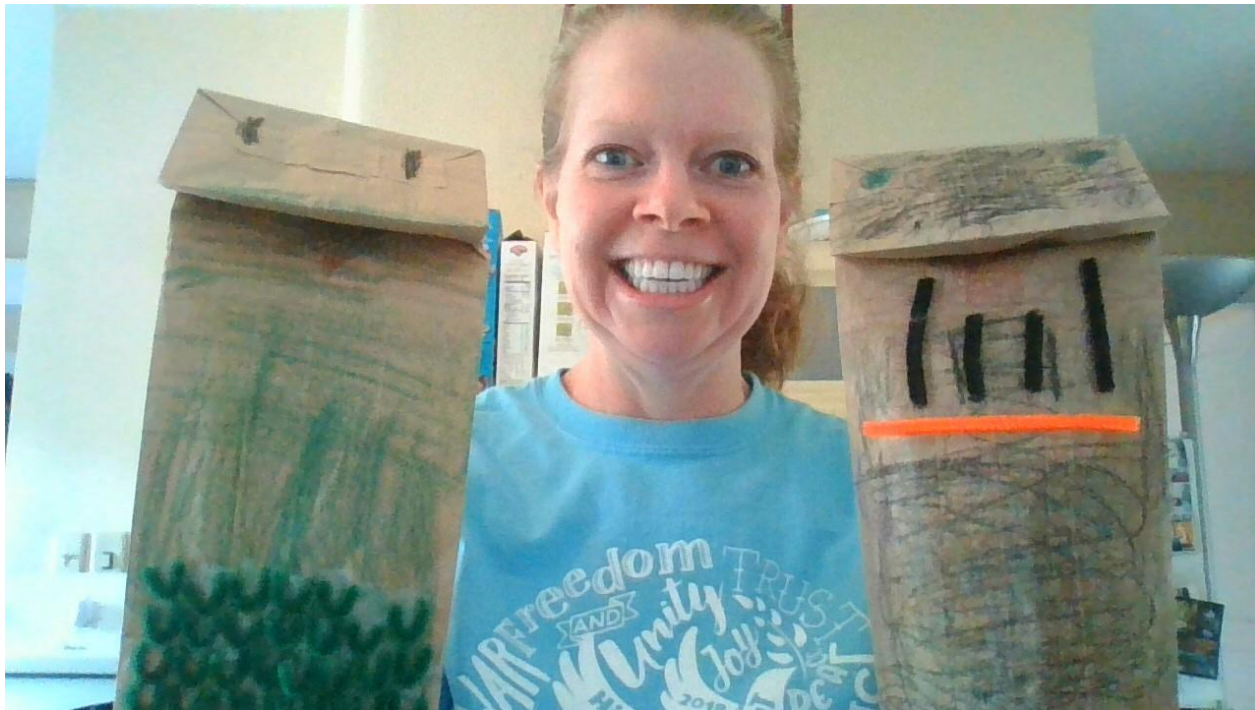
Is this what you think Champ looks like? This sock puppet was made in 1959 for the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's travel on Lake Champlain in 1609. It's part of the Vermont Historical Society collections. We really like the jingle bell nose!

<https://www.vermonthistoryexplorer.org/explorer/things>



Have you seen Champ? What do you imagine this sea monster looks like?

Make a puppet that looks like Champ. You could use a paper bag or an old sock. Use whatever craft supplies you have to make your sea monster. These are some pictures of Champ puppets made by Vermont students.



The next time you are near Lake Champlain, make sure you look for Champ!