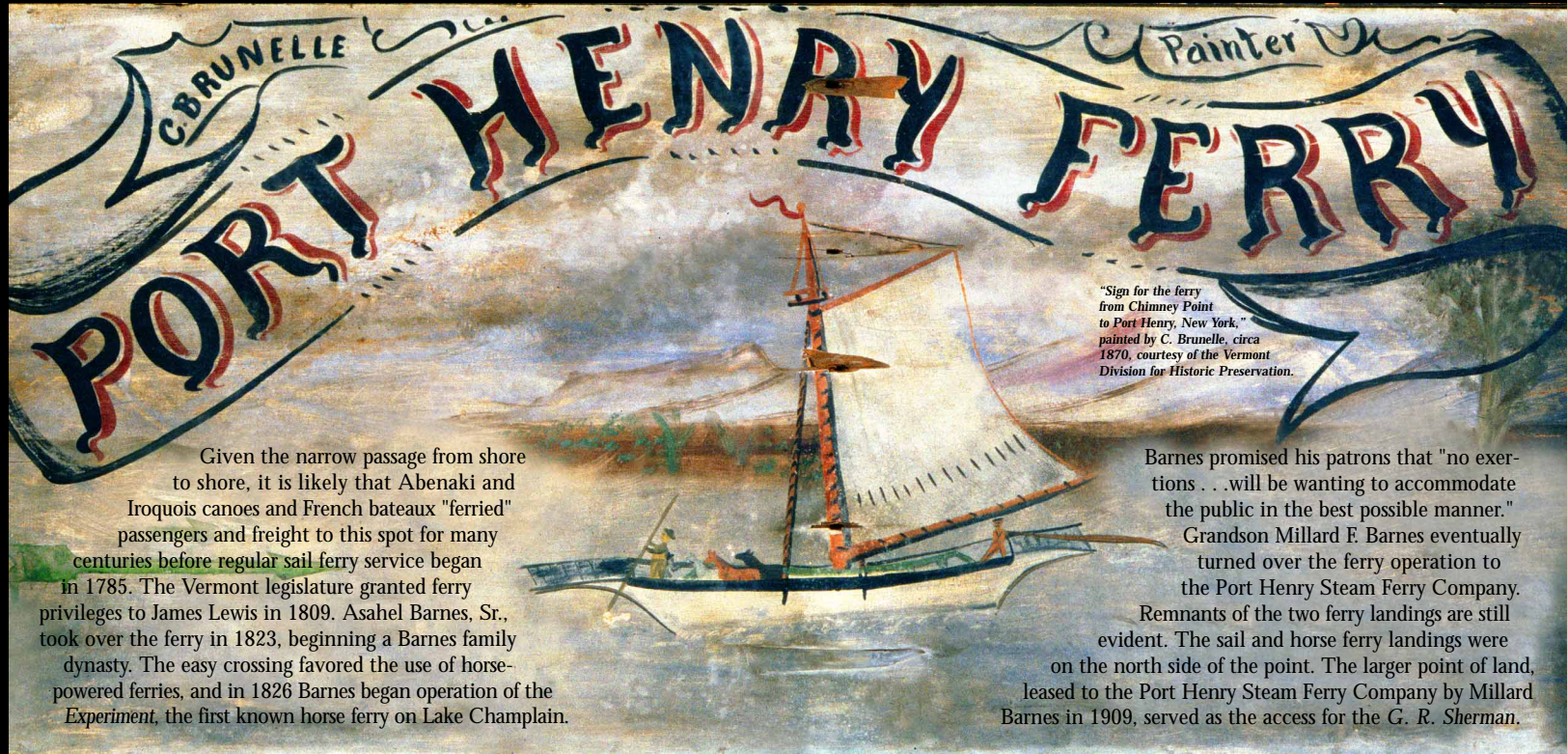
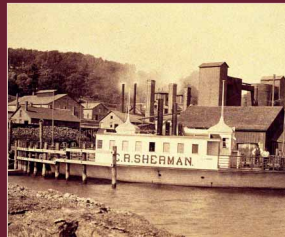


Out with the Old, In with the New



Given the narrow passage from shore to shore, it is likely that Abenaki and Iroquois canoes and French bateaux "ferried" passengers and freight to this spot for many centuries before regular sail ferry service began in 1785. The Vermont legislature granted ferry privileges to James Lewis in 1809. Asahel Barnes, Sr., took over the ferry in 1823, beginning a Barnes family dynasty. The easy crossing favored the use of horse-powered ferries, and in 1826 Barnes began operation of the Experiment, the first known horse ferry on Lake Champlain.

Barnes promised his patrons that "no exertions . . . will be wanting to accommodate the public in the best possible manner." Grandson Millard F. Barnes eventually turned over the ferry operation to the Port Henry Steam Ferry Company. Remnants of the two ferry landings are still evident. The sail and horse ferry landings were on the north side of the point. The larger point of land, leased to the Port Henry Steam Ferry Company by Millard Barnes in 1909, served as the access for the G. R. Sherman.



Courtesy of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

Steaming Across

Docked here in this photograph at Port Henry, the G. R. Sherman was a double-ended propeller steamer. It could transport four horses and buggies, four cars, or two teams of horses drawing loads of hay. It made its last crossing between Chimney Point and Port Henry just before the ribbon was cut to open the new Champlain Bridge.



Courtesy of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

The Crew

The G. R. Sherman crew was famous by the time of the boat's retirement in 1929. Israel King-dollar, the first mate and engineer, wore a red flannel Union suit all year long. When bridge steelworkers cruelly tossed nuts and bolts onto the deck of the Sherman during its final days, Captain T. E. Weatherwax would shout from under his bristling mustache: "We'll run if we run for 25 cents!"



Courtesy of the Lake Champlain Bridge Commission, Vermont State Archives.

New Crossing

The opening of the Champlain Bridge in 1929 spelled the immediate demise of the Chimney Point ferry. The Bridge Commission had a replica steam ferry built to be set ablaze during the opening ceremony, an "offering" to the new mode of transportation.