

The Overton Stone

Terry J. Deveau — 2015-12-03

The Overton Stone first came to my attention on 2009-05-11 when I was asked to help investigate it by Nadine Gates of the Yarmouth County Museum and Archives (YCMA). The YCMA had received an inquiry from Wilfred H. Allan [see [blog](#)] on 2009-03-31 about an unusual carving found on the stone [[Note 1](#)]. Mr. Allan recently had been asked about it himself by Beverly Wells-Pinkney and Anne Harding. As far as I know, Beverly is the first person to report the carving and make an inquiry about it. She took me to see the stone for the first time on 2009-05-17 [[Note 7](#)].



The Overton Stone is a large glacial boulder that has broken into two pieces. An unusual carving can be seen on one face of this stone, just to the left of the top of the metre stick in this photo.

Now that the Overton Stone is getting a lot of attention, we would like to avoid having its exact location generally known or published, as it is highly susceptible to vandalism. This is difficult because it is located at an important, accessible, and popular spot known to many local people. Although no earlier reports have yet come to light about the Overton Stone itself, for many years its location was a popular recreational spot for shore walks, watching the waves, and picnicking. This leads to the suggestion that the carving was made fairly recently, associated with this recreational use of the location. While this possibility must be considered, it is not definitive, and we must also consider the possibility of the carving's greater antiquity.



The Overton Stone has a weathered carving on a sea-facing vertical surface, left of the top of the metre stick.

Following my first visit to the Overton Stone, I began to make inquiries to see if anyone had any information or knowledge about the carving. No one at the YCMA knew anything more about it. None of my other contacts at the Nova Scotia Museum or in the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society had ever heard of it either. Deborah Trask, Manager at the Mahone Bay Settlers Museum, [in an Email to me on 2009-05-27] mentioned that, “When I was much younger, I spent lots of time at that location but do not recall ever seeing this carving.” A similar note was provided by Jim Jeffery, who made an inquiry about this carving to the YCMA [in an Email dated 2015-02-17], “Attached is a picture of some symbols carved on a large rock in Overton. I am amazed that I did not see it previously as ... I spent a lot of time over there when I was younger.” The Overton Stone carving is in a very prominent spot and everyone who learns about it is surprised that it isn't well known, as you would think it would be if it has been there for a long while.

Description of the Main Carving

The Overton Stone is a large glacial boulder that has snapped into two nearly equal pieces; each about the size of a small car [Note 2]. It sits at the top of a small rise in the land, not far from the shore. The carving is on the more inland and higher of the two pieces, on a vertical south-facing and sea-facing surface of the boulder. The carving was made into the thick weathering patina that is present on the stone surface. The thickness, colour, and texture of the patina varies greatly across the surface of the stone, presumably due to variations in mineralization, as well as differing weathering exposure aspects. As a glacial boulder, the undisturbed weathering patina on this stone would be about 13,000 years old. The back side of the boulder, facing away from the ocean, is mostly dark (almost black), hard, and smooth, with less of the light grey patina that is present on the carved (sea-facing) side. The cross was originally carved deeply enough in the stone to expose dark unpatinated material, and some subsequent repatination can be seen in the interior of the cross. The mineralization and weathering

texture appears to vary across the carved area of the stone, and the upper half of the interior of the crescent moon, which isn't carved very deeply, is heavily repatinated, almost as much as the uncarved surface.



The main carving on the face of the Overton Stone consists of a stylized Christian cross inside an oval, a pair of crossed Native tobacco leaves, overlain by an eagle feather, and a 3-day-old evening crescent moon.

Although there is some debate about the identification of the elements depicted in the carving, my interpretation of them, from left to right, is (1) a stylized Christian cross, with the four arms widening outward, surrounded by an oval, and four deep dots (the top one almost triangular) outside the oval adjacent to the ends of the arms of the cross, (2) a pair of Native tobacco leaves, the larger one shown crossing and overlying the smaller one, with an eagle feather in turn overlying the large tobacco leaf, and (3) an evening crescent moon, about 3 days old. The other lines and marks that appear on the stone near the carving are natural cracks, depositional lines, and weathering features that are not related to the carving, nor incorporated in it.

Discussion of Mi'kmaw Symbols

For thousands of years, shamans and aboriginal people of the New World ritually used various tobacco species to gain spiritual insight into the causes of disease or illness. Archeologists have found that Natives in the Americas cultivated at least twelve different species, *Nicotiana tabacum* and *N. rustica* being the most significant prior to European contact. [source: [United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/nihm/1158221)]. As can be seen by comparing the tobacco leaves depicted on the Overton Stone with the botanical drawing on p. 5, the Overton Stone carving appears to be a good portrayal of *Nicotiana tabacum*; i.e., Native tobacco. The identification of Native tobacco leaves in the carving was also corroborated by the North American aboriginal rock art expert

Edward Lenik [in an Email to me dated 2009-11-10]. However, this species is not wild and not presently cultivated in Nova Scotia. Perhaps the carver was familiar with its use and appearance from further south on the Atlantic coast, or perhaps the local Mi'kmaq obtained it via trade from tribes to the south, or they may have cultivated it in small amounts in local micro-climates in the past, or the southwestern Nova Scotia climate may have been warmer at the time that the carving was made than it is in the present day (or some combination of these explanations).



Wild Native tobacco is the bright green plant growing at the base of this petroglyph stone at Tome Hill, New Mexico. Tobacco was used ceremonially at this site and the seed has taken root. Source: [Sacred Sites Research](#)

The use of *Indian tobacco*, or *Lobelia inflata* (not Native tobacco) for spirit offerings is *now* the tradition in the Mi'kmaw culture [source: [Muin'iskw](#), 2011]. It was also used extensively as a medicinal plant by First Nations groups such as [the Mi'kmaq,] the Penobscot, and the Wampanoag; and possibly by later European settlers in the area [*King's American Dispensatory*, 1893]. *Lobelia inflata* is found primarily in the eastern United States and Canada, thriving in dry soil along roadsides, in dry fields, and old pastures, as well as in woodland grazing areas. Most species flower from July to September, or until the first frost. [source: [Todd Caldecott](#), 2015].

With regards to the portrayal of a crescent moon symbol on the Overton Sone, it should be noted that the monthly lunar cycle is carefully observed in the Mi'kmaw traditional culture, as evidenced by the Mi'kmaw lunar calendar [source: [Muin'iskw](#), 2011].



Botanical drawing of Native tobacco, *Nicotiana tabacum*, showing the pointy long narrow leaf with a strong central vein. Source: [Koehler's Medicinal-Plants](#), 1887.



Botanical drawing of Indian tobacco, *Lobelia inflata*, showing the more ovoid leaf, pointy with a strong central vein. Source: L. Barton, W.P.C., *Vegetable materia medica of the United States*, vol. 1, 1817, [Table 16](#).

The eagle feather is also a particularly significant spiritual element in the Mi'kmaw culture. It is believed that to wear or hold an eagle feather causes the Creator to take immediate notice. With the eagle feather, the Creator is being honoured in the highest and most humble way [source: [Muin'iskw](#), 2011].

In my judgement, if the carving on the Overton Stone really is ancient, as based on the weathering it appears to be, the best explanation for it is as a monument to a friendship treaty between a group of Old World Christian explorers (or settlers) and the indigenous Mi'kmaq people. This would actually be a logical place to put such a monument. Prior to the building of the Yarmouth Bar causeway, the location of the Overton Stone would actually be the approximate mainland start of the eastern opening of the Bay of Fundy, as Cap Forchu Island could only be accessed by water. Also, the natural splendor of the area probably held a spiritual significance to the Mi'kmaq, and the carved boulder itself is the sort of rock that is often designated a *Grandmother Rock* in the Mi'kmaw culture [source: Trudy Sable, [Another Look in the Mirror: Research into the Foundations for Developing an Alternative Curriculum for Mi'kmaw Children](#), MA Thesis, St. Mary's University, 1996, p. 96]. There is a known pre-contact archaeology site not far away in Chegoggin, so it is known that aboriginal people frequented this general area. The very name Chegoggin means "Great Camp" in the Mi'kmaq language.



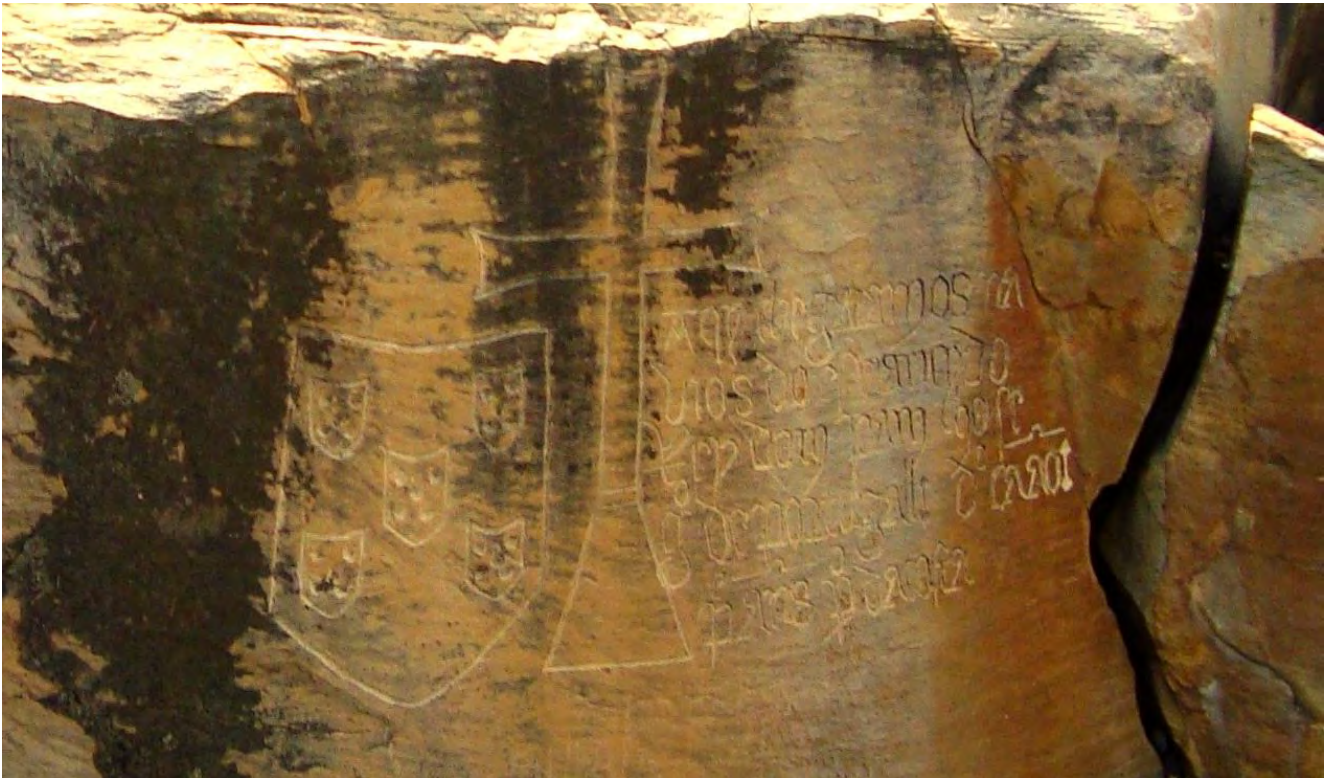
An eagle feather used in Mi'kmaw ceremony. Note the beaded artwork handle on the quill.
Source: [Muin'iskw](#), 2011.

The symbols on the carving seem to me to fit very well with the interpretation of the Overton Stone as a monument to a friendship treaty. The circled cross is an obviously Christian motif, the tobacco leaves and eagle feather are well-known to have spiritual significance among the Mi'kmaq, and the crescent moon may be symbolic of the Creator, God, or the Great Spirit invoked as witness to the friendship treaty.

Discussion of the Cross

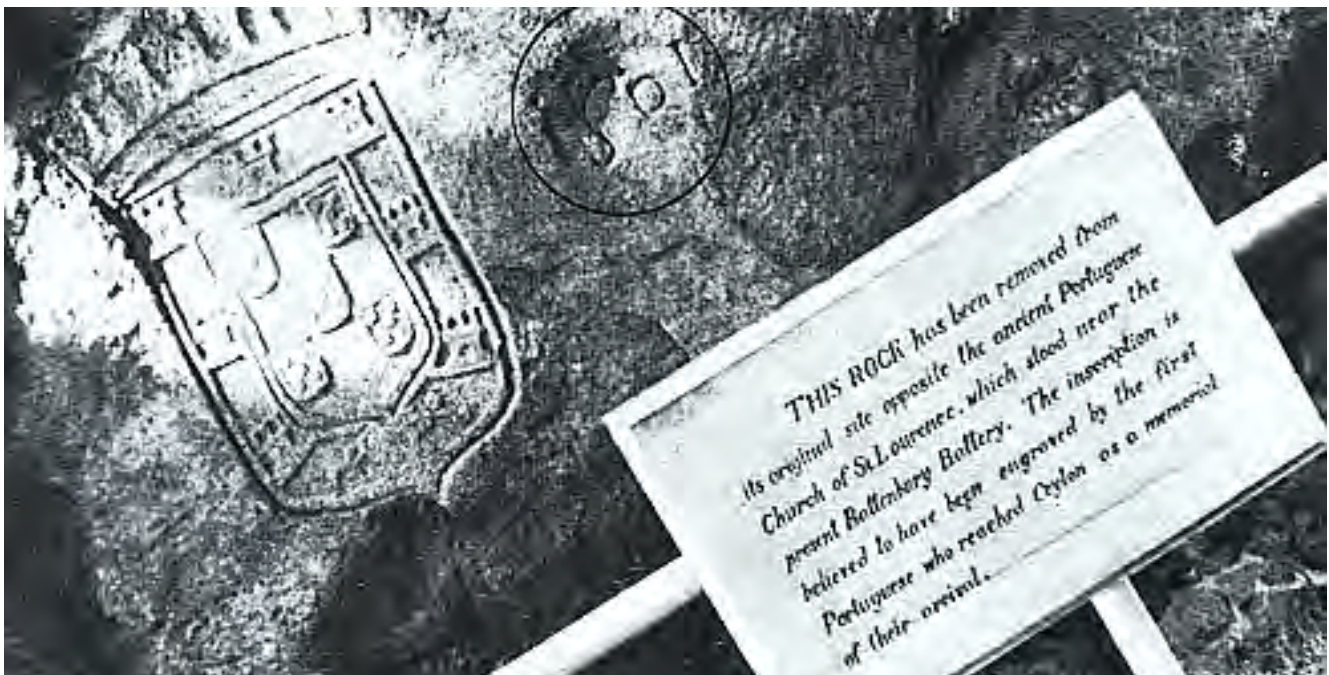
I've searched for cross symbols that look stylistically similar to the cross on the Overton Stone and it surprised me to find that this style of cross is not as common as I thought it would be. One of the most interesting matches is Yellala Rock, on the Congo River on the equatorial west coast of Africa, which has an inscription made by Portuguese explorers and dated to 1485 (see photo on next page). The Yellala Falls (*Rapides de Yelala* or *Chutes Yelala*; also spelled as *Ielala*) are a series of waterfalls and rapids on the Congo River just upstream from Matadi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Yellala Falls were reached by Europeans as early as 1485, when the Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão took a group of men as far as the falls before they were forced to turn back by disease, probably malaria. In that place he set a *padrão*, a large stone cross-shaped marker, customary during the Portuguese Age of Discovery. The stone, which was not rediscovered until 1911, bears the

words: *Aqui chegaram os navios do esclarecido rei D.João II de Portugal - Diogo Cão, Pero Anes, Pero da Costa.* (“Here arrived the ships of illustrious John II, King of Portugal – Diogo Cão, Pero Anes, Pero da Costa.”) [source: [Wikipedia](#)]. This is similar to the style of cross of the Knights of Christ insignia (see photo p. 18).



Yellala Rock, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa — Portuguese, dated 1485. Source: [João Perestrello](#).

Although not a cross, a stone inscription carved by the Portuguese in the year 1501 as a memorial to their arrival in Ceylon (below) is another instance of the type of explorer monument that the Overton Stone may exemplify.



Ceylon, Portuguese, dated 1501. Source: <http://www.dightonrock.com/images/130.jpg>

Portuguese explorers in the 15th and 16th centuries frequently left wood, stone, and iron crosses as monuments to their activities; these are called *padrão* crosses and *padrão* stones. An example is shown on p. 30. The *padrão* stone was sometimes topped with a cross made of iron that was inserted into a hole in the top of the column. Another interesting example is the Luso-Sundanese *padrão* stone of Sunda Kalapa, Indonesia, dated to 1522.



Luso-Sundanese *padrão* stone of Sunda Kalapa, Indonesia, Portuguese, dated 1522.

Sources: [Wikipedia](#) and [Wordpress](#).

A carved stone somewhat similar to the Overton Stone, including the depiction of a stylized cross, is found on Santo Antão (Portuguese for *Saint Anthony*) Island, in the Cape Verde Islands. The stone is called *Pedra da Nossa Senhora*. It is thought to date from 1460, when the Portuguese first arrived in the area (photos on p. 10).

Archaeological Potential

In summary, although the Overton Stone carving may look young at first glance, this may be a deceptive appearance. The iconography used in the inscription, including the prominent presence of the carved cross, and its stylized design, appears to be consistent with the possibility that it was carved by Portuguese explorers (or perhaps settlers) as a monument or memorial to a friendship treaty between themselves and the indigenous Mi'kmaq people.

It may be possible to broadly date the carving through a study of the patina on the rock and in the carving. The natural patina on this stone is very thick in the area of the inscription, and the carver has used this to some effect in his carving, creating lighter and darker lines and areas, with the deepest cuts exposing raw stone that would have looked almost black. Even there, however, in the dark bottom of the deepest cuts, repatination has begun.



Pedra da Nossa Senhora, Santo Antão, Cape Verde Islands, Portuguese, dated 1460. Source: Cabo Verde Foto



Pedra da Nossa Senhora, Santo Antão, Cape Verde Islands, Portuguese, dated 1460. Source: Bela-Vista

A rough age for the Overton Stone carving could be objectively determined, perhaps, through a careful geological study of the patination in and near the carving. Hopefully no one has disturbed the soil in front of the carving; if an accredited archaeologist could conduct an excavation there, it may be possible to find stone chips from the original carving in the soil. The depth of the soil layers where the chips are found should help the dating. Since the chips will be very tiny, extreme care would be required in such an excavation.



The stylized initials “HT” and the abbreviated date “06/07” are carved 1 m to the lower right of the main carving on the Overton Stone

Secondary Carving — Initials and Date

Separate from the main carving on the Overton Stone, but on the same face of the boulder, about 1 metre to the lower right, someone has carved the initials “H T” in a curvilinear stylized calligraphy (photo above), and below them an apparent date, “06/07”; however the “/” in the date is a natural crack in the stone that was apparently incorporated as a date separator. These initials are far enough away from the main carving that it does not appear to be the signature of the carver of the larger inscription. Also, the carved initials themselves have patination that appears to be consistent with 100 or 200 years of weathering (corresponding to possible dates of June 1907 or June 1807 for carving the initials), but certainly too much weathering for a more recent date (like June 2007). However, the larger inscription appears to me to be significantly more weathered than the initials. The initials also appear to have been carved with a different type of tool than the main carving. It seems most likely to me that the initials were carved much later than the main carving, by someone else, possibly as a calibration test of weathering, in an attempt to ascertain the antiquity of the main carving.

Possibility that the main carving was defaced

A few cm lower than the main carving on the south-facing surface of on the Overton Stone there is an area with very little patination, even less than in the interior of the deeply carved cross. The surface of the stone there is smooth, hard, and very dark (almost black). This section is also inset a few cm from the surface that holds the main carving, as if an oblong horizontal piece of the stone was removed from this spot (see photo below).



Close-up view of the surface of the Overton Stone, just below the main carving, where an oblong horizontal piece of the stone appears to have been removed.

The transition between the heavily patinated, and apparently undisturbed, surface of the stone just below the main carving and this lower area where it appears that material may have been removed is very rough and very abrupt. The roughness of the apparent cut through the patina along this border appears to be consistent with the stone surface having sustained deliberate defacing in this area, more recently than the age of the main carving. The weathering in this rough-cut border area appears to be much less than in the inscribed area of the main artwork.

The thought comes to mind that if this stone was originally carved as a memorial to a friendship treaty, it would be natural to expect it to include a date, or at least a year. If a later group, perhaps the French post-1600, or the British post-1713, did not appreciate the existence of physical evidence of prior Portuguese land claims, they may have considered that hacking off the date would be sufficient to invalidate the historical value of the monument as evidence of a land claim, without needing to also destroy the beautiful artwork associated with it.

The presence of this more recently cut area, if that is what it is, may also eventually be able to assist in the dating, if it can be used to calibrate the weathering rate in a careful geochemical analysis. Likewise, if a very precise archaeological excavation can be conducted below the face of the stone, it may be possible to discover two distinct and separated buried layers of tiny stone chips in the soil. Cross-referencing multiple geochemical weathering ages, for the different features on the stone, with multiple stone chip horizons in the soil, may greatly help to obtain precise dates for the different carving episodes.

Analysis of Possible Explanations

A range of theoretical possibilities for the origin of the Overton Stone carving can be considered. The most prominent among them are discussed below.

A recreational carver in June 1807 or June 1907. The hypothesis that the Overton Stone carving is recent, and not an authentic historical monument, is certainly a real possibility that must be considered. *A prima facie* case for it is bolstered by the suggestion that the carver left his dated initials. The initials HT and the numerals “06/07” are found on the same boulder, but about 1 metre to the lower right of the main carving. Arguments against the hypothesis are (a) if the carver was “signing” his work, he more likely would have done so closer to the main carving, (b) the tool-mark pattern on the “HT 06 07” carving is markedly different from the tool-mark pattern on the main carving, (c) the motif of the totality of the main carving appears to be an unlikely one for a recreational carver to choose (it is unlike other typical recreational carvings, such as ships, shields, runes, names, and dates, etc.), (d) a reasonable alternative explanation for the “HT 06 07” carving exists, namely that someone who found the Overton Stone inscription at a much later date may have wanted try to estimate the age of the original carving by making a fresh carving, close to the main carving, but not really interfering with it, and then observing over the years how quickly a fresh carving would appear to age from weathering.



The Mahone Bay Rune Stone is an example of an intricate and difficult historical-styled carving executed by a recreational artist. Photo credit: Danny Hennigar, dated 2014-10-21.

Nevertheless, it is true that recreational carvers sometimes do execute difficult and detailed rock art that emulates historical monuments. One example of this is the rune stone carved on the northern shore of Middle Peninsula, Mahone Bay, NS (shown in the photo above). From talking to local people, NEARA member Alessandra Nadudvari found that it was carved about 45 years ago by a visiting Belgian historian, whose relatives lived in a nearby stone cottage. [Email dated 2015-06-29] The earliest report of this carving that has come to light so far

dates from 1973 [source: *jeff*, blog [comment](#) dated 2014-09-08]. Prof. James Knirk of Oslo University has examined photos of the Mahone Bay rune stone and found that it is similar to “Apnir and Sigurd” as depicted at Ramsund in Norway, but “much reduced in content and lacking in certain of the finer details like the small coils for human and horse joints.” Prof. Knirk finds the inscription within the band forming the dragon's body to be exactly the same with all the same personal names and relationships as found in the inscription at Ramsund. Prof. Knirk is recommending that the stone be listed among notable fake runes of North America, since it was kind of artfully done. [source: Email from John Wolcott, Albany, NY, dated 2015-04-08 and [blog](#), [blog](#), [blog](#)]

Norsemen/Vikings. The possibility that the Overton Stone inscription was made by medieval Norsemen appears to be unlikely because nothing about these motifs fit what is seen elsewhere in Norsemen carvings. There are no runes present here (unlike the rune stone copy pictured above and some *claims* of runes on the Fletcher and Bayview stones, which were found a few km away). Rob Ferguson, retired archaeologist at Parks Canada, and Mats Larsson, archaeology professor at Linnaeus University, Sweden, examined the Overton Stone carvings together, and Rob Ferguson reported “hard to say anything about them. There is nothing Norse about them, and I suppose they could have been carved any time.” [Email dated 2014-09-14]. Incidentally, Mats Larsson had been in the area investigating the possibility of visits by medieval Norsemen to the nearby Chegoggin [[Note 3](#)].



Detail of Bedford Barrens Petroglyph, generally dated to circa 1500, and as is typical of most Mi'kmaw petroglyphs, executed on flat horizontal quartzite bedrock using stone tools, loon's beak, or beaver tooth.

Mi'kmaq. Although the iconography on the Overton Stone is certainly within the known spectrum of Mi'kmaw petroglyph symbols, including crosses (see the photo on p. 15), the tool-mark analysis argues against the idea that this might be Mi'kmaw rock art. Fine hard steel chisel tool-work like this is not normally seen in Mi'kmaw carvings and as rock art it is stylistically quite different from what is typical of Mi'kmaw carvings, which tend to be much more like line-art than the deeply sculpted carvings used on the Overton Stone (for example, the Bedford Barrens petroglyph detail in the photo above). Ruth Whitehead, retired ethnologist at the Nova Scotia Museum, mentioned [email dated 2009-06-09] that she had not previously heard of the Overton Stone carving, but agreed that it was not likely to be an ancient Mi'kmaw petroglyph, based on the style of the carving.

If the Overton Stone is a genuine carving originally made for an authentic purpose at some unknown early date, the most obvious explanation for it appears to be to commemorate a **friendship treaty** between the resident **Mi'kmaq** and some **European Christian** group wanting to establish a presence here. The iconography seems to be consistent with that explanation. Investigating this hypothesis, the two most obvious European groups to consider would be the **British** (post circa 1710) or the **French** (post circa 1600). However, the historical activities of these two groups are fairly well documented, and it would be very surprising that historical knowledge of such a monument and treaty would not now exist. So if one eliminates the British and the post-1600 French from the hypothesis, this leaves four main European groups that are historically known to have had significant activity in Atlantic Canada in the 16th century:

(a) **Bretons**, (b) **Normans**, (c) **Basque**, and (d) **Portuguese**. “The European fishery expanded to the New World shortly after John Cabot’s voyages in 1497 and 1498 it and may even have preceded it. Some of the first fishermen to cross the Atlantic at the beginning of the 16th century were the French and the Portuguese followed by the Basques who fished cod and dried them ashore. Soon, fishermen of Breton, Norman, and Basque origin were coming to fish off Cape Breton. By the 1520’s various sources suggest that Breton fishermen had begun a migratory fishery to Cape Breton. Between 60 and 90 French ships sailed to the Avalon, the Gaspé, and Cape Breton during the 1520’s.” [source: Ken Donovan, [2009](#), p. 337].

While all four groups may well have had friendly relations with the Mi'kmaq population, the **Portuguese** may be the most likely candidate to have created the Overton Stone as a memorial to a friendship treaty, if indeed that is what it is, because (a) the style of the cross is similar to other carved crosses they are known to have made in other parts of the world where they were making land claims in the 1460-1580 time period, (b) it is well known that the Portuguese regularly established durable monuments to claims that they made in this period (including padrao stones and crosses), whereas the other three groups are not known for this, (c) the other three groups were exclusively focused on exploiting resources in the vicinity of NS in the pre-1600 period, and are not believed to have been staking claims or making treaties, whereas it is well known that the Portuguese were definitely making claims to territory in NS, and the vicinity, in the 1500-1580 time period. This is evidenced by the historical cartography of the area.

Portuguese Cartography

The Diego Ribero world map of 1529, part of which is shown on the next page, is one example of a map exhibiting Portuguese land claims. Born in Portugal, where his name is Diogo Ribeiro, he nevertheless worked in Spain for most of his mapmaking career. In 1523 he was named the Royal Cosmographer to Charles V of Spain, the Holy Roman Emperor. Ribero is the most eminent cartographer of his time. The gulf shown in the centre of the map below is the eastern end of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, which at that time had not been mapped west of the Cabot Strait. The Penobscot River in Maine is the largest river shown, with all the red islands, about ¼ of



Pedestalled and dated cross carved by a Mi'kmaq artist on quartzite bedrock, Miller Mountain, Dartmouth, NS.

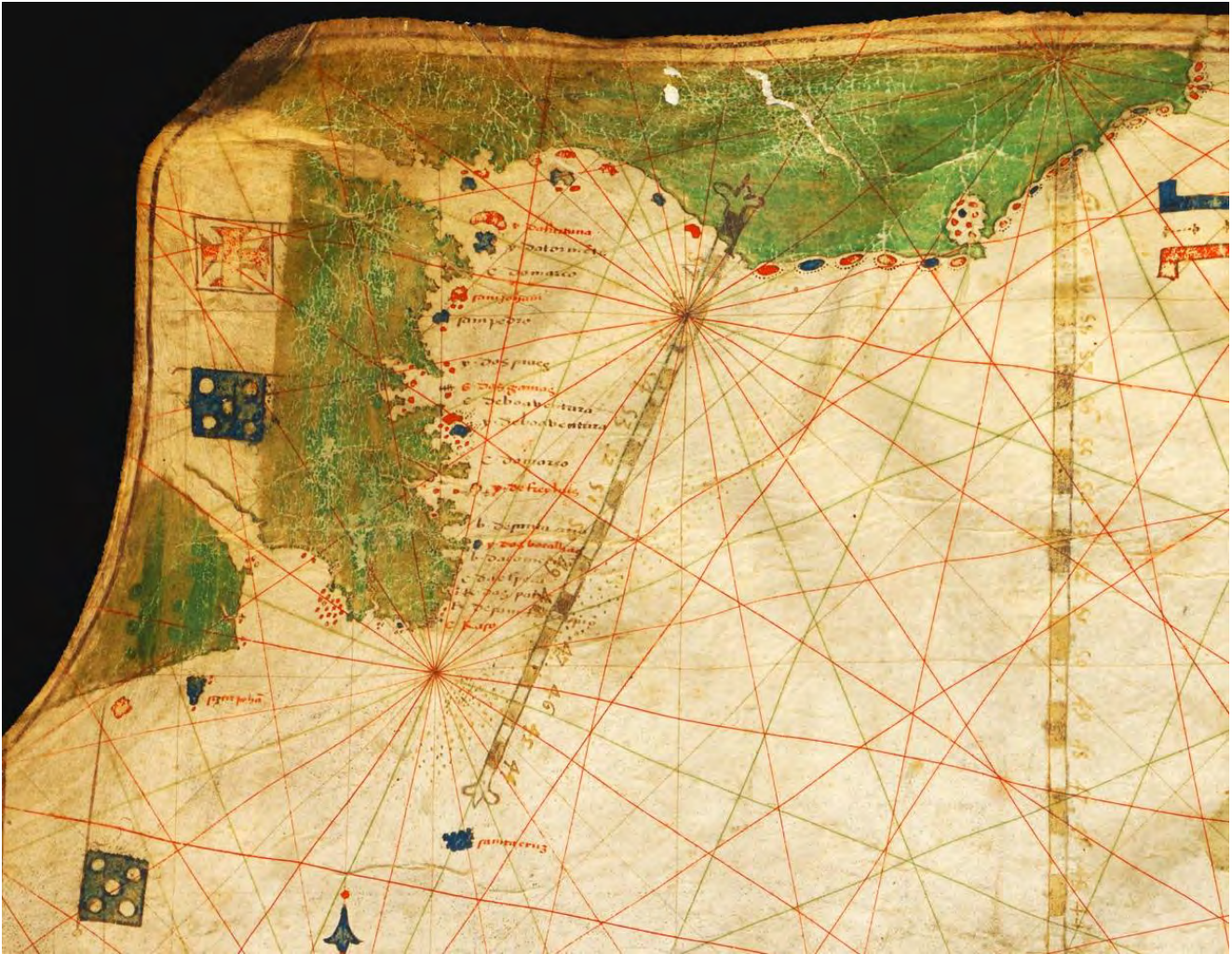
the way from the left edge of the figure. The area of Maine, and south along the coast from there, was claimed for Spain by the voyage of Estêvão Gomes (Estevan Gómez in Spanish, 1524), as indicated on this map. But the lands north and east of Maine—Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Labrador, and Greenland—were claimed by Portugal, based on the voyages of João Fernandes Lavrador (1498) and the Corte-Real brothers (Miguel and Gaspar, 1500-1502). This is shown on the map as Tiera del Labrador (Land of Lavrador) and Tiera Nova de Cortereal (New Land of Corte-Real), respectively.



Part of the Diego Ribero world map dated 1529. Original map in the Grand Ducal Library at Weimar.

One of the earliest maps to show such claims is the Portuguese portolan map made by Pedro Reinel in circa 1504-1520, part of which is shown on the next page. The green areas shown here are, from left to right, Cape Breton Island (NS), the south east and east coasts of the island of Newfoundland, and the south east coast of Labrador. The two blue flags with the five white dots represent land claims in this area by the King of Portugal. The red cross on a white flag, with the arms of the cross flared towards the end, is the insignia of the *Ordem dos Cavaleiros de Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo*, usually known as the Knights of Christ.

The military order of the Knights of Christ was founded in 1317 as a replacement for the Knights Templar of Tomar, following their suppression by Pope Clement in 1312. The Knights of Christ was established by King Diniz of Portugal, who negotiated with Clement's successor John XXII for recognition of the new order and its right to inherit the Templar assets and property (which it did in 1323). The Templars had been founded in Jerusalem around 1118 and soon formed commanderies all over Europe to support their efforts in the Holy Land, settling first in the region of Braga, Portugal, by 1122, where they obtained properties both by donations and purchase. This occurred at least seven years before their recognition and confirmation in the Council of Troyes. The Templars also received lands donated by Theresa of Portugal in 1126, a few years before Portugal itself was established as a fully independent kingdom. The Portuguese Templars had contributed to the conquest of Algarve from the Moslems; which they were still defending when their order was disbanded. King Diniz regretted the loss of these useful auxiliaries, especially since in their trial, the Templars of Portugal had been declared innocent by the ecclesiastical court of the Bishop of Lisbon [source: [Kevin Knight](#), 2012, and [Wikipedia](#)].



Part of the Portuguese portolan map made by Pedro Reinel in circa 1504-1520. Original map in Bavarian State Library, Munich.

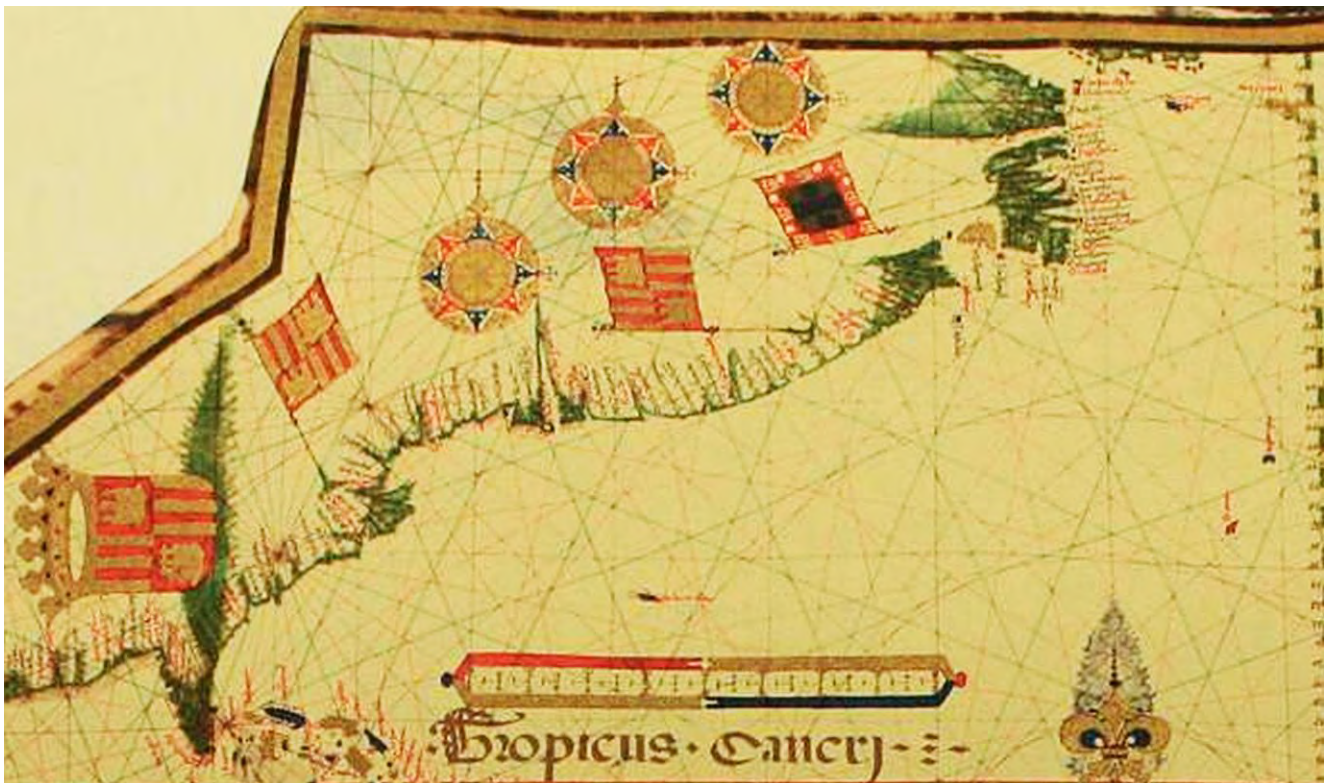


The Order of Knights of Christ was first seated at Castro Marim, in the Algarve (in the Diocese of Faro). In 1357, the order was moved to the town of Tomar, near Santarém, former seat of the Order of the Knights Templar in Portugal. Infante Henrique of Portugal, Duke of Viseu (better known in modern times as *Prince Henry the Navigator*) became the order's Grand Master in 1417, King João I of Portugal having requested this appointment of the Pope. In 1433, King Duarte I gave the Knights of Christ sovereign status not just over the territories which it already held, but over any future conquests. Using Knights of Christ money, Prince Henry organized the Navigator's school in Sagres, preparing the way for Portuguese navigational supremacy. From this village, the first great wave of expeditions of the Period of Discoveries was launched. Prince Henry colonized the Azores and Madeira islands—his aim was to go south beyond Cape Bojador, south of the Canary Islands. The cross of the Knights of Christ adorned Portuguese sails in their travels

all over the world (as in the ship illustration above, found on a Portuguese map from 1565).

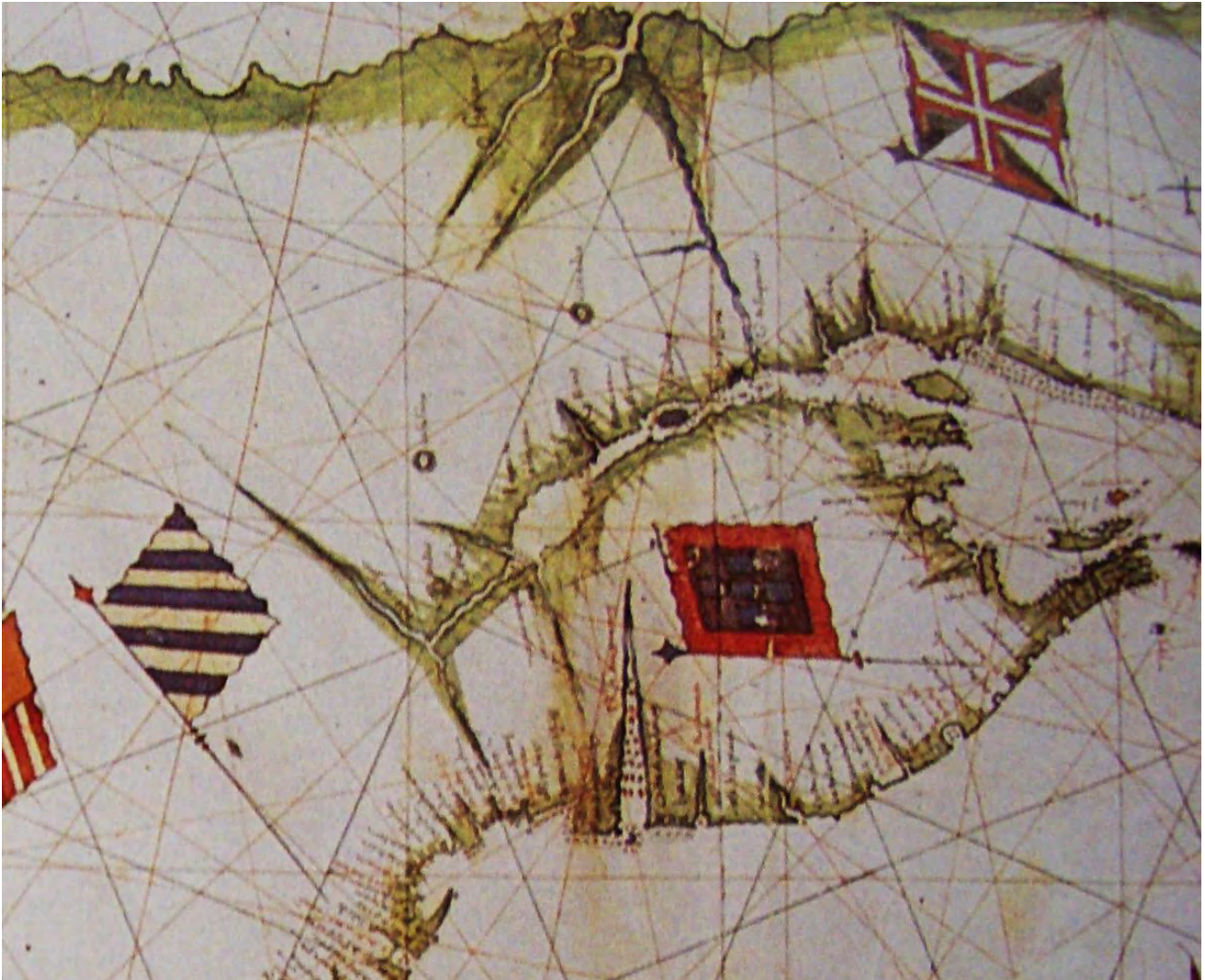
In 1460, King Afonso V granted the Knights of Christ a five percent levy on all merchandise from the new African lands. After Prince Henry's death on 1460-11-13, the grand mastership was held by the royal family, beginning in 1495 with King Manuel I, João's successor. In 1497, King Manuel sent Vasco da Gama (a member of the Knights of Christ) to sail around the African cape to India. He reached Calicut on the west coast of India the following year. By the end of King Manuel's reign, the Order of the Knights of Christ possessed 454 commanderies in Portugal, Africa, and the East Indies.

All this to say that it is natural for a Portuguese cartographer circa 1520 to show insignia both of the Portuguese Crown and the Knights of Christ on Portuguese land claims in Atlantic Canada, since the same person was both King of the nation and Grand Master of the Order; and though subservient to the crown, the Knights of Christ technically held sovereignty in all the new lands that they claimed for the Crown. It is also interesting to note that the Knights of Christ insignia wasn't always in the form of a cross with four arms of equal length; sometimes the lower arm was longer, as shown in the photo of the decorations to the right, [source: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Christ)] and as portrayed in the Overton Stone cross.



Part of a map by Bastian Lopez, 1558-11-15, with southern Labrador, the entire island of Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia all coloured green, and one Portuguese flag representing their claim. Original map: *Carta das Linhas Costeiras de parte da Europa, África e América*, 83 × 101.5 cm, held at the British Library, London.

Another historical map showing the same three lands claimed by the Portuguese in Atlantic Canada is the Bastiam Lopez (Sebastião Lopes) map of 1558, part of which is shown above. In this case, a single Portuguese flag denotes this claim. By this time, the cartography of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was known from the voyages of Jacques Cartier, but it appears to have been purposefully omitted from this map [see Ganong, *Crucial Maps*, 1964, p. 401]. A later map by the same cartographer, dated to 1583 (see part of it reproduced below), now shows the Gulf of St. Lawrence and St. Lawrence River areas in great detail. A Portuguese insignia flag highlights their claim to what is now Nova Scotia, and the Knights of Christ insignia above it shows how the same claim really extends to all of Atlantic Canada.



Part of a map by Bastiam Lopez, dated 1583, with the Portuguese Crown and the Knights of Christ insignia flags showing their claim to all of what is now Atlantic Canada. Original map: *Mapa Mundi Sebastião Lopes*, Cartes et Plans, S. H. Archives, n.º 38, held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

It is striking that in both of these Lopez maps, and most of the others from this period, a realistic depiction of the Bay of Fundy is one major cartographic feature that is missing, and which sometimes seems to have been intentionally omitted. In fact, the Portuguese had already extensively explored the Bay of Fundy well before 1583, likely beginning in 1520 (if not earlier), and mapped it with impressive accuracy; however, it appears that they may have been keeping some of their activities in Nova Scotia a secret. Nevertheless, some early Portuguese maps showing the Bay of Fundy have been found.

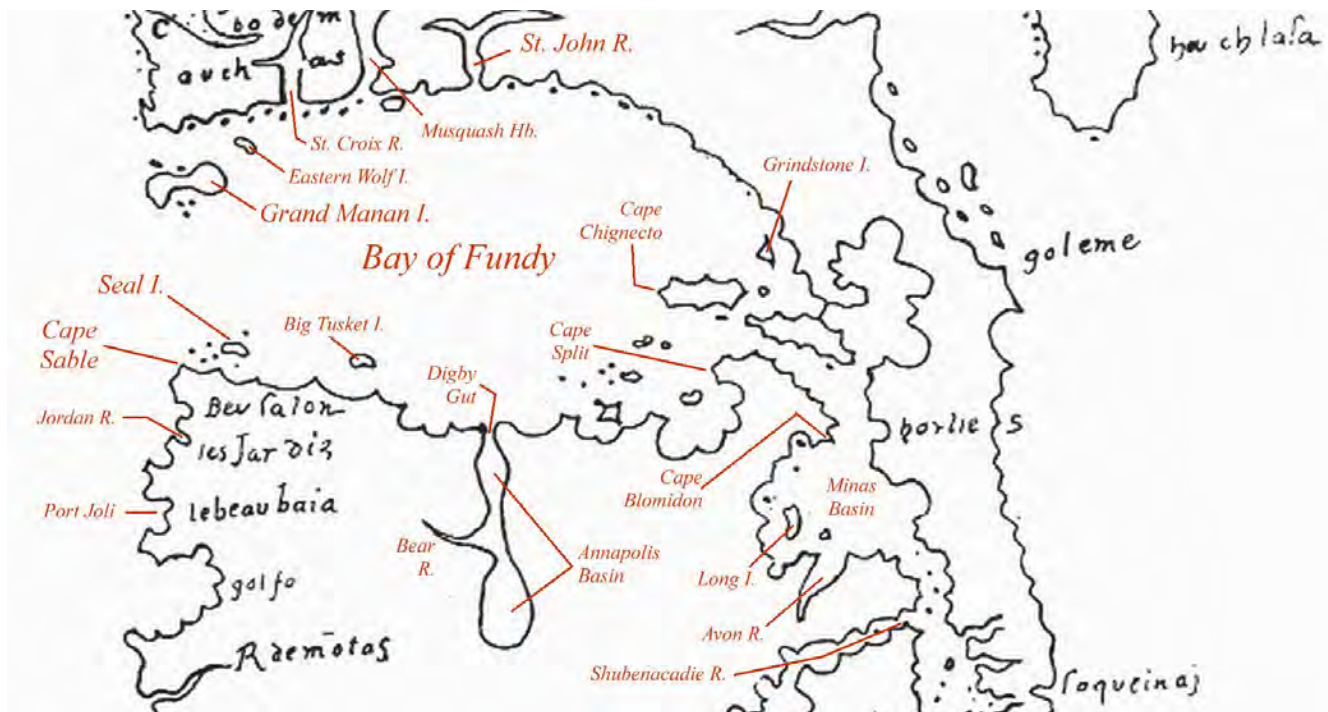


One part of the Portuguese world map of 1554, by cartographer Lopo Homem; it is the earliest map to show any cartographic detail or significant size to the Bay of Fundy. Original manuscript map on vellum discovered shortly before 1916 by Dr. F. C. Wieder in the Museo degli Strumenti antichi, Florence.

The world map of 1554 by Portuguese cartographer Lopo Homem, part of which is shown above, shows many remarkable advances from all earlier (and many later) maps that have survived to the present day. It is one of a small number of original manuscript maps known to have been produced by Homem and his son, Diogo, in this period, or derived from them. The Homem's had access to original Portuguese materials formerly gathered in the *Casa da India* at Lisbon, where as early as 1517 Lopo Homem had an exclusive privilege of drawing and improving maps. These materials were not accessible to other cartographers, such as Ribero working in Spain [source: W. F. Ganong, *Crucial Maps*, 1964, pp. 72-94].

The two most striking departures in these Homem (and related) maps that set them apart from almost all other 16th century maps are (a) the presence of the Bay of Fundy *at all* (not to mention in exquisite cartographic detail), and (b) the presence on the east coast of Cape Breton Island of a sequence of place names that are unquestionably derived from the Mi'kmaq language. W. F. Ganong argues that the Mi'kmaw place names were most likely originally set down on a small local map of the east coast of Cape Breton Island by a Portuguese explorer in the 1520's, and subsequently sent back to Portugal as a sample of the kind of place-names used by the Natives of this country (p. 81). As such, preceding Cartier, they constitute the most ancient First Nations place-names recorded for any part of Canada, if not for an even wider territory. This is *prima facie* evidence of a very close working relationship between the Portuguese and the Mi'kmaq, in which they are learning each other's language. Clearly there was a working friendship between the two groups, which is consistent with the hypothesis of a friendship treaty having been struck, and a monument erected to memorialize it. In fact, Ganong argues that the existence of these names "on so ancient a map indicates for him who collected them a contact with the Indians far more lasting and intimate than was possible to the usual explorer of the sixteenth century, **suggesting rather some contemporary settler there**" (p. 81).

Regarding the portrayal of the Bay of Fundy on the Homem maps (and derivatives), there is a remarkable consistency and apparent accuracy of detail, however there is also an uncharacteristic absence of toponymy. In *Crucial Maps*, Ganong has included a very precise tracing of the Maritime Canada portion of the Lopo Homem 1554 map [Fig. 25, p. 71]; an enlargement of the area in the vicinity of the Bay of Fundy is reproduced below. Although not discussed by Ganong, except for the three toponyms on the Atlantic Coast, I've added my own interpretation of the cartographic detail that is unnamed in the original, and the equivalent modern toponyms are shown in Roman Italic font. While the cartography is certainly less than perfect, it does exhibit a very intimate familiarity with the detailed coastal features of the Bay of Fundy, and even to some extent the major river systems that empty into it.



Tracing of the coastline in the vicinity of the Bay of Fundy from the Lopo Homem world map of 1554, with added modern toponyms in Roman Italic font. The source for the tracing (not the added toponyms) is W. F. Ganong, *Crucial Maps*, 1964, Fig. 25, p. 71.

Further Evidence of 16th Century Portuguese Exploration and Settlement in Atlantic Canada

As evidenced by the Homem maps, the Portuguese are known to have been active in the Bay of Fundy in the 16th century. Even the very name of this bay is derived from the Portuguese “Rio Fundo.” Samuel de Champlain reported finding “a very old cross, all covered with moss, and almost wholly rotted away, an unmistakable sign that formerly Christians had been there” in Parsboro Harbour (near the inland extremity of the Bay of Fundy) in 1607 [Note 4]. By the degree of rot in the wooden cross, it most likely would have been erected in the mid-16th century. The Portuguese are by far the mostly likely agents to have erected it. [source: W. F. Ganong, *Crucial Maps*, 1964, p. 92] Champlain also apparently found another cross in Saint John harbour on the west side of the Bay of Fundy, as shown in his small map of that harbour (although some suggest that his own group placed it).

The 1964, University of Toronto Press edition of Ganong’s *Crucial Maps in the Early Cartography and Place-Nomenclature of the Atlantic Coast of Canada* is a compilation of nine papers that first appeared in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* (RSC). The second of these papers, upon which we have relied in the foregoing, was first presented to the RSC in May 1930. It deals at length with the voyages and settlement in Atlantic Canada of the Portuguese explorer and colonist, **Joam Alvares Fagundes**. The interested reader is

referred to the extensive analysis and discussion presented by Ganong in those pages (pp. 45-97). In brief, the discussion involves how “Fagundes, in the year 1520 or earlier, did explore and give place-names in a region between that visited by the Corte-Real’s (i.e., Labrador and the east coast of Newfoundland) and the line of demarcation between the Portuguese and Spanish territories” (i.e., roughly as far west as Maine; pp. 47, 61, and 93). Subsequently, in 1521, the King of Portugal made a grant to Fagundes of these same lands (p. 60), and pursuant to this Fagundes established, circa 1520-5, a Portuguese settlement in Nova Scotia (pp. 67-89). There is no explicit evidence indicating how long the Fagundes colony survived. A manuscript written by Francisco de Souza in 1570 indicates that the Fagundes colony was known to have been located in Cape Breton Island, most likely either in the Sydney River or the Mira River area (or perhaps both, since the same document says there were “many people”). Even by 1570, de Sousa seems to believe that the colony is still extant, and says that he plans to visit it (p. 68). Ganong also notes evidence that Fagundes framed his claim to the territory of Atlantic Canada as derivative of the earlier claim by Lavrador, with that designation for his Cape Breton Island colony having survived into the French period in the place name *Lac de Lavrador*, and into modern toponymy as the Bras d’Or Lakes.

In addition to the evidence for the Portuguese settlement attempt in Nova Scotia by Fagundes circa 1520-5, as discussed by Ganong, [*Crucial Maps*, 1964, p. 89], there is also some more fragmented evidence of other Portuguese settlement attempts. Ganong discusses the possibility of an attempt circa 1553 (pp. 69 and 87). Others have highlighted evidence for a settlement by the Portuguese Barcelos family from the Island of Terceira in the Azores [[Note 5](#)]. The possibility that there may even have been other Portuguese settlement attempts in Nova Scotia in the 1500-1580 time period should not be ruled out, and we should be vigilant towards new evidence that may be brought to light.

Ken Donovan reviews arguments and evidence for a 16th century Portuguese settlement at Ingonish, on Cape Breton Island, in “[Precontact and Settlement: Ingonish and Northern Cape Breton From the Paleo Indians to the 18th century](#),” *The Nashwaak Review*, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, vols. 22-23, (Spring-Summer 2009), pp. 330-87 (esp. pp. 337-40). Emily Burton presents a wider examination of the Portuguese interest in the establishment of permanent settlements in northeastern North America in the 16th century in “[Portuguese Interest in Settlement in Sixteenth-Century Northeastern North America: A Historiographical Reassessment](#),” MA Thesis, St Mary’s University, Halifax, 2005, 181 pp.

There was a gravestone found inland on Ardoise Hill, near Windsor, NS, which may be evidence of a Portuguese presence in that area in the mid-16th century, according to a published report by Larry Loomer: [[Note 6](#)] “At the south extremity of Windsor township lies the high ground of Ardoise Hill. There about 1900 was discovered apparent evidence of other visitors to the area. It is a piece of slate, 12 inches long, six inches high, and a quarter inch thick. It bears a shield with a chevron and sword, an arrow, a skull and cross-bones, and the Latin inscription: 'C. Manulis, Hic Jacet; A.M.DLVIII.' Translated it appears to be *Here lies C. Manulis 1558*. The rest is a mystery. He may have been one of a hunting party of Portuguese fishermen who died and was buried on Ardoise Hill. The stone, in private hands, would be the oldest known inscribed gravestone in Hants County.” [source: L.S. Loomer, *Windsor, Nova Scotia – A Journey In History*, West Hants Historical Society, 1996, p. 25. [link](#)].

Conclusions

Based on the totality of the discussion regarding **Fagundes**, it seems reasonable to suggest that he could have been the very person responsible for commissioning the memorial exhibited on the **Overton Stone**, if indeed it is a memorial, during his 1520 (or earlier) expeditions in that area.

A thorough geological and geochemical analysis of the Overton Stone, and the differential weathering in the carved and uncarved surfaces of the stone, is well advised to objectively assess the likelihood that this stone is an authentic historical monument from the European contact period in Nova Scotia.

Likewise, a careful archaeological excavation of the soil under the carved surfaces is also well advised to attempt to locate detritus of the various carving episodes in the soil stratigraphy, and the rate of soil development at this site, to objectively constrain the assumptions and dates pertaining to possibly multiple carving episodes here, the earliest of which would potentially represent the creation of an important historical artefact.

Notice

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Note 1. First known documentation pertaining to the Overton Stone

From: Wilfred H. Allan

Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 4:42 PM

To: Nadine Gates

Cc: Bev Pinkney; Anne Harding

Subject: Rock Carving

Hi Nadine:

The photo below is of a rock carving found ... by a friend.

Is anyone in the museum aware of it, its history, or its meaning?

I had never heard of it, but think it's fascinating.

Take care,

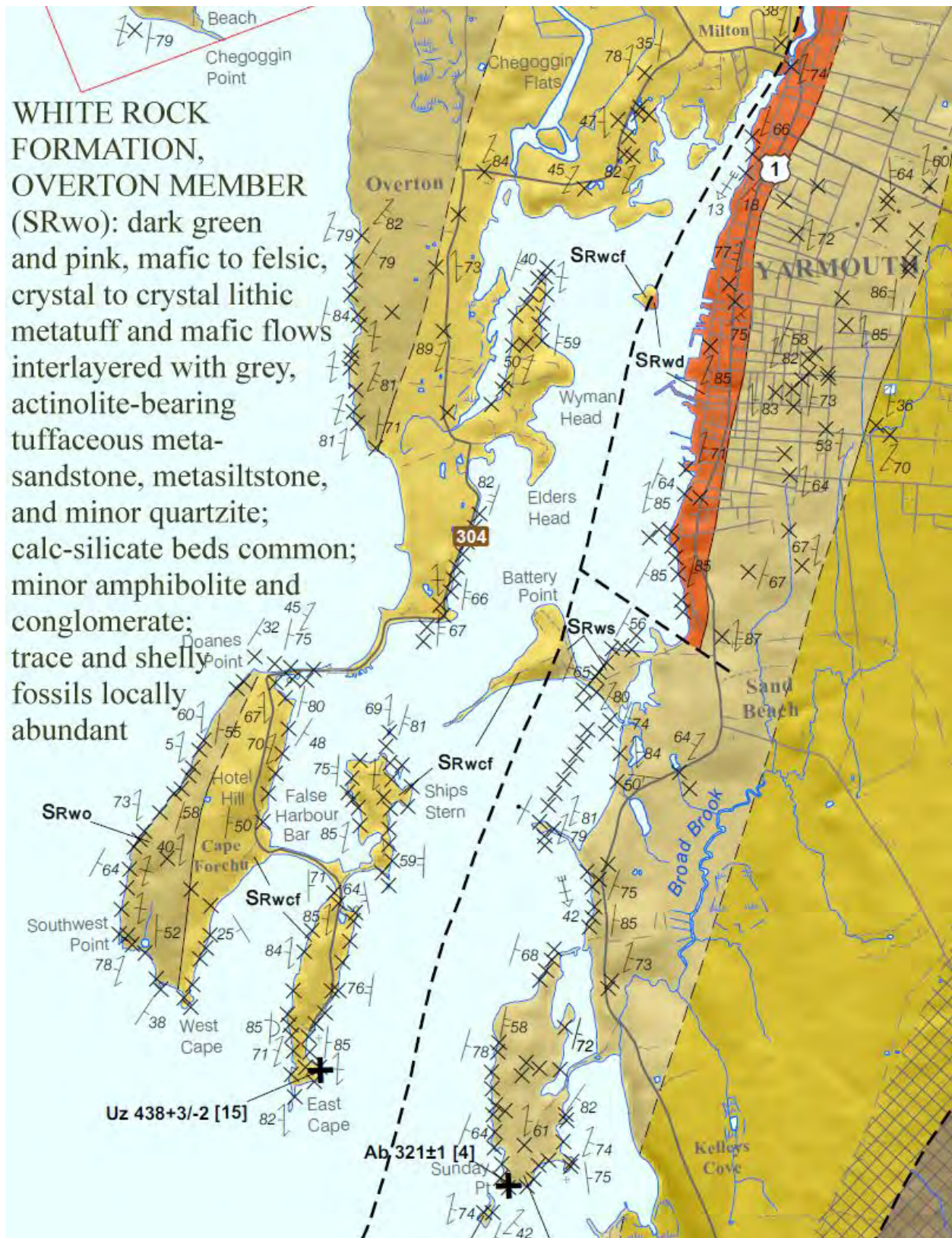
W



Source: Beverly Wells-Pinkney, 2009.

Note 2. Geology of Overton

The Overton Stone appears to be a glacial boulder of 430 million year old tuffaceous metasiltstone of the White Rock Formation, Overton Member, which is the local bedrock geology shown on the map below.



Bedrock geology of the Overton area. Source C. E. White, [Open File Map ME 2012-091](#), 2012-10-10.

A detailed exposition of the regional geology is given by Thomas E. Lane, [Stratigraphy of the White Rock Formation](#), 1975. Although the Overton Stone boulder shows evidence of having been glacially transported, it probably didn't travel very far, geologically speaking. The glacial flows were almost southward here, and the same geological member extends five or six km to the north, with other closely related members of the White Rock Formation extending an additional two or three km further.

This boulder appears to be composed of a very fine grain source rock (siltstone) that has undergone metamorphosis and recrystallization, changing it mineralogically and morphologically, making it very hard. Bedding planes and lamination of the source rock can be seen in differential weathering lines on the surface of the stone, which are particularly notable to the upper left of the carved cross, where they can easily be mistaken as being part of the artwork (which it appears that they are not, and were perhaps not as prominent at the time of the carving as they are now, due to intervening differential weathering).

My comments above are simply my personal observations as an *amateur* geologist, and are subject to revision once a fully-qualified geologist is able to present an analysis of the stone.

Note 3. Swedish archaeologist targets Chegoggin in search for medieval Norse ruins in North America

THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY
4 JUNE 2000

Viking 'land of wine' pinpointed in Canada

THE LOCATION of the long-lost "Land of Wine", discovered in North America by the Vikings 1,000 years ago, may at last have been found.

Research by a Swedish archaeologist suggests that the site of Vinland – the far-off place mentioned in the Viking Sagas – was in fact in southern Nova Scotia, at a latitude just 150 miles north of that of modern New York. If he is right, it would almost certainly have been the first European colony in mainland North America.

Up till now most historians have believed that Vinland was located 500 miles further north at the bleak northern tip of Newfoundland – or around the estuary of the Saint Lawrence.

Survey work by archaeologist Dr Mats Larsson of Lund University, Sweden, has, for the first time, pinpointed an area which correlates precisely with the detailed description of Vinland in the Sagas. The region still produces wild grapes.

After combing hundreds of miles of coastline, the Swedish academic believes that the only convincing candidate for the ancient Viking settlement is a small river estuary and bay called Chegoggin ("Great Camp" in the local Indian language) just north of Yarmouth near the southern tip of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia.

The information in the Sagas indicates that the Vinland settlement was on or near an inlet with an unusually large tidal range and a river, navigable only at high tide, which led to an inland lake. The name Vinland also suggests that it had to be in an area warm

BY DAVID KEYS

enough to produce wild grapes. The Chegoggin estuary location matches Vinland on all these criteria and is the only site which does so along the 1,500 miles of Canadian coastline, so far examined by Dr Larsson.

It may also be significant that the Chegoggin estuary is immediately opposite – indeed just 80 miles from – the site on the coast of Maine where a late 11th-century Viking coin and a group of stone implements were found in 1957. The stone tools were not of local origin – and had somehow been brought from more than 1,000 miles further north – from Eskimo northern Labrador and Baffin Island. It is possible that both the coin and the Eskimo-originating artefact materials were traded by Vikings with local Maine Indians, perhaps in exchange for supplies. It is known that Vikings were active in the Baffin Island region and it is thought that they also visited Labrador, which Dr Larsson believes they called Helluland – "Stoneland".

Although Vinland was settled temporarily in the early 11th century, it may have been revisited by Viking explorers on several occasions, the last known voyage being by a Viking bishop who went there in 1121 hoping to convert the natives. He was never heard of again.

Vinland was discovered in the year 1000 – probably in late summer – by Viking explorer Leif Ericsson, the son of the founder of the Viking colony in



Greenland. A little later a settlement was established in Vinland – probably in around 1003 – by some 160 Icelandic and Greenland colonists led by an Iclander called Thorfinn Karlsevni. Thorfinn went to

Vinland via Greenland where he had married the widow of Leif Ericsson's brother.

Once in Vinland they built a settlement and traded with the native Indians, obtaining skins in exchange for red cloth and

dairy products. But disagreements with the natives made the settlement vulnerable to Indian attacks – and after a few years the colonists returned to their original homes in Greenland and Iceland. Now the

search for the Vinland settlement is gathering speed.

Archaeological investigations by Dr Larsson in the Chegoggin estuary area have already begun. Using chemical tests he hopes to detect

phosphate concentrations produced by ancient human and animal refuse and waste. Aerial photographs will also be used to pinpoint potential sites.

"After years of survey work, I believe that Chegoggin is the

only location which fits the saga description of the Vinland settlement site," said Dr Larsson. "Now we have to find archaeological material to confirm the historical and geographical evidence."

Note 4. 16th century Christian artefacts in the Bay of Fundy reported by Samuel de Champlain

The works of Samuel de Champlain, vol. 1, Eds. H.P. Biggar, H.H. Langton, and W.F. Ganong, Toronto : Champlain Society, 1922, [p. 455](#).

VOYAGES DV SIEVR DE CHAMPLAIN 455

p. 153. est fort platte & peu d'eau. Il y a quantité d'autres petits ruisseaux & quelques endroits, où il y a de bons ports, mais c'est de plaine mer, où l'eau môte de cinq brasses.¹ En l'vn de ces ports 3. à 4. lieues au Nort du cap de Poitrincourt ² trouuasmes vne Croix qui estoit fort vieille, toute couuerte de mousse & presque toute pourrie, qui mōstroït vn signe euident qu'autrefois il y auoit esté des Chrestiens.³ Toutes ces terres sont forests tres-espoisses, où le pays n'est pas trop agreable, sinon en quelques endroits.

water. There are a number of other small streams and certain places where there are good harbours, but only at high tide, which here rises five fathoms.¹ In one of these harbours, three to four leagues north of Poutrincourt Cape,² we found a very old cross, all covered with moss, and almost wholly rotted away, an unmistakable sign that formerly Christians had been there.³ This whole country is covered with very dense forests, and the land is not very pleasant except in certain places.

¹ From his observations during this expedition Champlain laid down the Basin of Minas upon his maps, though he seems to have given it no name. The other great arm of the Bay of Fundy, Chignecto Bay, which he named *baye de Gennes*, could only have been explored in 1604 (p. 279 *supra*). In his explanation of his map of 1632, under 94 he says: "Sort of salt water lake at the head of the French Bay, where runs the flow and ebb of the tide. Here are islands on which are many birds, plenty of marshes in several places, and small rivers which fall into these lakes, and by these one can travel into the Gulf of St. Lawrence near the island of St. John."

² Cape Blomidon or Cape Split.

³ The cross was probably found in Parrsboro harbour. On Champlain's map of 1632 the cross was no doubt intended to be placed here, but by error of the engraver stops at the north side of the Bay of Fundy. Upon general grounds we can well believe that Minas Basin had been visited before Champlain's day, but no record of this has come down to us. The custom of erecting crosses was very general. Champlain's map of St. John shows a cross there, and he records another at Misfortune Harbour, while Lescarbot mentions them at Kennebec and Nauset (ii. 331).

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est par la hauteur de 45. degrez deux tiers, y a vne mine de fer.¹ [PLANCHE : R. ST. IEHAN.]

p. 30.

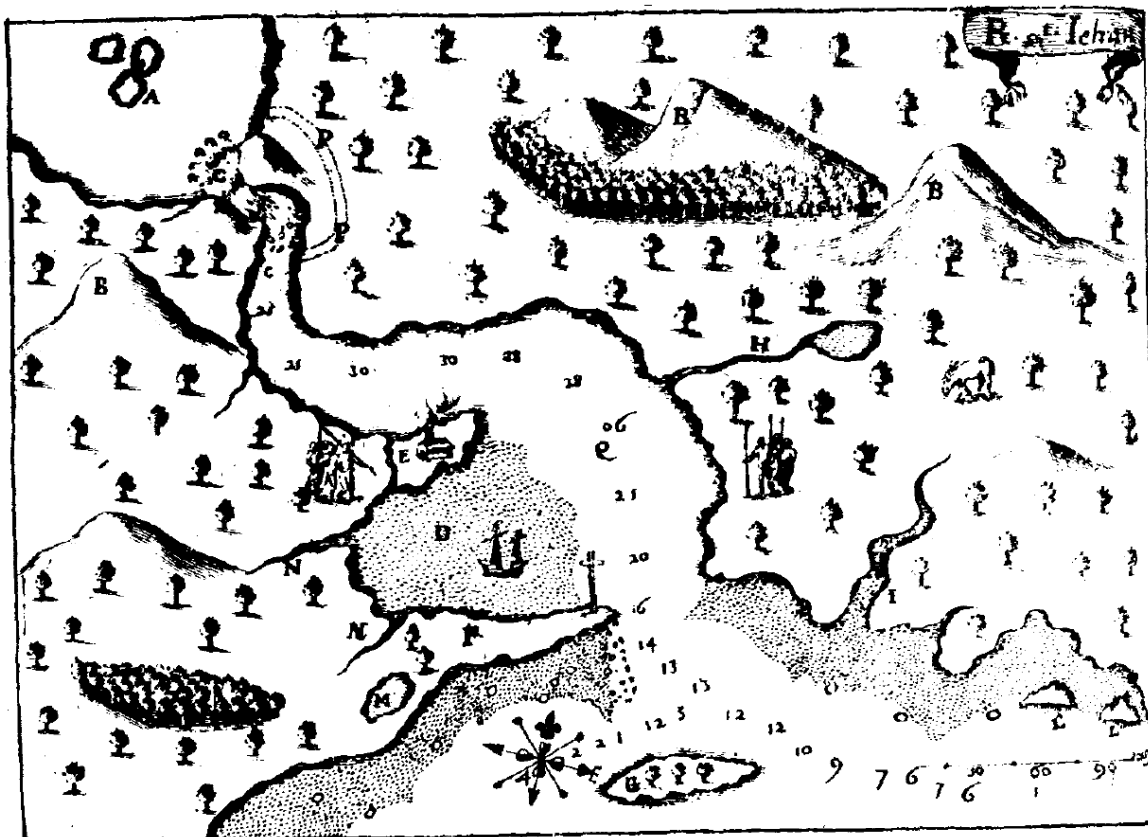
De la riuere saint Iean nous fusmes à quatre isles, en p. 31.
l'une desquelles nous mismes pied à terre, & y trouuâmes
grande quantité d'oiseaux appelez Margos,² dont nous

tance is sixty-five leagues. At its mouth, which is in latitude 45° 40', there is an iron-mine.¹ [PLATE LXIX.]

From the river St. John we proceeded towards four islands, on one of which we landed, and found there great numbers of birds called margos ;² we captured many of their young,

¹ Champlain's description of the mouth of the river St. John is in most respects accurate. The name has been in use from that time to this ; but Champlain is wrong in his statement that its native name is Ouygoudy, for there is ample evidence that this word is simply the Micmac word for a camp-ground. Its Indian name is Woolastook (*Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, V, 1899, ii. 229). The two islands, a league from the cape westward, were the Manawagonish Islands (Meogenes, Mahogany, thus variously spelled on the maps), while the cape must be that at the western entrance to the river, now called Negro Town point. It is called *C. S. Iean* on the map of 1612, and located apparently on an island, which I take to be simply a crude representation of the peninsula between the Millpond (of his map of the harbour) and the Bay of Fundy. The rock he mentions is of course the prominent Shag Rocks, west of Partridge Island. The account of the fall is correct, albeit with some exaggeration about the disappearance of the wood ; and Champlain's is the first of a long series of descriptions of this really remarkable geographical feature, now commonly known as the Reversing Falls. Our author errs, however, in stating the fall can be passed only at high tide, for it is then impassable ; the passing time is a little above half tide, when the waters are level and still. The mention of the portage overland to the St. Lawrence is correct, though the distance to Tadoussac is much underestimated. The iron-mine, as the map of 1612 makes clear, was on the east side of the mouth of the river, where traces of iron are abundant. The true latitude of the mouth of the river is 45° 16'.

² These islands are the bold rocky group called the Wolves. The *margos* were gannets, or solan geese (*cf.* p. 242 *supra*), but it does not seem possible that these were found on the Wolves, which are a wooded group, and those birds breed in bare isolated rocks like the Gannet Rock a little farther westward. On Champlain's map of 1607 the islands are called *Isles aux Perdrix*, but partridges do not occur on them. I suspect his *Margos* were Sea Pigeons (*Cephus grylle* Linn.), which are " pied " birds and breed there abundantly.



LEGENDS ON CHAMPLAIN'S MAP OF RIVER ST. JOHN, WITH COMMENTS.

The figures show the fathoms of water.

F.—A GRAVELLY POINT ON WHICH STANDS A CROSS.

This letter looks more like a P, but the point, which is clearly recognisable, is the present Sand Point, originally just such a gravelly bar as our author describes, but now covered with the piers and buildings of the modern seaport of St. John. Presumably the cross was erected in connection with ceremonies at the naming of the river on St. John's day.

Although Ganong presumes that Champlain's own party erected the cross at this gravelly point in Saint John harbour, there is nothing to actually suggest this in Champlain's material. To the contrary, if his party had erected it, it seems virtually certain that he would have explicitly mentioned it somewhere. The style of expression used here "on which stands a cross" certainly has the connotation that Champlain and his party have no responsibility for it being there, and that it preceded them. There is also nothing specific to say whether it is made of wood or stone. If anything, the pictorial representation of this cross on Champlain's map looks somewhat similar to the classic Portuguese *padrão* style of stone cross (like the picture on the right). If Champlain recognized it as a Portuguese monument, he may not have wanted to mention that fact, as it could potentially work against French land claims in the New World, since Spain was then in possession of Portugal and all of its overseas possessions.

Pictured at right, the Jakarta *padrão* stone cross. "Portuguese Enrique Leme came to Kelapa bearing gifts for Sunda's King. Being well received, on 1522-08-21 he was able to sign the Treaty of Friendship between Portugal and the Kingdom of Sunda. To honour this treaty, they placed a *padrão*—a big stone cross inscribed with the coat of arms of Portugal as part of a land claim." Source: [link](#)



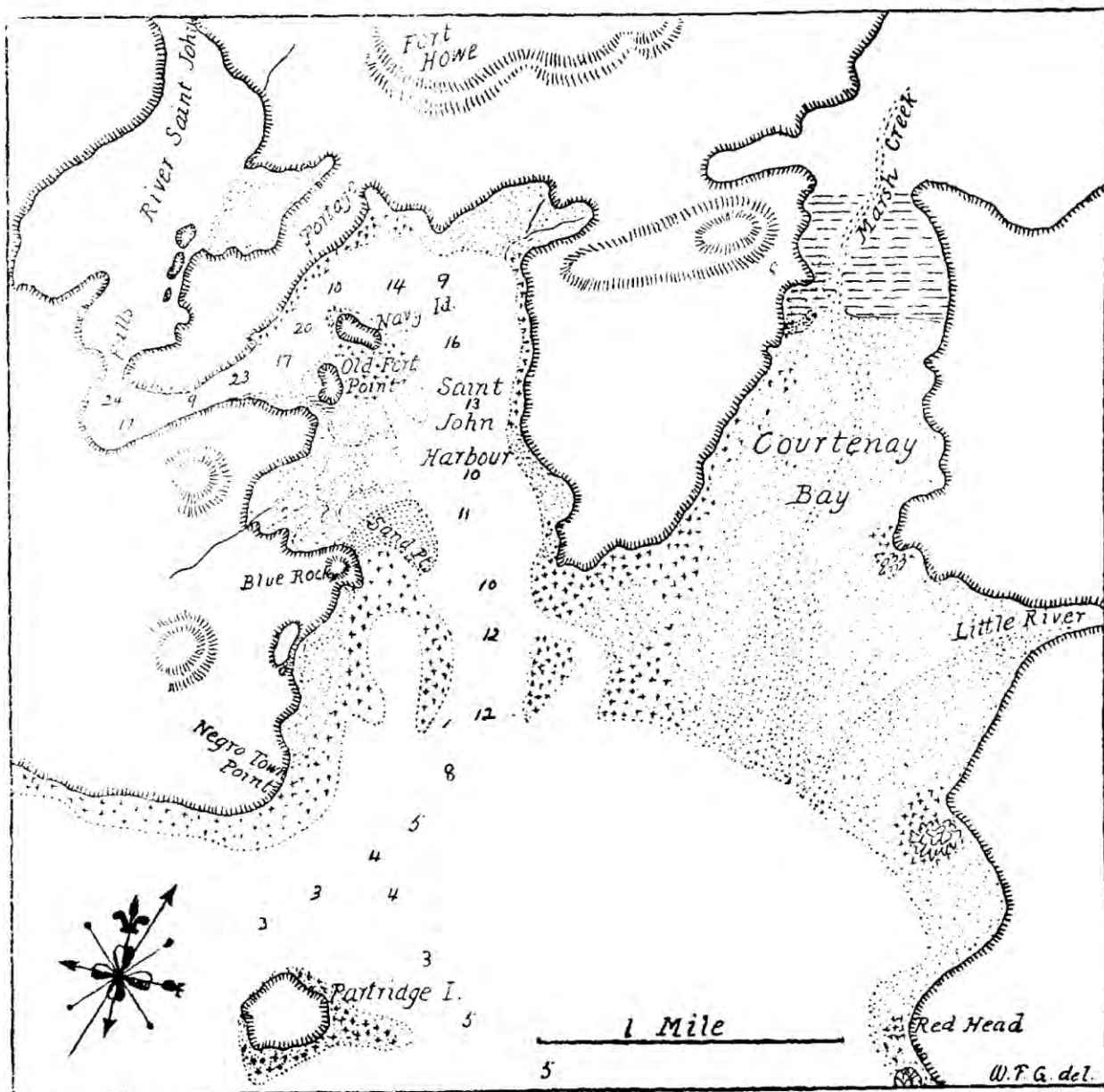


Plate LXIX

MAP OF THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK,
FROM AN ACCURATE MAP BY R. G. BRUCE IN 1761, WITH MODERN PLACE-NOMENCLATURE.
For comparison with Champlain's map of *R. St. Jehan*, to which it is adjusted as nearly as possible in
scale, extent, and meridian.
The compass agrees with Champlain's, which is set to the magnetic meridian, but the true north is
shown by the arrow.

Q.—THE PLACE WHERE VESSELS CAN ANCHOR, THOUGH THE RIVER RUNS WITH A STRONG
CURRENT.
Many a great ship has anchored in that place since Champlain's day.

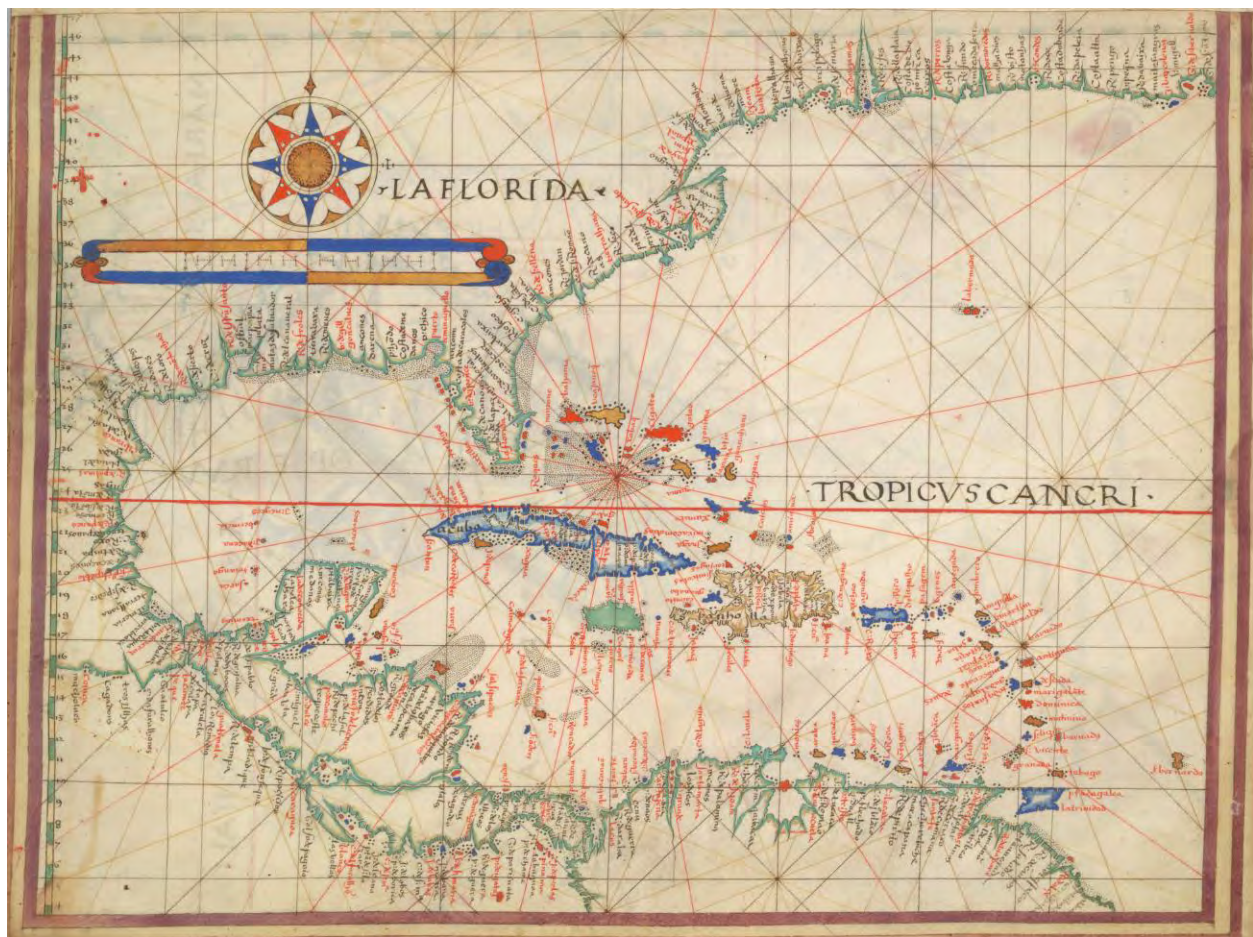
Upon the whole this map is one of Champlain's best, and surprisingly accurate in view of the haste with which it was made. The inclusion of Partridge Island, which lies far outside its limits, was allowed by its picture character. It is obviously not the result of a survey, but was sketched from a single point, and that point somewhere near the letter P of Champlain's map. This position is approximately that of the prominent Blue Rock, from the bare summit of which a very fine view of the surroundings is afforded; I have no doubt that here Champlain sketched the map. Upon this assumption, all the features of the topography of the region become perfectly clear. The soundings give too great a depth as a rule, which is natural from the fact that they must have been made in strong currents. The animal represented is one of the deer kind, but impossible of closer identification.

[Facing page 268.

Note 5. Barcelos family (Portuguese) 16th century settlement interests in Nova Scotia

Most of the information below was collected by Paul Wroclawski and published by him in “Early History of Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia,” *NEARA Journal*, vol. 44, No. 1, Summer 2010, pp. 14-20. [Paul passed away suddenly from a heart attack on 2014-06-15].

Archival documents pertaining to the Barcelos family settlement interests in Nova Scotia were discovered in the 1950's by Dr. de Lima, Chief Archivist, Azores. They are published in *Boletim do Instituto Historico*, vol. 18, 1963. These documents have been translated into English by L.A. Vigneras and published as “The Voyages of Diogo and Manoel de Barcelos to Canada in the Sixteenth Century,” *Terrae Incognitae: The Journal for the History of Discoveries*, vol. 5, 1973, pp. 61-64.



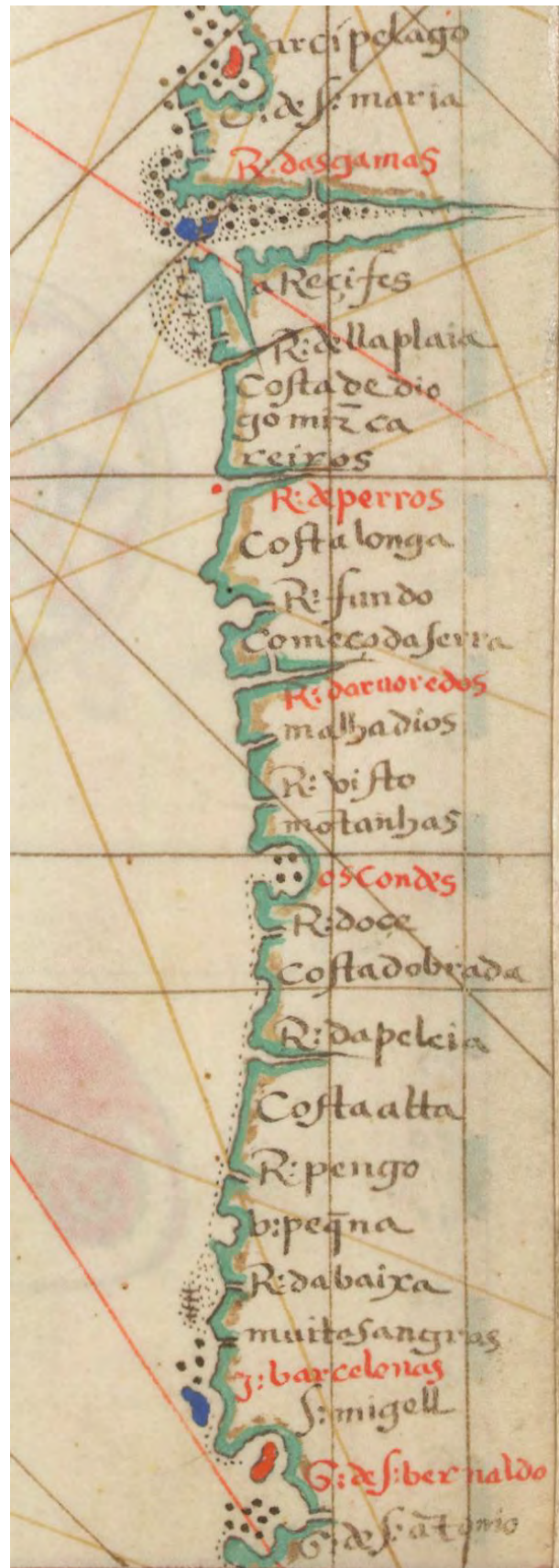
Map by Velho, circa 1550. Nova Scotia Atlantic coast is in upper right (see enlargement shown below).

By 1508, the family of Pinheiro de Barcelos, from Angra, Terceira Island, Azores, Portugal, claimed and was granted part of the Nova Scotia coast. They were raising livestock for trade with whalers off Labrador and they were mining lime for use as lime mortar to be sent back to the Azores. The following text is from a 1568 petition: “Manoel de Barcelos Machado, who resides in this city of Angra in Terceira Island, says that he bought a new ship, whose master is Joao Cordeiro, to go and settle the Island Barcellona de Sam Bardao, in which discovery his late father and he spent more than 5000 cruzados, and in which they have (or he has) been breeding herds of cows, sheep, goats and swine ...”

The *Island Barcellona de Sam Bardao* that the Barcelos family settled has not been conclusively identified. The Velho map shown above and partly enlarged on the right, and other such maps, portray it as an island very near the Nova Scotia coast. The *R. das gamas* (in red near the top), meaning River of Deer, is the Penobscot River. The *R. Fundo* (i.e., Bay of Fundy) is about two fifths down from the top. The *I. Barcelonas* and *G. de San Bernaldo* are in red near the bottom.

Some authors have tried to identify it with Sable Island. That seems very unlikely, as there would be no reason to attempt an agricultural settlement in such an impossible location as Sable Island when the entire Atlantic Coast of Nova Scotia was at their disposal. Furthermore, there is no lime (or anything else) to mine on Sable Island. That identification is also contrary to the cartographic evidence presented above (one example of several that could be cited).

There are some other maps, however, that do show the Barcellona or Barcelos island quite far offshore, and these maps partly motivate the purported Sable Island identification. However, in those particular maps, it seems evident that the mapmaker did not specifically know where to place the island, and just placed it somewhere in the vicinity of Nova Scotia. The same treatment is usually given in those cases to other far off islands that the mapmaker didn't know exactly where to draw, like the Island of Saint John.



Inset from Velho map of the Nova Scotia Atlantic coast, circa mid 1500's.

Note 6. Larry Loomer

Larry Loomer has published the only known account of a slate gravestone found circa 1900 on Ardoise Hill, NS, with an inscription claiming a burial dated to 1558. It is thought to most likely represent a Portuguese burial. The artefact itself appears to be still held in private hands and is not available for detailed study at the present time. The report by Loomer is the only information currently publically available. Loomer passed away in 2003 and his obituary is reproduced below.

Leslie Sinclair "Larry" Loomer, of Wolfville Ridge, NS, died Friday, 2003-05-30. Born in 1930 in Windsor, NS, he is the eldest son of Earle Raymond Loomer and his wife Verna Barbara Neaves. He was educated at public schools in South Farmington and Falmouth, Windsor Academy, King's College School, Acadia and Boston universities. Larry began his career as an art teacher, returning to the subject in later years as a painter, notably of watercolour landscapes, some of which are in private collections throughout Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In his early career he was a writer and editor with the *Telegraph-Journal* and *Evening Times-Globe*, Saint John, and the *Daily Gleaner* and *Atlantic Advocate*, Fredericton, NB.

Larry married Jane Schubert (née) Clarke (formerly Bernard), B.Mus. on 1963-10-14 at 474 Queen St, Fredericton, NB; she was a music teacher in Roxboro, PQ; she died on 1995-04-27. The last 29 years of Larry's business career were as a dealer in used antiquarian books, principally in Windsor (*Loomer's Antique Book Store*). He contributed to many periodicals and published several books, including *The beginnings of Jewish settlement in Nova Scotia, 1600/1800* (1980), *King's Edgehill School 1788-1988* (1988), *Windsor, Nova Scotia - A Journey in History* (1996), and *Allinghams* (1998). Some of his plays were performed in Canada and California. Larry was made honorary historian of *King's Edgehill School*. He is also one of the editors of *The Old St. James Anglican Burial Ground, Brooklyn, Hants County, Nova Scotia: Meander (Old Methodist) Cemetery, Newport, Hants County, Nova Scotia : Gravestone Inscriptions Recorded 1988-1989*, eds. Leslie Sinclair Loomer and Leland Harold Harvie, West Hants Historical Society, 1990, 16 pp.

Larry was survived by his step-mother, Mae, Windsor; sister Bernice, Montreal; two brothers, David, Kingston, Paul, Falmouth; five step-sisters, two step-brothers, numerous nieces and nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews, and cousins by the dozens. He was predeceased by his parents and brother Kenneth. Cremation ashes were interred privately in Falmouth. In keeping with Larry's wishes, there was no funeral service. Funeral arrangements entrusted to *Lohnes-Beazley Funeral Service Ltd.*, Windsor, NS. [source: [DeMont Family Funeral Home](#), [King's-Edgehill School Archives](#), [WikiTree](#), and the [West Hants Historical Society](#)]

Larry Loomer appears to have had a long interest in inscribed stones. In a letter from Grace S. Lewis, Assistant Secretary, Yarmouth Library, to L.S. Loomer, Managing Editor, *The Atlantic Advocate*, Fredericton, NB, dated 1963-11-28, there is the following remark (apparently in reply to an earlier inquiry by Loomer): "As for the Tusket River stones, mentioned by Dr. Flint, no further comment on them seems to have interested anyone." [source: letter on file at the [Yarmouth County Museum and Archives](#), Runic Stone collection.]

Note 7. Beverly Wells-Pinkney

So far as we have been able to ascertain, Beverly Wells-Pinkney is the first person to have reported the carving on the Overton Stone and to have made an enquiry about it. Sadly, Beverly passed away on 2015-11-18. Her obituary is online and reproduced below.

Beverly Patricia Marie Wells-Pinkney of Yarmouth, NS — 1961 to 2015



WELLS-PINKNEY, Beverly Patricia Marie – age 54, Yarmouth, passed away after a brief illness on Wednesday, 2015-11-18 in Yarmouth Regional Hospital. Born 1961-03-29 in Yarmouth, she was a daughter of Shirley L. (Fenton) Wells, Yarmouth, and the late Robert E. Wells. Beverly had been working most recently with MacKenzie Security in Yarmouth and had previously worked at the Yarmouth SPCA for many years, which was a fitting job for her given the passion and love she had for animals. Aside from her mother Shirley, she is survived by her loving children, Kara, Tiffany, Darrell, Christopher and Anna, all of Kemptville, as well as by five grandchildren; a brother, Robert Wells, Carleton; sisters, Gina Hatfield, Woodstock and Heather Watkins, Pembroke, ON and the father of her children, Darrell Pinkney Sr. She was predeceased by her father, Robert. In accordance with her wishes, cremation has taken place and there will be no visitation or public funeral service. Donations in Beverly's memory may be made to the Salvation Army. [source: [H.M. Huskison's Funeral Homes](#)]



Beverly was an avid hiker and explorer of the paths less travelled. She also made reports of a number of other unusual stone features from various locations around Yarmouth County, such as the beach stone with the square hole (left) and the stone that appears to



show a dragon facing a swan, though very heavily weathered (below). The photo on the right was taken on the same day that she first showed me the Overton Stone.

