

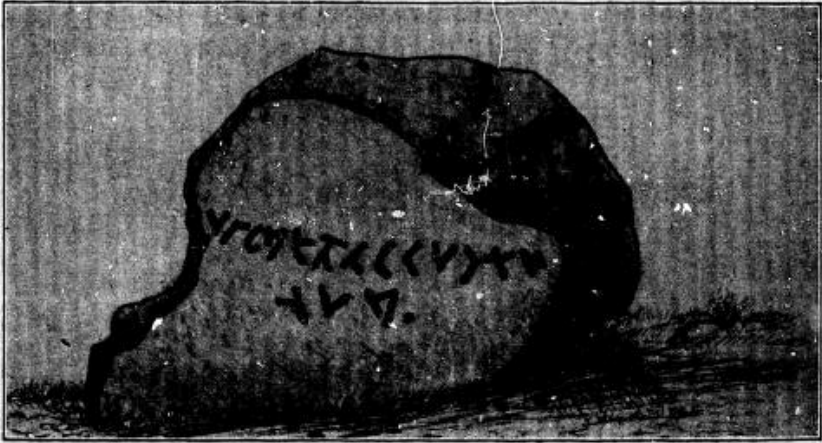
**DESCRIPTION
OF
RUNIC STONES
SUPPOSED RUNIC
INSCRIPTION.**



Found at Yarmouth Nova Scotia

**First Published in the
Yarmouth Herald 1898**

**DESCRIPTION
OF
RUNIC STONES
SUPPOSED RUNIC INSCRIPTION**



Found lying face downwards, half buried in the mud
on Jeffrey's Point, west side of Yarmouth Fletcher
Discovered by Mr James F. Jeffrey in 1897 This stone
is similar to the Fletcher Stone. Were one mile apart
Drawn by R Balfour Brown Copyrighted 1898 by J.
Murray Lawson.

**FOUND NEAR YARMOUTH, NOVA SCOTIA
(REPRINTED FROM THE YARMOUTH HERALD, 1898)**



REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.

Another Runic Stone Found near Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.
INSCRIBED STONE (RUNIC CHARACTERS)

Discovered by the late Dr. Richard Fletcher between the years 1809 and 1818 on Fletcher's Point, west side of Yarmouth harbour.

Drawn by R. Balfour Brown. Copyrighted 1808 by J. Murray Lawson.

We publish herewith prints of the Fletcher stone (so-called), and also of the more recently discovered inscribed stone situate on the south side of Bay View Park.

Mr. R. Balfour Brown has prepared two letters on the subject which will be found replete with interest, throwing as they do considerable light upon the history and condition of these remarkable records, These letters will be published in the next issues of the Herald.

Antiquarian zeal has been for many years expended in efforts to decipher the first of the two inscriptions and the latest discovery cannot but add new interest to a most perplexing question.

The similarity of the records is most an striking, and the fact that the two inset scribed stories were found so near each other (About a mile apart) cannot fail to attract marked attention. We republish our remarks of July 23, 1884, on which occasion the Herald published a print of the Fletcher stone:

The report of proceedings of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia for 1880, tinder the date of February 5th, says:—"A letter was read from Mr. T. B. Flint, of Yarmouth, N. S., in reference to the supposed Scandinavian inscription in that vicinity. He states that on an island near the mouth of the Tusket River there are also two very large stones with inscriptions in similar characters. The spot is very difficult of access by land, but not by water, although it is not in any frequented route.

The special committee appointed by the Society to investigate into and report upon the subject was continued."

The stone is at present in the possession of Mr. Samuel M. Ryerson, Yarmouth, who has for many years taken great interest in the inquiries connected with the stone and its inscription.

The following is Mr. Phillips' report in full. Should any of our readers know of any similar inscriptions, or have information which would throw any light on this interesting subject of discussion, we should be pleased to hear from them.—Ed. HERALD.

**On a Supposed Runic Inscription at Yarmouth,
Nova Scotia."
By Henry Phillips, Jr.**

On the shore of the Bay of Fundy, opposite the Town of Yarmouth, stands a rock weighing about four hundred pounds, which, about the end of the last century, was discovered by a man named Fletcher. It has been well known for nearly a hundred years, and those who dwell in its vicinity have always accepted it as a genuine relic of antiquity, no breath of suspicion ever having fallen upon it. The glyphs have been at various times copied and sent abroad to men of learning who have made more or less attempts at deciphering them, more than one savant seeing traces of Semitic origin.

In 1875 rubbing procured from the stone was placed in my hands for investigation. Since that time I have carefully considered the circumstances of the case and have become ultimately satisfied of its bona-fide nature, that the inscription is neither a modern fraud nor the work of the wayward playfulness of the leisure hours the sportive redskin. having become imbued with a belief that no deception was intended or practiced, I entered upon the study of the markings with a mind totally and entirely free from prejudice. So far from believing that the inscription was a relic of the pre Columbian discovery of America, I have never given any credence to that theory. I therefore approached the subject entirely unbiased in my opinion, in fact, somewhat prejudiced against the

Description of Runic Stones Supposed Runic Inscription

authenticity of any inscription on this continent., purporting to emanate front the hardy and intrepid Norsemen.



SUPPOSED RUNIC INSCRIPTION

Found lying face downwards half buried in the mud on the beach on Jeffrey's Point, west side of Yarmouth harbor. Discovered by Mr. James F. Jeffrey in 1897. This stone is similar to the Fletcher Stone. Were one mile apart.

Drawn by R. Balfour Brown. Copyrighted 1898 by J. Murray Lawson.

The difficulty of interpreting these markings was greatly increased on account of the nature of the material on which the rubbing had been taken and the fact that in the Runic alphabets the letters frequently have many varying values and forms. but like a kaleidoscope, word after word appeared in disjointed forms, and each was in turn rejected until at last an intelligible wind came forth, followed by another and another, until a real sentence with a meaning stood forth to my astonished gaze:— "HARKUSSEN MEN VARU"— HARKO'S SON ADDRESSED THE MEN."

Description of Runic Stones Supposed Runic Inscription

Upon examining further, I found that in the expedition of Thorfinn Karlsefne, in 1007, the name of Harki occurs among those who accompanied him. I confess that I was staggered by the remarkable coincidence and began to waver, and the finishing touches were placed to my unbelief when I observed the map and saw how short the distance was from Iceland to Greenland, compared with the stretch of water from Norway to Iceland, It seemed more than probable that the fearless race that actually did cross the latter expanse of ocean were not likely to be deterred from navigating the former. As to the reason why such a memento should be left of the visit, of course no definite answer can be given, but it is a fact well known that memorials were often made or erected, engraved or placed at localities where events had taken place, and the address of the chieftain to the men may have been of some noteworthy matter, perhaps even to commemorate the fact of having landed at that spot. In conclusion, I would say that the circumstances are worthy of consideration, if not absolutely convincing.

Notes: The squeeze of the inscription was made by T. B. Flint, Esq., of Yarmouth, N. S., and photographed by Mr. E. B. Harden, of Philadelphia.

Mr. Phillips is Corresponding Secretary of the numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia.

On this voyage "they came to a place where a firth penetrated far into the country. Off the mouth of it was an island past which there ran strong currents, which was also the case farther up the firth."—*Antiq Americana* 1837. Page xxxi.

The New Runic Stone. Editor Yarmouth Herald:

DEAR SIR, —I was told about a year ago that a stone, with characters cut on it similar to those on the Fletcher stone, had been found near Bay View Park. Supposing it to be an advertising dodge for the benefit of the lessee of the park I did not go to see it at that time.

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On the first of the month, however, I happened to be on the grounds of the park and thought I would take a look at this new find. Imagine my astonishment when on seeing it for the first time there appeared the same mysterious glyphs of the same well known forms with which I had been familiar all my lifetime on the now celebrated Fletcher stone. In the present case, however, three more had been added to the inscription. Two of these had their counterpart on the Fletcher stone, while one was new. The three last glyphs were in a line below the others which stretched across the whole face of the stone tablet.

Roughly measured with a tape line, I found the contents to be about three cubic feet, or say 450 lbs. in weight. The face of the boulder is as fair and smooth as if dressed by a lapidary, and is colored by age to a dark hue, glyphs and all. The stone must have been selected with great care, and seemed to be a bard, fine-grained hornblendic granite, such as may be seen along the shores of Little River, eight or nine miles from our cape in a south-wardly direction.

Having made a careful sketch of the stone, which, by the way, has a singularly grotesque resemblance to a human skull in outline, I sought an interview with Mr. James F. Jeffery, the alleged discoverer of it.

Mr. Jeffery led me down to the beach just south of his residence, and pointed out the spot near high water mark where it was found, and here, half buried in the salt, sand and debris of the beach, face downwards, had this interesting relic of a past ago lain unnoticed, while the residents of the locality must have walked around and over it a thousand times. This neighborhood had been inhabited for more than a century.

Being provided with paper, etc., I wrote down all that Mr. Jeffery knew about his discovery.

MR JAMES F. JEFFERY'S STATEMENT

I have lived all my life on this farm. Wishing to extend the seawall on the south side of the road leading to Bay View Park, I was engaged last summer in hauling up the boulders which lined the shore near my house.

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On turning over the stone with the characters on, I noticed some of the marks which excited my curiosity. After carefully washing off the rock I was satisfied that this was similar to the one described in the YARMOUTH HERALD some years ago, and in order to preserve it I had it hauled up to the place where it now lies on Bay View Park hill in front of the stable. Neither I nor my father, though living here for many years, ever heard of this stone until last summer, when I found it as stated.

Referring to the above brief narrative of Mr. Jeffery, I may state here that any one who is acquainted with him would never for one moment doubt his veracity, but as there are many persons likely to read this statement who can never be made to be-here a self-evident fact without the strongest proof, I used my prerogative as a magistrate to swear him in due form as to the finding of the stone as related above.

Among the hundreds of boulders (doubtless brought here by the ice) Mr. Jeffery and I could find none of a similar composition to the one under consideration. In comparing ibis record with the one found by the late Dr. Richard Fletcher on his property in the year 1812, with the one found by Mr. Jeffery last summer, I have some remarks to make which I consider of importance.

Quite fifty years ago I made my first sketch of the Fletcher stone, and noticed then that the glyphs were bridged over in places by spongy masses or scales of white quartz, which must have either formed by atomic deposition, or else (what seemed most likely) by the gradual disintegration of the softer rook, It was my opinion then that no better proof of the antiquity of the inscription could be desired. Scales of quartz may be seen now all over the upper part of the face of the stone. It will be observed that the inscription is very near the top edge of the stone tablet, as if the sculptor intended to add more to the record at some subsequent period. This rook is what I should call a metamorphosed sand stone. The first 13 glyphs on the Jeffery stone are identical in form with the 13 glyphs on the Fletcher stone; the others are partly a repetition so that any one having a key to the first 13 could read all but one in the second row on the Jeffery stone. The first few on the latter are cut down to a level, but as you near the end of the sentence they have a stippled appearance as if they were

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done much more hurriedly. These last might be done exactly by means of a round steel marlinespike point, held at an angle of about 45 degrees, and a mallet. The glyphs are about 1/8 inch deep and tarnished by age, as is the rock itself.

I can only account for the polished appearance of the flat surface of the Jeffery stone by supposing that float ice had enveloped and lifted it with the rising tide and moving it back and forth on the sandy bed on which it lay.

Jeffery's Point, where the last stone tablet was found last summer, is just about one mile due south nearly from the Fletcher point where the other tablet was found nearly a century ago. Again, it is one mile farther south to the "Narrows," formed by Bunker's Island and the east cape, at the south extremity of the harbor.

There are other inscribed stones known to the writer which have been found in this county, but which will be referred to in a subsequent letter, as I find myself encroaching too much on your columns.

Yours truly,
R. BALFOUR BROWN.

RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS. FOUND ON THE WEST OF YARMOUTH HARBOUR (Continued)

Several years previous to the death of the late Dr. Joseph Farish, while riding over to the Fletcher farm with me, that gentleman informed me that in 1824 his father, Dr. H. G. Farish, took him over to see the stone, and the elder gentleman entertained his son, a boy of 15, with an account of the efforts that had been made by himself and Dr. Fletcher (who had died some half-dozen years before), to have the glyphs deciphered by some antiquarian societies to whom they had sent copies, but without success.

Later efforts also failed, and it was only in 1875 that the mysterious writing was made known to the world by Mr. Henry Phillips, Jr., corresponding

member of the antiquarian society of Philadelphia. I had known Mr. Phillips for some years, and when he greeted me on board of the old Steamer Linda, with the assurance that he had "come to study and procure copies of the Fletcher stone," I was not surprised, knowing him to be a fine scholar and enthusiastic antiquarian. He was fortunate enough to fall into the hands of our courteous and obliging representative, Mr. T. B. Flint, who secured for him several copies of the inscription.

Mr. Phillips' interpretation and subsequent report to the society, of which he was a member, published in the *Yarmouth Herald* in 1884, was of such interest to the reading public, that I shall take the liberty of asking a republication of it in its entirety as follows:

"On the shore of the Bay of Fundy, (this is an error, the stone was found on the west side of the harbour, and not on the Atlantic shore, which is separated from the harbour by a long strip of land about half a mile in width) opposite the town of Yarmouth a rock, weighing about four hundred pounds, which, about the end of the last century was discovered by a man named Fletcher.

"It has been well known for nearly one hundred years, and those who dwell in its vicinity have always accepted It as a genuine relic of antiquity, no breath of suspicion ever having fallen upon it. The glyphs thereon have been at various times copied and sent abroad to men of learning, who have made more or less attempts at deciphering them, more than one savant seeing traces of Semitic origin.

"In 1875 a rubbing, procured from this stone, was placed in my hands for investigation. Since that time I have carefully considered the circumstances of the case, and have become ultimately satisfied of its *bona fide* nature: that the inscription was neither a common fraud nor the work of the wayward playfulness of the leisure bums of the sportive redskin, "Having been imbued with the belief that no deception was intended or practiced, I entered upon the study of the markings with a mind totally and entirely free from prejudice. So far from believing that the inscription was a relic of the pre-Columbian discovery of America, I had never given any credence to that theory. I therefore approached the subject entirely

unbiased in my opinion, in fact, somewhat prejudiced against the authenticity of any inscription on this continent purporting to emanate from the hardy and intrepid Norsemen.

"The difficulty of interpreting these markings was greatly increased on account of the nature of the material in which the rubbing had been taken, and the fact that in the Runic alphabets the letters frequently have many varying values and forms. But, like a kaleidoscope, word after word appeared in disjointed forms, and each was in turn repeated, until at last an intelligible word came forth, followed by another and another, until a real sentence with a meaning stood forth to my astonished gaze: 'Harkussen men varu' ('Haka's son addressed the men.')

"Upon examining further. I found in the expedition of Throfinn Karlsetne, in 1007, the name of Haki occurring among those who accompanied him, on this voyage they came to a place where a frith penetrated far into the country. Off the mouth of it was an island past which there ran strong currents, which was also the case farther up the frith.

"I confess that I was staggered by the remarkable coincidence, and began to waver, and the finishing touches were placed to my unbelief when I observed the map and saw how short the distance was from Iceland to Greenland, compared with the stretch of water from Norway to Iceland. It seemed more than probable that the fearless race that actually did cross the latter expanse of ocean were not likely to be deterred from navigating the former.

"As to the reason why such a memento should be left of the visit of course no answer can be given; but it is a fact well known that memorials were often made or erected, engraved or placed at localities where events had taken place; and the address of the chieftain to the men may have been of some noteworthy matter, perhaps even to commemorate the fact of having landed at that spot."

In Mr. G. S. Brown's "Sequel to Campbell's History of Yarmouth," that gentleman has devoted several pages to the consideration of the Norsemen,

and to facts leading up to their probable visit to Yarmouth, and the almost certain Scandinavian origin of the Fetcher stone.

To those who may have access to the above history, I commend a careful perusal of the first chapter of this valuable work.

Mr. Brown's interest in the stone record was no doubt intensified by the fact of his being the grandson of the discoverer, Dr. Richard Fletcher, who died in ISIS, and whose widow became the custodian of the inscribed stone until her death many years afterwards. To their watchful care are we in a great measure indebted for its preservation during the time it was in their possession.

Among the critics who are opposed to the views taken of the subject by Messrs. Brown and Phillips are Sir Daniel Wilson, of the university of Toronto, and K. G. T. Webster, B. A, a native of Yarmouth, the last of whom in a letter on the Fletcher stone, published in the *transactions of the Nova Scotia Institute of Science*, page 208, vol. 1, ridicules the notion of a Runic origin to the stone inscription, implying also that the Norsemen might have found several other places to which their account applied more properly than Yarmouth. Before quoting the chief grounds for Mr. Webster's unbelief, it will be interesting to the readers of this article if I transcribe a few lines from the writings of Carl Christian Rafu, a learned Danish archeologist, librarian of the university of Copenhagen. His *American antiquities* published in 1837 from the manuscripts of the Scandinavian records, and his interpretation thereof, are accepted by nearly all students of Norse history, and are endorsed by no less a personage than the great Baron Humbolt who quotes him largely in his Cosmos.

In the year 1001 the Icelanders touched upon the American coast, and for nearly two centuries subsequent visits were repeatedly made by them and the Norwegians.

Biorn Heriolson, an Icelander, was the first discoverer. Steering for Greenland he was driven to the south by tempestuous and unfavorable winds, and saw different parts of America, without, however, touching at any of them. Attracted by the report of this voyage, Leif, son of Eric, the

discoverer of Greenland, fitted out a vessel to pursue the same adventure. He passed the coast visited by Biorn, and steered southwest till he reached a strait between a large island and the mainland. Finding the country fertile and pleasant he passed the winter near this place, and gave it the name of Vinland, from the wild vine growing there in great abundance. According to Rafu, " Biorn first saw land in the island of Nantucket, one degree south of Boston, then in Nova Scotia, then in Newfoundland."

Accurate information respecting the former intercourse of the North men with the continent of America reaches only as far as the middle of the 14th century. In the year 1349 a ship was sent from Greenland to Markland (Nova Scotia) to collect timber. Upon their return from Markland the ship was overtaken by storms and compelled to land at Straumfjord, in the west of Iceland. This is the last account of the Norman America preserved to us by the ancient Scandinavian writings.

Humbolt tells us that "by means of the critical and most praiseworthy efforts of Christian Rafu, and the Royal Society for Northern Antiquities in Copenhagen, the traditions and ancient accounts of the voyage of the Normans to Helluland (Newfoundland), to Markland (the mouth of the river St. Lawrence at Nova Scotia), and at Vinland (Massachusetts), have been separately printed and satisfactorily commented upon."

Says Rafu: "The principal sources of information are the historical narratives of Eric the Red, Thorfinn Karlsefne and Snorre Thorbrandson, probably written in Greenland itself as early as the twelfth century, partly by descendants of the settlers born in Vinland. One account seems to point very strongly to a visit to this part of Nova Scotia and is as follows:

"Thorfinn Karlsefne in 1007, in one ship, and Biorne Grimolfson in another ship, left Greenland for Vinland (Massachusetts). They had a hundred and sixty men, and took all kinds of live stock intending to establish a colony. They sailed southerly and found Helluland (Newfoundland), where there were many foxes. They again sailed southerly and found Markland (Nova Scotia) overgrown with wood. They continued south-westerly a long time, having the land to starboard, passing long beaches, and deserts and sands, and came to a land indented with

inlets. They landed and explored the country, finding grapes and some ears of wheat, which grew wild. They continued their course until they came to a place where a frith penetrated for into the country. Off the mouth of it was an island, past which there ran strong currents, which was also the case farther up the frith, etc."

The long beaches and deserts of sand referred to above, in my opinion, refer to those stretching along the coast line from Hawk Point, Cape Island, in a north-easterly direction, one of which makes a fine race course, at least six miles long. In the distance across Barrington Passage may be seen stretches of sandy hills not less than 40 feet high, and which may be seen at a great distance from seaward. In the last sentence written by me in italics, " they came to a place," and so on, there is in my opinion a very pointed reference to Yarmouth and vicinity.

Mr. K. G. T. Webster, in his paper read before the Nova Scotia Institute of Science six years ago, calls attention to the fact that the current on the west side of Bunker Island is not strong, (being in fact a four knot tide at the utmost) and that the island is "more peninsula than island." This is all very true as to present conditions, but it must be borne in mind that in the year 1007, when the Norsemen visited this country, there were topographical differences which do not now exist.

From the bridge at the head of the harbor to the Narrows is three miles and a quarter, while it is four miles and a half to the end of the capes. It is just three miles more from the bridge up to Hebron pond at its head, the northern limit of the tidal flow. This was on the east side, giving as a result an uninterrupted passage inland of more than six miles, inside the sound. On the west side the harbor was connected with what is called the "salt pond" by a channel of a few yards in width. When flooded this pond would be over a square mile in area. All the ponds united would give an area of about three square miles, and if the dams were removed to the depth of the old channels, would give a depth of from six to ten feet above the channel banks. Again, I have heard in my young days old men say that in their time the Beacon ledges were covered and connected with Bunker Island by soil on which trees were growing. This would leave the Narrows a width of three hundred yards, and the two passages at the harbor's north

end were mere ravines of from 80 to 100 feet wide through which the miles of water must have rushed with great velocity during the hours of ebb and flood. Nor is this all, for since the settlement of the township began, many miles of forest trees have been destroyed, thereby lessening materially the rainfall, and causing to dry up a chain of lakes which emptied into the ponds at Hebron, but which formerly were filled to overflowing, and were connected by rapids for ten miles above Milton, on longer pouring their waters into our harbor as in the days of the Vikings How applicable the language of the Norsemen is to our harbor may be judged by every reader acquainted with the facts as I have given them. "They came to a place where a frith penetrated far into the country. Off the mouth of it was an island past which there ran strong currents, which also was the case farther up the frith." I have hopes that on some of the other headlands around our coast inscriptions may be found, a translation of which may throw more light upon the mystery now enveloping the two remarkable stone tablets which were discovered at periods so widely separated.

R. BALFOUR BROWN.



The Fletcher Stone with Runic inscriptions

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