

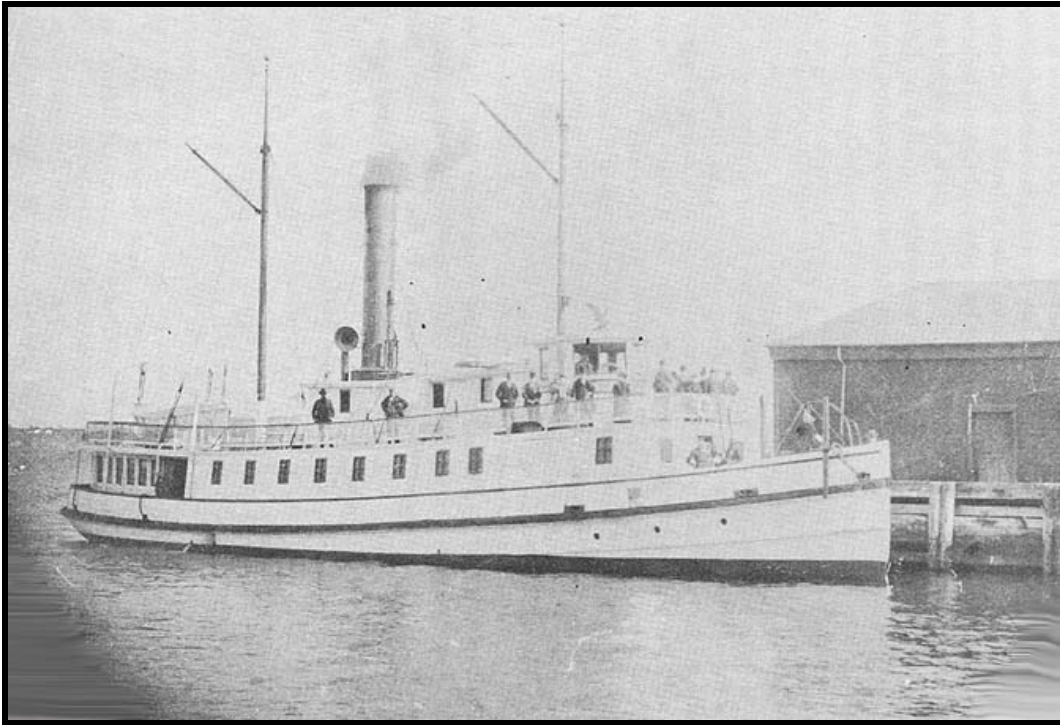
Grand Manan Ferry Service 1884 - Present

Foreword

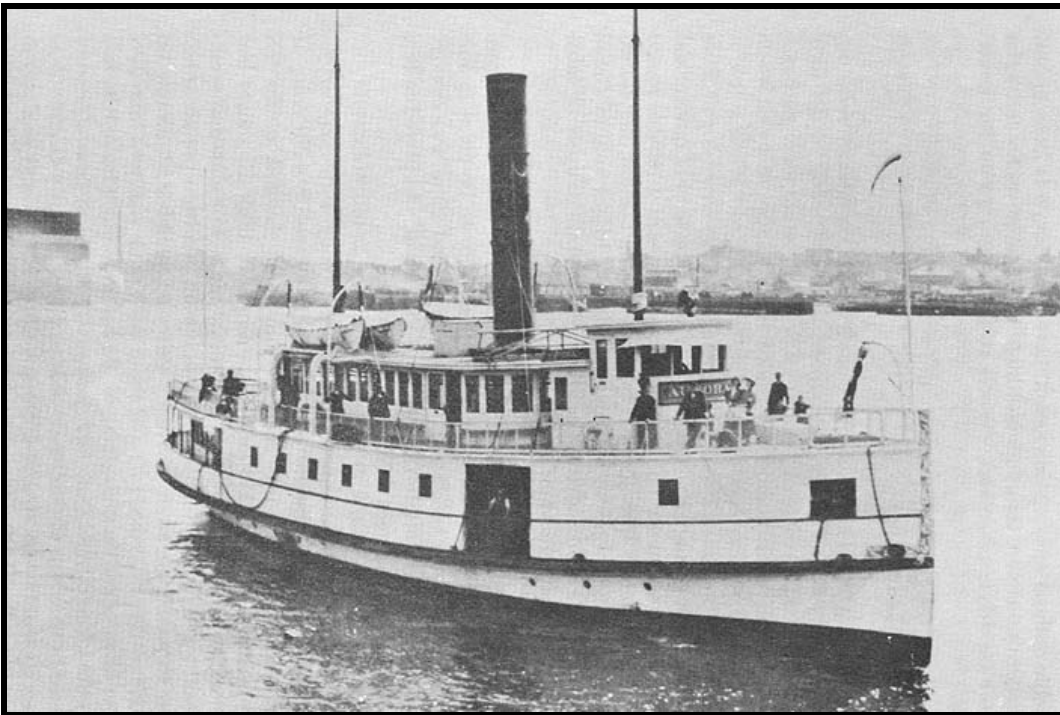
"Manan" comes from the Maliseet-Passamaquoddy-Penobscot Indians term "man-an-ook" meaning "*island place*" or "*the island*". Situated just over 30km off the south-western coast of New Brunswick, Grand Manan is the largest of the Fundy Islands and home to a population of just over 2,400 people. The main industry is fishing, main lobster and herring. However, for over a century, the island has attracted visitors from all over the world. Artist and photographers voyage to the island each year to capture the timeless fishing villages and roughed shoreline; flocks of bird watchers visit the island in search of unique shorebirds; and nature-loving people travel to Grand Manan with hopes of spotting whales, especially the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale, at home in their natural habitat. Grand Manan offer all visitors a chance to step away from the world's fast pace and a chance to relax in the simple life of an island community.

Some of the first settlers arrived on the island in the 1790s. Some of the most common surnames are: Brown, Green, Ingalls, Ingersoll and Urquhart. A scheduled ferry service to Grand Manan Island has been in operation since 1884. However, long before any ferry, people have traveled to and from the island via fishing and supply vessels. Today, the ferry journey to Grand Manan Island from Blacks Harbour is approximately 1.5 hours.

The following information help explore the history of the ferry service to Grand Manan through a variety of sources.



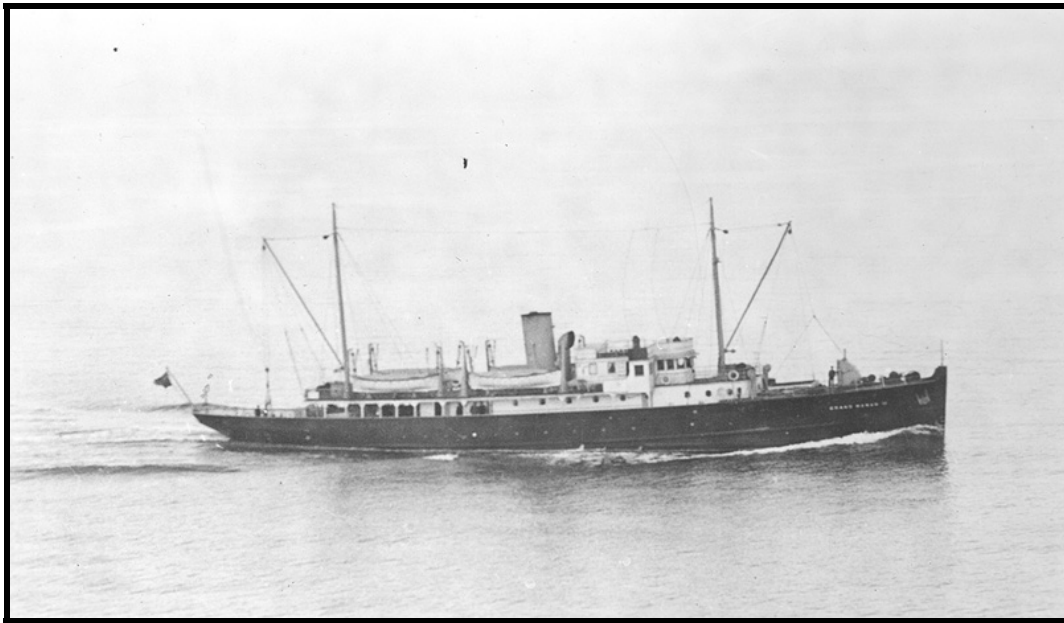
(above) S.S. Flushing
Service 1884-1900



(above) M.V. Grand Manan
Service 1900-1930
Formerly the Aurora



(above) M.V. Grand Manan II aka "*The Iron Duke*"
Service 1930-1940



(above) M.V. Grand Manan III
Service 1945-1965
Formerly the H.M.C.S. Elk



(above) M.V. Grand Manan IV
Service 1965-2011



(above) M.V. Grand Manan V
Service 1990-present

Grand Manan Ferries, 1884 to 1965

By L. K. Ingersoll, published in the Saint Croix Courier, July 15, 1965

Following a long period of negotiation, the people of this Island community are assured a new ferry within the coming months. Authorized in April of last year (1964), the official announcement covered details of a 3½ million dollar "package deal" to include two terminals, a new vessel to ply the long established service on a new route. At this time, it is understood the construction of the ferry, began in November, is well ahead of schedule at St. John Drydock, while more recently, contracts have been signed with Diamond Construction Company for building the new docking facilities. Work on the terminals is now underway.

It has been suggested that such progress has been made with the ship's hull that it may be ready before the docks are fitted for complete service. But modern technologies will assist in terminal construction and even the most severe sceptics among us will no doubt be amazed at the speed with which this phase of the project will advance.

Side by side with such good news is the fact that, with inauguration of the new service, old connections will be broken, old ties severed, and certain segments of society saddened and disgruntled by the new order. Unfortunately, this seems to go along in progress; old ties retain their fundamental hold long after the practical value has been dissipated. Even progress has its price.

The new link will have two terminals only and will thus provide the Island's first real ferry service. The ferry will shuttle between North Head and the nearest convent place on the mainland, at a spot near Blacks Harbour, on an announced two trip per day during the remainder of the year. This will give islanders ready access to the mainland, especially for movement of vehicles and, after nearly a century of criss-cross or triangular routes will bring order to the business of mainlanders getting to Grand Manan. All they most do is present themselves at the mainland terminal and the service will take over from there. Mainland merchants, with goods to sell, will also find this a more convenient avenue than it might appear when looking through the glass of the past eighty years.

A glance at the history of the Island-mainland service might be of interest just at this time so that we may judge just how well it has kept in line with the gradual modernization of the community.

Just eighty-one years ago in April 1884, the people of Grand Manan were proud indeed to welcome their own steamship, a vessel that was to open the first, year round, regular service. The doughty little "S.S. Flushing" was much more than a new transportation link; it was in truth, a symbol of a new era.

Confederation was still relatively new. The telegraph was linking the nation along with the locomotive. The telephone was catching on. Grand Manan's census, in 1881, had not only passed the 2,000 mark for the first time, but had reached 2,616, up 750 in ten years. The local smoked herring industry had grown to be one of the largest of its kind in the world; there were several canneries, and a growing fleet of fishing vessels. And, in 1884 the Island community was exactly 100 years old. It was time to join the rest of Canada on a permanent basis!

From 1784, when the company of Loyalist settle on Ross Island, to 1839 mail and passenger services were haphazard at best. Mainland fishing boats came in from time to time and locally owned craft made trips to the mainland ports when necessary. British naval vessels called here on fishery patrols and on the lookout for "contraband runners". Passengers travelled by way of chartered vessels or "caught a place" with one of those "just leaving"; mail was often passed from hand to hand, and from boat to boat until it reached destination.

Post office services were the responsibility of the British Government in those days and New Brunswick was little more than a colony of the far-flung empire. However by 1830 the population of Grand Manan had grown near the 1,000 mark and the New Brunswick Legislature approved a petition to grant 250 pounds sterling as a subsidy for two "packet boats" to operate weekly between St. Andrews, Deer Island, Indian Island, Campobello and Grand Manan.

A Provincial Commission was named to operate the service, providing its own boats, and it was no accident that Wilford Fisher, a merchant and boat builder at Woodward's Cove, then the bustling center of commerce here, Harris Hatch and Thomas Wyer of St. Andrews, the latter a member of the Legislature, were entrusted with this enterprise. The Assembly Journals reveal that "Capt. Lamb" was skipper of the first subsidized packet, probably the same gentleman who had been first keeper of Gannet Rock Light from 1831 to 1835. The Commissioners paid him 150 pounds a year for looking after the mails, sundry freights and the few persons who travelled the route.

In 1841 the subsidy was cut to 150 pounds, the next year to 75, and in 1843 refused "altogether due to the present state of the Province". Renewed in 1845, however, at 100 pounds, it was paid at the rate presumably until Confederation (1867) when the mails were taken over by the Federal government. In 1848, a petition signed by Church Meigs, Rev. James Neales, Cochran Craig and forty others, asked for a weekly trip to Saint John but this was refused.

The growth of the postal services in Grand Manan is tied in closely with the transport system; mails were the basic item for which subsidies were paid, or increased, and even today form the broad basis for subsidization. A "Way Office", the Island's first "post office", was opened at Woodward's Cove on December 26, 1845, and the enterprising Mr. Fisher named first postmaster. The mails were not heavy. A report for 1852, the last year Mr. Fisher held the position, show he collected 3 pounds, 10 shillings and 10 pence in revenue (something in the nature of \$20 in 1965 rates!), handles an average five letters and 52 newspapers a week out of an average of one bag of mail weekly. By this time, too, New Brunswick had been given full and responsible control over its own affairs, including a Post Office department which it operated until 1867, though this made little, if any difference in the local system.

By 1867 the volume of mail had increased to about three bags weekly though the central post office was still a long from big business. Joseph Lakeman, who had succeeded Wilford Fisher as Post Master, was drawing a salary of \$60 a year and John Burke who in 1865 had opened the first post office at North Head drew a wage of \$3.50 for his year's work; a year later Ebenezer Gaskill was paid \$8.52 for the same services.

When steam ferries began to be available, North Head replaced Woodward's Cove as the main post office center, and probably by 1880 the steamers stopped making visits to the Woodward's Cove terminal entirely. For a number of years following Confederation, the Island was served by the "S.S. Dominion", a vessel owned by mainland companies and operated fairly regularly during the summer months when traffic warranted, leaving much to be desired at other time of the year.

Finally, a group of local pioneers decided the Island could best be served by a Grand Manan ship. Among these men were Eben Gaskill, Allan Otty Guptill, Isaac Newton, Nelson M. Small, John A. Ingersoll, Frank Ingersoll, William E. Tatton, H. Hamilton Bancroft, William L. Kent, and Nelson M. Wormell, who with others formed the "Grand Manan Steam Boat Company", incorporated (1883) with a capital of \$20,000 divided into 800 shares of \$25 each.

Local legend persist there was an earlier incorporation, but no official record has so far been found to support this belief. At any rate, in 1884 the Company was sufficiently launched to send Capt. James Pettes and Capt. John Ingersoll to New York to buy a suitable steamer. They selected the two-year old "S.S. Flushing", then lately taken off a Flushing, Long Island and New York City route, took aboard charter cargo for Lubec, Maine and proceeded up the New England coast.

By mid-April the steamer was tied up at the Gaskill wharf at North Head where carpenters, painters and steam fitters went to work to prepare her for the Bay of Fundy trials. Finally, on Dominion Day, 1884, Capt. John Ingersoll proudly blew three whistles and moved out of North Head harbour for the first run to the mainland.

The service later developed into four trips per week, with calls at Welchpool, Eastport, St. Andrews, St. Stephen and Saint John – and often including Deer Island. The initial subsidies for the "Flushing" totalled \$6,500 annually, with \$4,000 from the Dominion government and the remained from the Provincial Treasury.

The "Flushing" was in use for nearly sixteen years and then sold for conversion as a tug boat. In 1900 the Company bought a 130-foot New York excursion boat, the "S.S. Aurora" and converted her for the Island run. In 1911, rebuilt at the Mullhall Shipyards in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, and rechristened, this ship became the first "Grand Manan".

Oddly enough, the records grow dim at this point. However an interview granted by the ship's captain following his retirement, confirms the fact that in 1914 a majority interest in the assets of the Grand Manan Steam Boat Company was sold to Saint John investors and management transferred from Grand Manan to that city. The acquisition of steam boat companies became quite a hobby in the Port City; in 1929 a new company called the Eastern Canada Coastal Steamships Limited amalgamated a dozen of the small, local transport companies located around the Bay, including the Grand Manan system. One of the company's first moves was to build a steel ship for the island route and as "M.V. Grand Manan II" in February, 1930; the new vessel (with under-deck capacity for 14 cars) replaced the old and storied "Aurora - Grand Manan I". The late Scott D. Guptill, an Island MLA for 24 years, represented the Grand Manan investors in the Eastern Canada Coastal venture as a member of the Board of Directors.

It may have been more than a coincidence that the "Iron Duke", as the motor vessel was often called, was also sold during wartime. During the greater part of World War II the Island was in touch with the outside world through the Cann Line of old wooden vessels (a fleet of Nova Scotia steamers that had been acquired by the Eastern Canada Coastal were slow, outdated hull that made travel a miserable and time staking effort. Then in 1946, the war over, with Eastern Canada Coastal replace by Saint John Marine Transports Limited, "H.M.C.S. Elk" was purchased from War Assets Corporation and refitted for the route as "M.V. Grand Manan III", the vessel in operation today (1965). "Elk" was a name given the ship when it was placed in the Royal Canadian Navy as a coastal patrol and naval training unit and had been a gift to the Government from US interest. Built in Newport News, Virginia, in 1926 as yacht, and first christened "Arcadia", Mrs. Margaret Hardwick of Boston had been the last private owner. As the "Arcadia", the ship had been used for many "extensive cruises, going whaling in the Pacific, and on one occasion a member of the party caught a world-record sailfish from her on a cruise to the Galapagos," according to an informant living in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Relieved of calls at St. Stephen, Welchpool, Eastport and Deer Island and that had slowed down the first regular service, and powered to operate at 14 knots, the Grand Manan III greatly improved mail and passenger transport, insofar as time is concerned. Shortly after being placed on the route, Ottawa assured the Island people the vessel would be used only until "steel became available in quantity for resumption of shipbuilding for coastal services". The inconveniences of cramped vehicle cargo space (nine cars) and lack of adequate passenger accommodation seemed a small sacrifice and as the years ticked off men who knew admired her "good qualities as a sea boat," and the efficient manner in which she was handled by officers and crew, despite the obvious handicaps of using a pleasure yacht as a commercial, workaday ship.

Two Nova Scotians, brothers and veteran mariners have commanded the ship for most of her service on the Grand Manan run. Capt. J. C. Merriam was the first, to be succeeded on retirement by Capt. G. E. Merriam. The latter's sudden death while on a regular run to St. Andrews was a shock to all his many friends. The vacancy was filled by Capt. A. H. Ells, also with a long record of seamanship, who is the present commander (1965).

A year ago, actually on April 18, 1964, at a dinner jointly chaired by the Liberal Club and the Board of Trade at Grand Harbour, the official announcement was made concerning the new ferry service. Speaking for the federal government: Hon. Hedard J. Robichaud, Minister of Fisheries and New Brunswick's representative in the federal cabinet, and Dr. A. M. A. McLean, MP for Charlotte; for the provincial government, Hon. Dr. Henry G. Irwin, Minister of Education and MLA for Charlotte, and Leon G. Small, MLA for the Islands. The new vessel would be 172 feet long, with a beam of 40 feet, would accommodate 22 cars and 100 passengers, would run between North Head and Blacks Harbour on a twice daily schedule.

The announcement was made just twenty years following the organization of the Board of Trade, a group that had come into being almost primarily to press for improved transportation facilities. In the two decades, first with one government, then with another, now with opposites at Fredericton and Ottawa, then with straight channels from Grand Manan to the East Block, the petitions and delegations had been routed. Private individuals took up the battle; local political groups did the same.

Unusual tactics were attempted, highlighted, perhaps, by several public spirited men who felt they could solve the problem chartering the Grand Manan III on a lovely Sunday and bringing Rt. Hon. C. D. Howe, the Czar of Ottawa, to the Island from his summer home in St. Andrews. The result of the trip: thanks for a lovely outing, and a bill for the charter service.

That experience, like all of the two decades of letters and communication otherwise, proved one point; that everyone agreed a ship should be built expressly for the Island route. Nothing else.

How the tumblers eventually fell into place to unlock the massive door of the "vault" of the Federal Treasury Board, will be told one day. Care will be taken that some future historian will "discover" the story without difficulty.

In view of all that the "Flushing" symbolized, one would expect her arrival in 1884 had been greeted with headlines. William and John Lorimer were publishing a Grand Manan weekly at the time, but "The Island News" in its issue of April 18 of that momentous year chose to tuck a little announcement of the event in the middle of the "Shipping Notes" on page two, as follows: "Arriving of the Flushing, Easter Monday, April 14, 1884, was a day of great rejoicing at North Head, on account of the arrival of the Island Steamer Flushing. The day was fine, and a large number

of people collected on Gaskill's Wharf, to meet and greet the steamer's advent in the Island waters. Flags flying and cannon roaring added their quota to the Flushing's welcome to her Island home. The Flushing will not go on her route for a short time. She needs painting and other fixings."

That was all. Perhaps Editor Lorimer was reserving his headlines for more dramatic news. At any rate, from the distance of eighty-one years the event appears to have been one of the highlights of the Island's history.



(above) M.V. Grand Manan III
At dock on Grand Manan Island, circa late 1950s.



(left) Capt. John A. Ingersoll

Captained the "Flushing", "Aurora" and
"Grand Manan"

Capt. John A. Ingersoll, son of Anson Ingersoll and Eunice Benson, was born at Seal Cove, Grand Manan, on March 19, 1850. Died, at the age of 87, on May 10th, 1937. He is buried in Seal Cove with his wife Madge.

Grand Manan Ferry Makes Initial Run

Saint Croix Courier; June 9, 1966

The Grand Manan Ferry made her first run to Blacks Harbour on Monday, May 30, docking at the new terminal in that Port, thus making the end of an era of ferry service between Grand Manan and St. Andrews dating back more than a century. The S.S. Flushing operated by the Grand Manan Steamship Company was the last craft to serve the island on a regular schedule followed by *S. S. Aurora* renamed *S. S. Grand Manan*. The *M.V. Grand Manan II* operated by Eastern Canada Coastal Steamship came into service in 1936. In 1946 Saint John Marine Transport took over the route with *M.V. Grand Manan III* which continued until the present new ferry "*Grand Manan*" took over in 1965. The new ferry operated by Coastal Transport accommodates 22 cars and one hundred passengers making a twice a day run between North Head and Blacks Harbour during the summer months. At present only one run per day is being made until the automobile ramps are ready for use in Blacks Harbour, probably before July. It is expected that the ramp at North Head terminal will be into use very soon.



Grand Manan Ferry Service Timeline:

- 1839 - Packet service started between St. Andrew's and Woodward's Cove.
- 1884 - M.V. Flushing began service operated by Grand Manan Steamboat Co. Ltd.
- 1889 - M.V. John Cann and M.V. LaTour fill in service.
- 1900 - M.V. Aurora began service, until 1910 when it was condemned and sent to be refitted. It was back in service in 1911, renamed **M.V. Grand Manan**.
- 1929 - Eastern Canada Coastal Steamship Ltd. bought Grand Manan Steamboat Co. Ltd.
- 1930 - **M.V. Grand Manan II** (The Iron Duke) was built and replaced M.V. Grand Manan (drive-on, drive-off capability for 12 cars).
- 1940 - M.V. Grand Manan II sold and replaced by a number of vessels including fishing boats, tugboat M.V. Mohawk, and M.V. Keith Cann, M.V. Robert Cann, M.V. Elizabeth Cann which carried only one car on their deck hatch.
- 1945 - Eastern Canada Coastal Steamships Ltd. replaced with Saint John Marine Transport Ltd. and **M.V. Grand Manan III** began service (formerly HMCS Elk), six and later nine cars, loaded by winch, and up to 50 passengers.
- 1952 - Stewart Morse began regular passenger service, primarily for school children, which latest until 1963.
- 1964 - Lester Carroll carried passengers aboard the M.V. Sojourner and also a few cars in a barge towed alongside. This service continued until 1977 when it the S.S. Lady White Head started service.
- 1965 - Drive-on, drive-off service restored to the island when the 25-vehicle **S.S. Grand Manan IV ("Grand Manan")** began its route.
- 1977 - S.S. Lady White Head began regular ferry service; owned by the province and now operated by Coastal Transport Ltd.
- 1978 - M.V. Lady Menane added for summer service, 24 cars and 80 passengers.
- 1990 - **M.V. Grand Manan V** began service, 64 cars and 300 passengers; M.V. Lady Menane sold and M.V. Grand Manan IV refitted for summer service only; Coastal Transport Ltd. operates ferry service.
- 1999 - New ferry wharf built at North Head terminal. The new terminal beings use in February 2000.
- 2000, 2002 - M.V. Nada employed as second ferry during refit of M.V. Grand Manan V
- 2004 - M.V. Transgulf (formerly the M.V. Nada) employed as second ferry during refit of M.V. Grand Manan V
- 2004 - Construction begins on a new terminal facility in Blacks Harbour. The new terminal opens in 2007.
- 2006 - The M.V. Grand Manan V ferry schedule adds a fourth, year-round crossing.
- 2010 - M.V. Astron, a 269ft. ship from Newfoundland, is temporarily assigned to the ferry route during April-May.
- 2011, January 14 - New 82-vehicle ferry, **M.V. Grand Manan Adventure**, built by Eastern ShipBuilding Group of Panama City, Florida was launched from dry-docks in Florida.
- 2011, May 18 - M.V. Grand Manan V runs ground near the dock in Blacks Harbour.
- 2013 - M.V. Grand Manan IV is sold by Province of New Brunswick to Fritz The Cat SA.



Vessel Overviews:

Grand Manan Adventure

DOT Registration No.: 835549
Lloyd's Register No: 9558103
Year Built: 2011 (Eastern ShipBuilding Group, Panama City, Florida)
Length: 80.28 meters (263.38 feet)
Breadth: 18.50 meters (60.69 feet)
Depth: 13.75 meters (45.11 feet)
Tonnage: 1974 tons (net) to 6580 tons (gross)
Engines: 2 diesel, twin-screw (4474 propulsion power)
Speed: 14 knots

Grand Manan V

DOT Registration No.: 396006
Lloyd's Register No: 8902591
Year Built: 1990 (Bodewes Scheepswerf "Volharding", Netherlands/Holland)
Length: 70.32 meters (230.71 feet)
Breadth: 15.03 meters (49.31 feet)
Depth: 9.60 meters (31.50 feet)
Tonnage: 2,934 tons (net) to 3,832 tons (gross)
Engines: 2 diesel, twin-screw (2370 propulsion power)
Speed: 14.5 knots

Grand Manan IV ("Grand Manan" or "Blacks Boat")

DOT Registration No.: 322563
Lloyd's Register No.: 6523535
Year Built: 1965 (Saint John Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., NB, Canada)
Length: 51.05 meters (167.49 feet)
Breadth: 12.22 meters (40.10 feet)
Depth: 7.56 meters (24.81 feet)
Tonnage: 896 tons (net) to 1,443 tons (gross)
Engines: 2 diesel, twin-screw (2500 propulsion power)
Speed: 13.0 knots

Notes: Currently owned and operated by Fitz the Cat SA (owner Fritz Breckner) of Columbia, South America. Rechristened "San Blas", the ferry is planned to offer service between Cartagena, Columbia and Carti, Panama. The boat was repainted completely white.

Lady Menane

DOT Registration No.: 329382
Year Built: 1973 (Verreault Navigation, PQ, Canada)
Length: 52.99 meters (173.85 feet)
Breadth: 10.77 meters (35.35 feet)
Depth: 3.12 meters (10.24 feet)
Tonnage: 139 tons (net) to 456 tons (gross)
Engines: 2 diesel, twin-screw (522 propulsion power)
Speed: 11.0 knots

Notes: Currently owned and operated by Compagnie de Navigation des Basques Inc. Now named "L'Heritage I"



Grand Manan Ferry Service, 1884 - Present

Sources:

Transport Canada; Federal Government of Canada
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Provincial Archives of New Brunswick
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Saint Croix Courier Newspaper
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Grand Manan Museum
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