

MYSTERIES: If Champlain's Anchor was found on Grand Manan, where is it now?



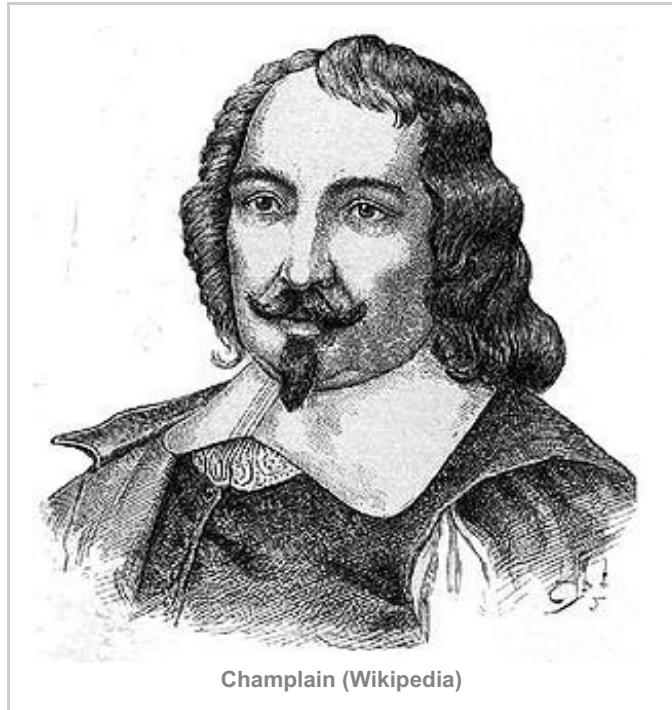
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One of our excellent author-historians published a great book many years ago called History of islands & islets in the Bay of Fundy, Charlotte County, New Brunswick, 1876. In it is this intriguing section:

Champlain speaks of having anchored at one time near the Southern Head of the island (Grand Manan). and it appears he left the best proof possible that he did so; for, in the year 1842, Mr. Walter B. McLaughlin, whose residence is at Southern Head, found the remain of a large anchor that must have lain beneath the salt water wave, subject to the corroding hand of rusty time, for over 200 years! Our informant states as his opinion, circumstances tending to confirm it, that the bold navigator, Champlain; must have run his vessel aground in one of those "fog-mills," which almost invariably make an annual visit, enveloping for the time being the entire island, its islets, and the surrounding waters, in a pall of density so thick as to render it impenetrable to vision. Even "Peeping Tom," were he here in a fog-mill, would have to acknowledge his poor eye-sight. Mr. McLaughlin stated that the shank of this anchor was eleven feet long; and, at one part of it -the shank- it was seven inches in diameter and although it must have originally weighed some 14 cwt., it was reduced by the long lapse of time, subject to rust and the action of the sea, to less than 300 lbs – an indubitable evidence that, over two centuries had passed away, with all the strange and mighty changes which the old and the new world, the easter and the western hemisphere, have experienced~ since Champlain lost his anchor at Southern Head, Grand Manan!

But where is this anchor today? The Walter B. McLaughlin Gallery at the Grand Manan Museum features an awesome array of artifacts, but I don't see a very old anchor in the pictures. I do remember an anchor on the lawn a few years ago but that as I recall was more modern. So there are many questions.



Champlain (Wikipedia)

Was this really an anchor from one of Champlain's ships? Seems that just might be so. Here is Champlain's translated words on this anchor loss ... note the second paragraph. As for the picture, this approximates an anchor from that period. It's not a picture of the actual anchor.

VOYAGES OF SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN -1606

On the first day of March, Pont Grave ordered a barque of seventeen or eighteen tons to be fitted up, which was ready on the 15th, in order to go on a voyage of discovery along the coast of Florida.[^] With this view, we set out on the 16th following, but were obliged to put in at an island to the south of Manan, having gone that day eighteen leagues. We anchored in a sandy cove, exposed to the sea and the south wind/ The latter increased, during the night, to such an impetuosity that we could not stand by our anchor, and were compelled, without choice, to go ashore, at the mercy of God and the waves.

The latter were so heavy and furious that while we were attaching the buoy to the anchor, so as to cut the cable at the hawse-hole, it did not give us time, but broke straightway of itself.

The wind and the sea cast us as the wave receded upon a little rock, and we awaited only the moment to see our barque break up, and to save ourselves, if possible, upon its fragments. In these desperate straits, after we had received several waves, there came one so large and fortunate for us that it carried us over the rock, and threw us on to a little sandy beach, which insured us for this time from shipwreck.

The barque being on shore, we began at once to unload what there was in her, in order to ascertain where the damage was, which was not so great as we expected. She was speedily repaired by the diligence of Champdore, her master.

Having been put in order, she was reloaded; and we waited for fair weather and until the fury of the sea should abate, which was not until the end of four days, namely, the 21st of March, when we set out from this miserable place, and proceeded to Port aux Coquilles, seven or eight leagues distant.

Is it in the Grand Manan Museum collection? Did it find its way to another museum? Is it hidden away in a barn somewhere? Or ... has it disappeared totally?

It would be great to hear from anyone who has some answers.