

P lease put page number in

Historical Time-line for the KRS

4-9-03

The story of the Kensington Rune Stone has been told in print countless times. Each chronology is usually laced with the author's interpretation of the information. This has been the basic problem with KRS chronologies. They have all of the right information, but they will have the opportunity to start with a presentation that is accurate. To hopefully avoid any inaccuracies, we include photographs of part or all, of the stone. This information from a document that speaks to the stone is information to researchers of the stone. Hjalmer Holand to Olof Ohman are two of the most important individuals in the KRS history. There may be more documents that we have not seen on the stone. This chronology of the stone's story it tells, speaks for itself.

Dick Nelson's Review

information. This has usually happened unless you are where Dick and I have the experience. What we have documented evidence. So, we include a pertinent quote that now represent new information. A letter written by the two most important individuals in the KRS history in April of 2003. There is a document on that bears directly on the stone and we believe the

The time-line spans 150 years and is divided into nine sections. Each section represents an important block of time when significant events occurred. The implications of these events will be discussed in later chapters. What is most important is to document the sequence of events in the story as objectively and thoroughly as possible. This time-line should serve as a reference for the countless discussions and debates that are sure to follow. A logical starting point for a time-line for the modern history of the Kensington Rune Stone is with the birth of the central character.

Olof Ohman (1854 to 1898)

1854

Month, Date
↓
a small town near Forssa?
six weeks

October 10 - Olof Ohman was born on ----, 1854, in the city of ----, Helsingland, Sweden. He received the equivalent of 6 quarters of formal education.



1857/1858 - Sven Fogelblad and Claës Ljungstrom both attend the Bedared Parish Church in Vastorgotland.

1866 - Claus Ljungström wrote a book of runes called Runa-List. The rune rows in this book are not consistent with the runes on the KRS. Further, the Futhork table of runes shows that the "thorn" rune could be used for "t."

RUNORNA.

F	N	D	A	R	Y	*	T	I	I	N	1	B	T	Y	A
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

Bokstaf	Betydelse	Namn
F	f, fv	Frej, Fè
N	u, v, y	Úr
D	þ, th, t, d	þór, Thurs

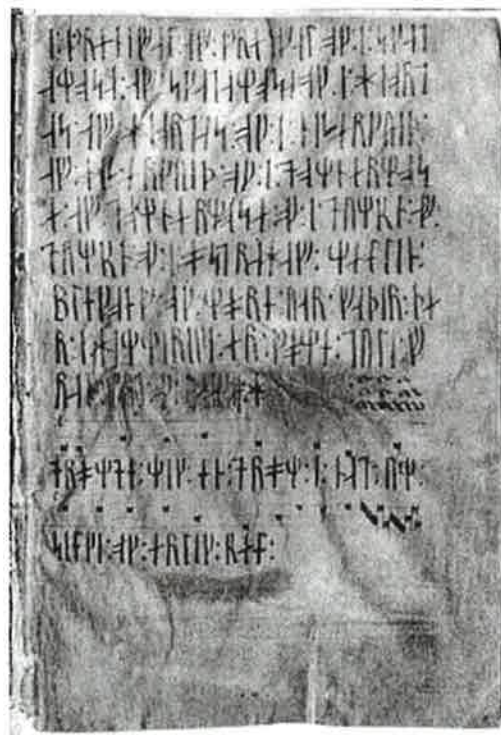
and the rune's name

Page 1 of Ljungstrom's book of runes, showing a table of runes and the letters they could represent. The third line shows how the "thorn" rune could also be used for "t."

1877 – Both the 100-page Codex Runicus and the 20-page Mariaklagen texts were first reported in modern times, in Denmark by P. G. Thorson. Both documents are the only copies of each known to exist and contain numerous examples of the "crossed-L" or so-called "J" rune which was considered to be the chief proof of forgery. The Codux Runicus survived the Copenhagen fire of 1728 because it had been checked out of the library.

plus?

the dozen pages of



The last page of the Codux Runicus, which contains two of the so-called "J" runes in the last line of the document.



Page 18 of the Mariaklagen text which contains three of the so-called "J" runes. *or crossed t f*

Montelius, Oscar – Published the book, Sweden's History: From the Oldest Times Until Our Days, Stockholm. The first volume was later published in the Swedish American Post between November 1897 and *July* 1898.



The title page to the Oskar Montelius book of Swedish History published in 1877.

1884 to 1886 – Olof Ohman returned to Sweden where he met his eventual wife Karin.

1888 – Edward Ohman was born in Kensington, Minnesota.

1890 – P. K**ö**bke publishes the book, “About the Runes in Scandinavia.” Included in this book are the last two lines of the Codex Runicus which include the two “J” runes. K**ö**bke’s book was referenced by George T. Flom in his discussion of the runes of the KRS.



but f
was not
noticed

The last two lines of the Codex Runicus that appears on page 79 of K**ö**bke’s book about runes in Scandinavia.

189? – Ohman acquires the eastern 40 acres of his land where the KRS would eventually be discovered.

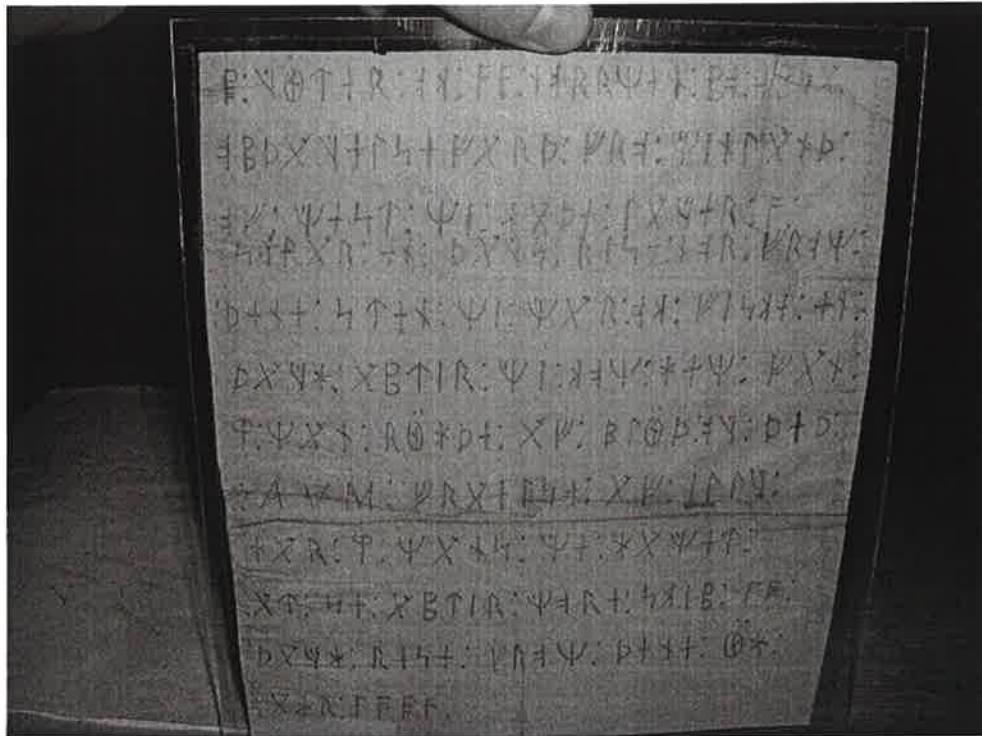
The Discovery (1898 to 1900)

1898

November – Sometime prior to the ground being frozen, Olof Ohman unearths the KRS while “grubbing trees” on his newly acquired property adjacent to Nils Flaaten’s farm.

November -- Siverts son recalls that the rune stone was brought into town on a sleigh.’

December – A copy of the inscription that was found in the President of the University of Minnesota’s file by Theodore Blegen in 1925. This copy was originally sent by Samuel Siverts upon the request Olaus J. Breda, at the University of Minnesota, “About New Years of 1899.”



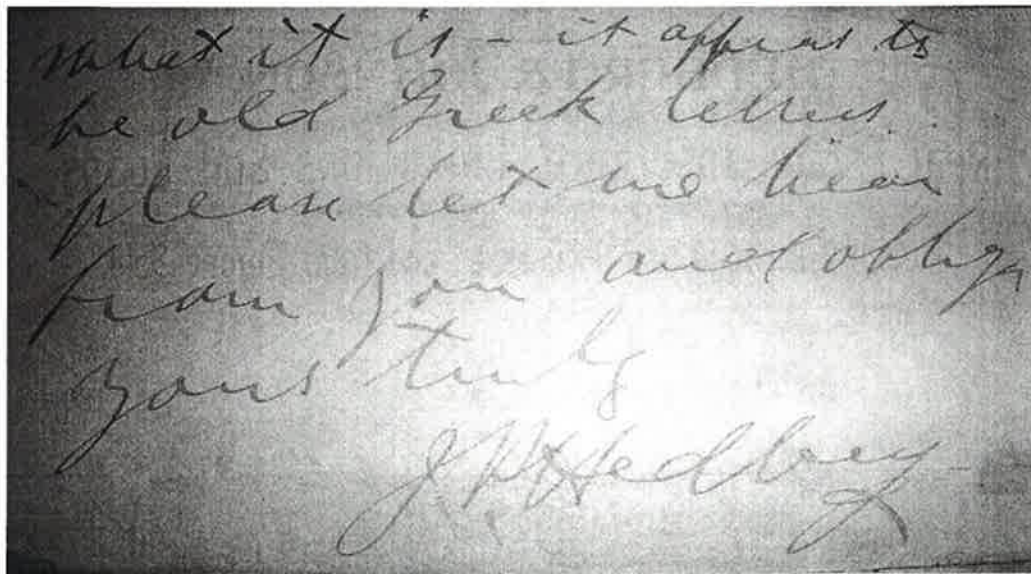
The copy of the KRS inscription ["Siverts Copy"] that was received by Olaus Breda at the University of Minnesota *about New Year* "around" January 1, 1899. This document is incorrectly labeled as being sent by J. P. Hedberg, on the right side of the copy.

1899

January 1 – A second copy of the inscription, the so-called "Ohman Copy," was sent to Swan J. Turnblad at the newspaper, The Svenske Amerikanska Post, on January 1, 1899. This copy was received with a letter written by J. P. Hedberg of Kensington, Minnesota. The whereabouts of this original copy is unknown.



A newspaper reproduction of the "Ohman Copy" that was sent to Swan J. Turnblad at the Svenska Amerikanska Posten on January 1, 1899. *and published on Feb 28, 1899 subsequently*



Page 2 of the J. P. Hedberg letter received by the MHS on January 1, 1899. *sent to, SAP Turnblad*

“- it appears to be old Greek letters please let me hear from you and oblige.”

January 14 – Professor Breda at the University of Minnesota publishes in the newspaper Ariel, his translation of the inscription using the Siverts copy. This translation does not include the word “with” on the fourth line.

Siverts was a fellow East immigrant from Norway
get newspaper article
February 20 – The Chicago Tribune reports that Professor George O. Curme of Northwestern University, in Evanston, Illinois, at a meeting of the German Club “announced publicly that he had the copies [of the] inscription in his possession and that it had been translated.”

get Newspaper article
February 21 – The Chicago daily newspaper The Daily Inter Ocean, reports that “The letter [“Ohman copy”] was received several weeks ago at the university; [Northwestern].” Professor Curme’s use of the word “with” on the fourth line in his translation, confirms that this copy was indeed the “Ohman copy.”

from SAP
Skandinavian
February 23 – E. E. Aaberg, a Norwegian immigrant, wrote a letter to the Skandinavian, that was published 7 days later on March 1st. “The hill where the stone was found was without trees when the first settlers arrived some 20 to 30 years ago. But since that time a number of aspen trees have grown up there; it was an aspen that had grown over the stone, from 20 to 30 years ago.”

Chicago
February 28 – The KRS arrives at the residence of Professor George O. Curme’s

March 1 - Curme was quoted in The Daily Inter Ocean, as saying the following, “The most positive proof that the inscription is not of the ancient origin claimed by its discoverers is the fact that the crevices which form the letters are of a lighter color than the outer surface of the stone; this could hardly be the case if the stone had been buried for the 600 years that must have elapsed provided the inscription is authentic.”

March 3 – Curme was quoted in the Skandinavian, as saying the following, “The letters of the inscription were evidently carved with a sharp instrument for they are clear and distinct in outline. But the fact that the upper edge of the incised line is rough and rounded as a result of the disintegration of the stone, while the bottom of the incisions is sharp and clear, shows plainly that many years must have elapsed since the inscription was cut. In other words, the external appearance of the Kensington rune stone, so far from speaking against it, is such that the inscription may well be 600 years old.”

John F. Stewart takes the first known photographs of the Kensington Rune Stone at the home of George O. Curme in Chicago, Illinois.

May 16 – Olaus Olson wrote a letter to the Svenska Amerikanska Posten, that was published 7 days later on May 23. Among other points, Olson said, “The tree is at least 25 if not 30 years old.”

May – The stone was returned to the Olof Ohman farm. *on the Soo Line*



A photograph of the face side of the inscription taken by John F. Steward in March of 1899.

ripped.
October 15 – John F. Steward wrote a letter to Professor Ludwig F. A. Wimmer of Copenhagen, Denmark. He wrote the following with regard to the inscription, “The inscriptions are on the two cleavage surfaces of the stone, which have received no dressing. They are cut as with a “diamond-studded” tool. The grooves show no more newness than the natural surfaces of the rock; on the contrary all show age.”

1900

pointed

Relative Calm (1900 to 1907)

Flurry of Activity (1907 to 1911)

1906 —
 1907

*Adolf Noreen's articles in KRS
 1906 Noreen's Dalecarlian Runic*

see it again

August – Hjalmer Holand took possession of the KRS from Olof Ohman. *on the occasion of his retirement to Christus for ownership "was presented"*

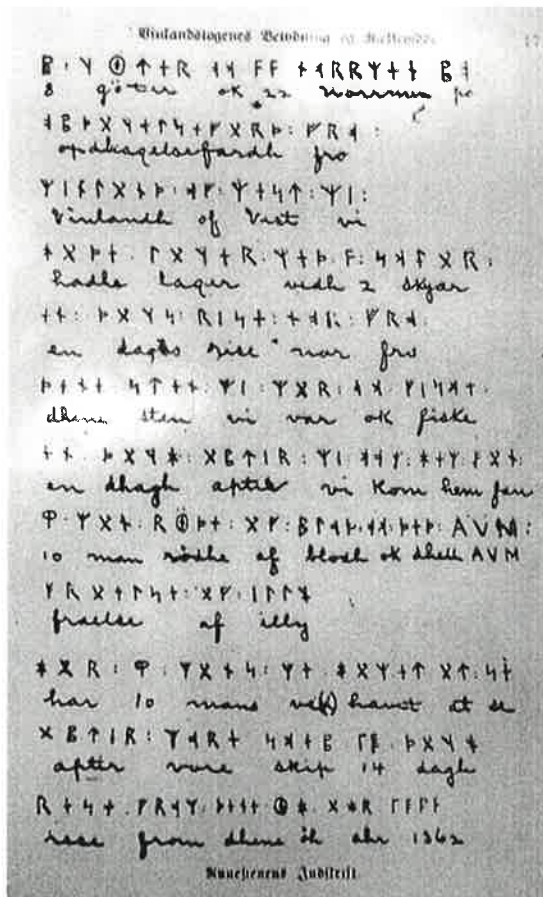
14th. In reply I wish to say that
 Mr. Ohman presented me with the
 stone in ^{August} November, 1907. At that

Holand Letter of January 30, 1930

"In reply I wish to say that Mr. Ohman presented me with the stone in August of 1907"

1908

February – Hjalmer Holand wrote his first paper, "De Norske Settlementers Historie, [Norwegian Immigrant History," on the KRS. Included in this paper is Holand's and transcription of the inscription which omits the double-dots over the five "hooked-Xs." Holand also reports that the age of the tree was at least 25 years based upon a count of the annual tree rings.



as well as
 9 other
 errors.

next page

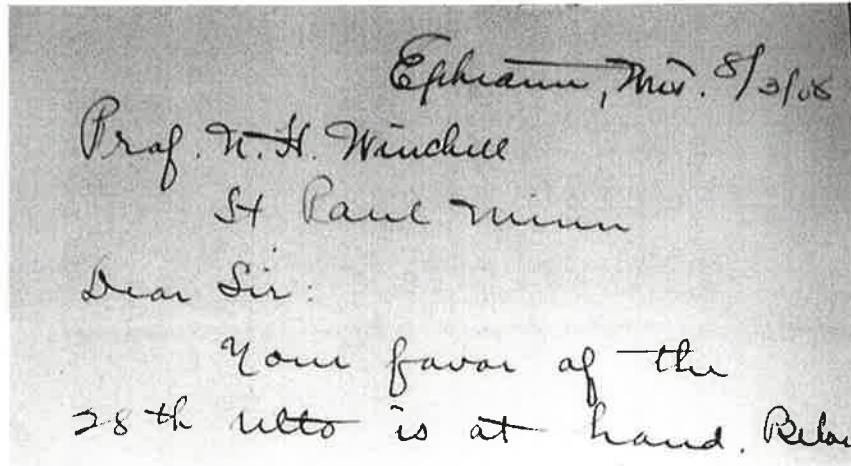
The "1909 Holand copy" of the KRS inscription, which appeared in the Harpers Weekly, October 9, 1909.

1908

several newspapers in
 the first quarter Febun 1908

which appeared in the Harper's Weekly,
October 9, 1909. Now only the
double-dot dots are missing over the X

August 3 – Holand wrote his first known letter to Professor Newton Winchell at the MHS. This letter includes a written transcription of the KRS inscription.



in file
plans.

The beginning of the first known H.R. Holand letter to Newton Winchell at the MHS on August 3, 1908.

1909

May – Helge Gjessing publishes an article, “The Rune-Stone from Kensington,” in Smyra. This article was written in response to Holand’s letter to Magnus Olsen in Oslo, enclosing his 1908 article on the KRS. Gjessing wrote that a tree of 25 years of age did not preclude the presence of white settlers capable of carving the inscription.

OK ~~1st~~ 2nd

Holand wrote his **second** paper on the KRS, “The Kensington Stone’s Language and Runes; Answer to Mr. Helga Gjessing,” which was published in Symra.

July 20 – Olof Ohman, Nils Flaaten, Roald Benson, Samuel Olson and Edward Ohman signed affidavits of their statements about the discovery of the KRS. These statements were given in Douglas County in the State of Minnesota, and signed by witnesses R. J. Rasmusson [notary public], and George H. Merhes.

October 9 – Holand publishes his ^{third} **second** paper on the KRS, “An Explorer’s Stone Record which Antedates Columbus,” in the Harper’s Weekly, 53:15. Holand reports in this paper that, “In the opinion of many expert Woodsmen, it could not have been less than forty years old, growing as it did, in a dense shaded forest.” There is no explanation of why the alleged age of the tree increased from 25 to 40 years. ~~and that the annual~~ However ^{tree}

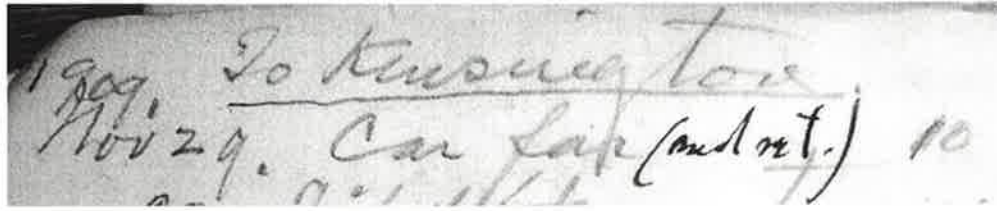
Holand had stated

November 29 to December 2 – N. H. Winchell made his first trip to Kensington.

that reports

“Forty years anterior to the
discovery brings us back to 1858, when
scarcely a single frontiersman had
settled within one hundred miles of the place and
the nearest rail road was four hundred miles away.”

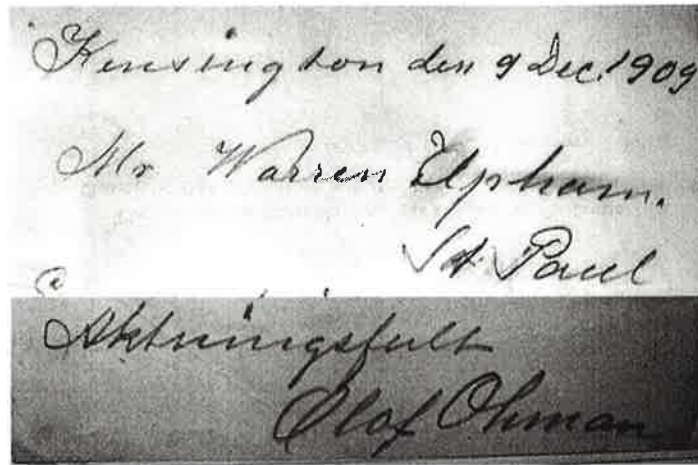
excerpt



The heading on page 1 of Winchell's field notebook.

December 6 - N. H. Winchell completed his report (11 pages) about the physical and geographical attributes related to the KRS.

December 9 – Olof Ohman wrote a 4-page letter in Swedish to Warren Upham at the MHS describing the discovery of the KRS.



The date on page 1 and Mr. Ohman's signature on page 4 of his letter.

"Your letter is at hand, and I must inform that my assets financially speaking do not permit me to attend your Society's meeting, nor can I see that my presence is necessary. As to your question concerning the finding of the rune stone I can state that the stone in question was found under a poplar root. From the appearance pictured below, of the root, the stone was imbedded between these roots with the runes turned downward and the runes of the side turned toward the taproot, as we say in farmer language. I cut off the outer root as we see in the drawing and also the taproot in the same place as shown in the drawing. Then the tree fell and the stone was revealed.

I saw that the stone was thin. I simply put the grubbing hoe under it and turned the under side up so that the runes were exposed. My boy Edvar[d] was born 1888. He was about 10 years old. He was the first to see that there was something inscribed on the stone. The boys believed that they had found an Indian almanac. I myself also saw that there was something written. But to read was a mystery to me. I am Swedish, born in Helsingland, but I never seen any rune stone before. The stone lay 44 feet above the present water level. The poplar tree was about 8 inches in diameter."

*add the rest of the text
Ohman*

Respectfully,

Olof Ohman



The drawing of the tree with its roots around the stone in Ohman's December 9, 1909 letter to Warren Upham at the MHS.

He marked where the roots were cut. * *

December 15 - N. H. Winchell writes a 1-page statement that is favorable to the authenticity of the KRS.

* * are their marks on the KRS from the hoe?

N. H. Mitchell
Geologist
Minneapolis, Minn.

Dec 15, 1909

I have personally made a topographical examination of the place where the Kensington rune stone was found, and of the region northward to Pelican lake where the skerries are located, to which the inscription refers, and I am convinced from the geological conditions, and the physical changes that the region has experienced probably within the last five hundred years that the said stone is not a modern forgery, and must be accepted as a genuine record of an exploration in Minnesota, at the date stated in the inscription.

N. H. Mitchell

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*
December 27 – Hjalmer Holand sends copies of the affidavits of Edward Ohman, Roald Bentson and Nile Flaaten to the MHS that were obtained by Mr. Holand and Dr. Knute Hough.

perhaps at ~~st~~ 4 ≠ F X R

is 4 ≠ + X R = shear ≈ skär
changes
skerries

perhaps the word
could be skermis

if f > + (e)

Spartan, Wis. 12/22/09.

My dear Dr. Upham

Enclosed I send you copies of the other three affs. to be embodied in footnotes to my lecture. I also enclose Prof. Winchell's statement to be filed in your archives.

The beginning of the cover letter attached to the three affidavits Mr. Holand submitted to the MHS.

1910

dated 12/22/09

January/February – Warren Upham wrote an article titled, “The Kensington Rune Stone, Its Discovery, Its Inscriptions and Opinions Concerning Them,” in Records of the Past. He discusses the weathering with the following statement, “*When we compare the excellent preservation of the glacial scratches shown on the back of the stone, which were made several thousand years ago, with the mellow, time-worn appearance of the face of the inscription, the conclusion is inevitable that the inscription must have been carved many hundred years ago.*”

March 3 to 5 – N. H. Winchell makes his second trip to Kensington.

In field notes?

March 4 – W. O. Hotchkiss, the State Geologist of Wisconsin wrote a letter to the MHS stating, “...the old runes are at least 50 to 100 years old unless some artificial process has been used to produce the weathered appearance.”

a given degree it is my opinion that the old runes are at least 50 to 100 years old unless some artificial process has

→ rest of text to "appearance."

A portion of page 1 of the March 4, 1910 letter written to the MHS by the Wisconsin State Geologist W.O. Hotchkiss.

March 7 – Sam Olson writes a letter for Olof Ohman, in English, to the MHS asking them to retain the KRS and not return it to Hjalmer Holand.

March 17 to 19 – N.H. Winchell makes his third trip to Kensington.

Field Notes

March 26 – Holand writes his fourth article on the KRS, “A Fourteenth-Century Columbus,” publishes in Harper's Weekly, 54:25.

Cost of Holand etc

April 21 – MHS Museum Committee approves the 76 page report by N. H. Winchell titled,

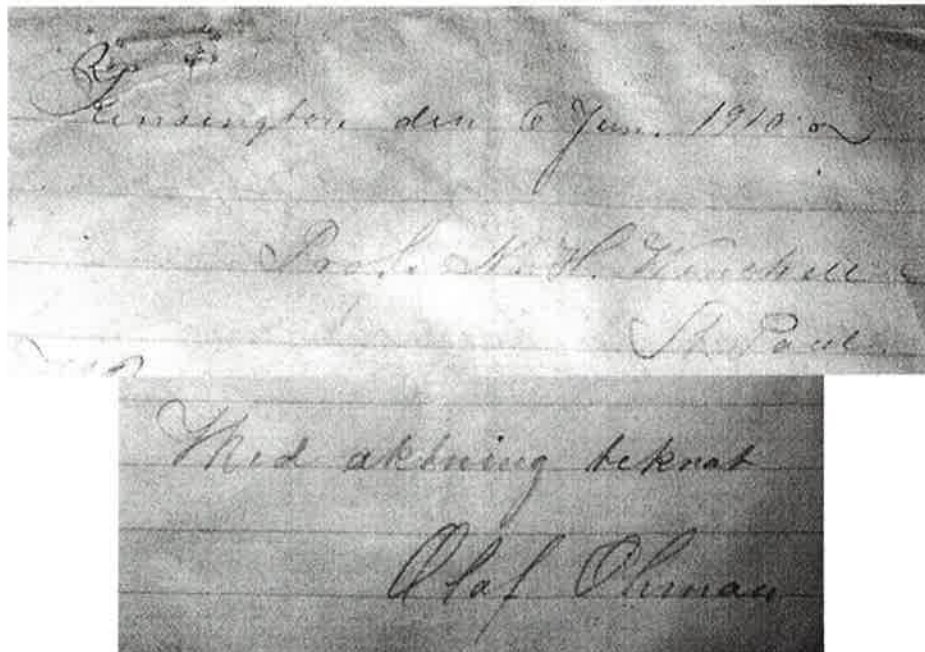
Report of the Kensington Rune Stone, with the following resolution:

Resolved, That this Committee renders a favorable opinion of the authenticity of the Kensington Rune Stone, provided that the references to Scandinavian literature given in this Committee's report and accompanying papers be verified by a competent specialist in the Scandinavian languages, to be selected by this Committee (Bothne), and that he approve the conclusions of this report;

Resolved, That this action of this Committee be reported to the next meeting of the Executive Council, and that Mr. Holand be so informed.

May – Olof Ohman writes a letter to the MHS (transcribed in English) where he denies ever carving runes.

June 6 – Olof Ohman writes a letter to N. H. Winchell, in Swedish, responding to rumors by Andrew Anderson.



give English text in newspaper

The date on page 1 and Mr. Ohman's signature on page 5 of his letter.

July 16 – Olof Ohman wrote a letter to the MHS, in Swedish, (transcribed in Swedish and English) describing the dimension of the Poplar tree slice samples that he cut down on his property with Winchell and Holand.

~~The cuts a, b, c, d are all cut on my property close to where the runestones was found~~

found

Kensington den 16 Jule 1910
Skifverna a. b. c. d. är alla huggad på min egenden i Röhöten af vad Runsten var funnen. under samma skogs-förhållande, skifven a är af samma storleas som tradet hvar vuxen öfver sten. men både a och . C. är från mycket frodigare sträd, än det som städ öfver stenen, c och d. är ifrån träd som i sin växt som mer liknade Runstens tradet. men är cirka 1/2 så stora mindre i tvärsnitt än detta. Olof Ohman.

The Swedish transcription of the July 16, 1910 Ohman letter. *English translation is in Holand's Westward from Vinland*
December 30 - Warren Upham writes that he half believes that the KRS is true. *page 116*

106
I half believe the Rune Stone true, - that is, as likely to be so as to be a fraud thus far escaping detection. My belief is about 50 percent of full confidence, but Prof. Winchell has fully 95 percent of complete assurance. We expect that Hjalmer Holand will take it to Norway next

Very interesting!

Entry into MHS archives letterpress book, Volume 16, page 106, by the Museum Committee Secretary Warren Upham.

"I half believe the Rune Stone true, - that is, as likely to be so as to be a fraud thus far escaping detection. My belief is about 50 percent of full confidence, but Prof. Winchell has fully 95 percent of complete assurance."

1911

April 19 - Olof Ohman signs a bill of sale for \$10.00 for the MHS to purchase his rights to the KRS. The agreement was a down payment with the \$90.00 balance to be paid upon acquiring the ownership rights from Hjalmer Holand. *+ there were other conditions?*

May 5 - Museum Committee votes to not purchase the KRS from Hjalmer Holand

May 11 - MHS *ships* sends the KRS back to Hjalmer Holand. *why?*

~~Under the same given conditions, the cuts a is of the same size as the tree that grew over the stone. See p. 116 of Westward. There is an English translation of Holand 19~~

May 12, 1911

Mr. H. R. Holand, Wasco, Minn. (General Delivery)

Dear Friend: The Runa Stone was shipped yesterday by the Am. Express, prepaid, to your address, Ephraim, Wis. (Via C. C. C. Dock, Menominee, Mich.) It was well boxed, with the address and sender, this Society, in paint on the cover boards, which are securely nailed and fastened with bands of strapiron. I hope that you may yet take it to Europe this summer, and that Prof. Winchell may also be with you.

Very truly yours, Warren Upham, Secretary.

Entry into MHS archives letterpress book, Volume 16, page 584, by the Museum Committee Secretary Warren Upham.

Holand Goes to Europe (1911)

1911

May 28 – Hjalmer Holand travels to Europe with the KRS.

August 10 – N.H. Winchell rights a letter to Holand that speaks for itself.

Much
expm

MHS
Old Capitol
Aug 10, 1911

My dear Holand,

① → Roan
in France

② 2 slabs stone
will ship
to Oslo

July
much more in

I have only just now read the account in the Norwegian American, of your lecture at the University of Christiania, and your reply to the criticisms of Hægstad on the inscription. I am struck with the similarity of the case in Norway with the early stage of the discussion in America. In both countries they cite certain evident variations from the high literary style of the date of 1362. In America these have been examined and no longer offer stumbling blocks in the acceptance of the record, but in Norway that have advanced no further than these linguistic stumbling blocks, Hægstad's whole argument is about on a par as Flom's and has no more force. It remains for some philologist in Norway (Whom Hægstad seems to call a "scientist"), who has not in precipitate judgment already condemned the stone, to dispassionately and thoroughly

investigate the repetition of the old objections which have been sufficiently removed in America, may at first blush before an audience which is not well informed on this special question, appear sufficient to disprove the inscription, and in Norway, as in America, may carry the day temporarily against the stone. But it is quite likely that, after a little time given to more detailed study by some experts, the truth will appear to be on the side of the runestone. I do not consider the results of the Norway meeting, even as reported by some of the old enemies of the stone in our American papers, as fatal or even as seriously damaging to the stone, for the same stage of the investigation has been passed through in America.

Further, there are certain typographical and physical elements in the case, and in my judgment these weigh so strongly and fundamentally in favor of the stone that it appears now that the little linguistic irregularities must be made to stand aside or be explained in conformity with these elements. I am certain ancient King is said to have given the orders that the tide of the ocean should not advance as to disturb him. I have no doubt that his hearers acclaimed him great and applauded his wisdom; but it is also said that the king was obliged to remove from his place or be overwhelmed by the superior force that carried the great tide. So with this runestone, as it appears to me, and as it appeared to us when I first gave attention to it, and I stated in my first paper concerning it --- those are the geological (physical) aspects of the question (which also – butely? require that the stone’s story be correct, these are fundamentals, and can not be set aside by verbal technicalities such as are, to date, brought up to disprove it. They stand impregnable while light combat rages about them among the scouts. When the line of battle reaches these fundamental truths they will assert their power. No one as yet has attacked those important bulwarks of the runestone. They are discussed in the report of the Museum Committee of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Still, even as the discussion now stands the... technical linguistic difficulties are apparently removed by your dignified reply to Prof. Hægstad published in the same number of the Norwegian American. The only lingering uncertainty lies in the word *opdagelse*. i. e. whether it could have existed in 1362 under the primitive form *opdage*, *else* being a terminational and unobjectionable suffix.

The elementary state of the discussion in Norway is amusing and at the same time vexing, because it goes out to the “Verdict of Norway”. On the condition that it is only the loud blast as the first onset of the opponents of the

stone, who having already announced their views (viz. Bugge and Hægstad), make a show of bravery in standing by their posts. The same took place in America, where similar loud blasts were found to consist almost wholly of noise, and gave the stone more help than harm after the smoke cleared away.

Again it is quite amusing to read of Hægstad's statement that the stone is composed of a soft material. On the contrary, it is harder than granite, standing next to pure quartzite in hardness. It is also sophomoric in Prof. Hægstad's address, in the first instance to scout "flowery discourses and flights into the speculation" and in the next instance, to say that all he seeks is "The path of the Truth." Thus impugning the contrary to the adherents of the stone. But the adherents of the stone are as fond of the Truth and as adverse to flowery discourses as he can be, and they might, perhaps, with more justice accuse him of the very same faults, for he has not always fairly presented the truth, and he himself resorted to flowery language with all its stealthy sting.

I think that the stone will withstand these loud preliminary skirmishes in Norway, and when the sober, thoughtful investigators of that country have had time to carefully poise the issue on the real evidence, the voice of Norway will be heard in defense of the stone, and finally the Norwegians and, whether in America or in of the old county, will appear and boast of the Kensington stone as their most valuable historic relic.

Very truly yours

H. N. Winchell

Recognita

The March to Authenticity (1911 to 1949)

1916

May – Warren Upham visits Olof Ohman and his family in Kensington for the first time.

October 10 – Warren Upham writes to Hjalmer Holand that he believes in the authenticity of the KRS and wants to urge the MHS to renew negotiations to acquire the stone.

long summer vacation, when as expected he would adventure for some travel and correspondence on this subject. My journey to Mr. Ohman's farm last May, when I was traveling past Kensington for Minnesota Geographic Names, gave me my first opportunity to talk with him and his family. As a result I am completely confirmed in my belief, with the late Professor Winchell, that the Rune Stone is 554 years old and a true historic record. This makes me exceedingly hopeful that the Rune Stone can be secured for permanent preservation and exhibition in this Society's Museum. But Secretary Bush, from the University of Illinois, doubts the truth of the Rune Stone, following Professor [?]

Entry into MHS archives letterpress book, Volume 19, page 911, by the Museum Committee Secretary Warren Upham to Hjalmer Holand.

"My journey to Mr. Ohman's farm last May, when I was traveling past Kensington for Minnesota Geographic Names, gave me my first opportunity to talk with him and his family. As a result I am completely confirmed in my belief, with the late Professor Winchell, that the Rune Stone is 554 years old and a true historic record. This makes me exceedingly hopeful that the Rune Stone can be secured for permanent preservation and exhibition in this Society's Museum."

1923

March 6 – Hjalmer Holand writes to Olof Ohman saying he will pay him 10% if he ever sells the stone.

CEDAR HILL
H. R. HOLAND
EPHRAIM, WISCONSIN

March 6, 1923.

Dear Mr. Ohman:

my pleasure to help you in any way.

Sincerely yours H. R. Holand

The date on page 1 and Mr. Holand's signature on page 6 of his letter.

1929

1927 Stone presented to Alex Ch. of Lawrence
8 people put up the money

July 17 – David Ohman, son of Olof and Karin Ohman, committed suicide by shooting himself in the head with a small caliber rifle at the home where he was raised. He apparently was despondent over his confinement to a wheelchair from paralysis below the waist due to a tumor on his spine.

1933

6/2000
Holand paid
Oman money

The Dustbin of History (1949 to 1982)

1949

Sven B. F. Jansson

The stone is displayed at the Smithsonian Institution as a authentic artifact.

December 28 – Edward Ohman, 61 years old at the time, was interviewed at the Science Museum in St. Paul, Minnesota, about the discovery of the KRS by R.S. Thornton, Modridge S. Robb and Bergman Richards.



N. D. FARMER TELLS HOW HE HELPED FIND RUNESTONE
Edward Ohman, left, and Bergman Richards, state historical society president, record details

Edward Ohman being interviewed by Bergman Richards about the KRS on December 28, 1949. This photograph and article appeared in the Minneapolis Morning Tribune newspaper on December 29, 1949.

1950

February 24 – Harold S. Langland wrote an article in response to comments made by Professor A. W. Brogger that was published in the Norwegian Post, newspaper. Langland said the following about the weathering of the runes; *"...with great care I studied the appearance of the surface of the stone and interior surfaces of the runic letter. Having had an engineer's scientific training, including chemistry and physics, and considerable experience on the prairie's and lakes of Minnesota, I am not without some knowledge of the weathering of stone surfaces. I observed the perfectly clear evidence of newly scratched marks on the stone; some of these*

scratches were on the surface and some were down in the runic grooves. They were very obvious, as the stone's outer surface is many shades darker than the interior. These scratches were recently made, that is comma, within a much shorter time than the runes themselves. The inner surfaces of the runes were as dark and weathered as the stone's exterior surface; it beyond the bounds of sound reasoning that those characters could have been recently cut and then have weathered down to the color of the stone's exterior surface in a few years."

July - Sivert N. Hagen published an article called, "The Kensington Runic Inscription," in Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies.

Medieval

1951

June – Erik Moltke wrote an article entitled, "The Kensington Stone," that appeared in Antiquity, number 98. This article summarizes an earlier article he co-authored with Harry Anderson in Danske Studier, 1949-1950. This article was highly critical of the KRS inscription. At one point in the article, Moltke recalls a statement made by Jon Helgason, a professor of Icelandic at Copenhagen University, when he told him that he intended to write about the stone. "No self-respecting scholar can in decency deal with this monstrosity; there is certainly no archaeologist that would bother with a grave from the stone-age if the burial urn rested on a telephone book." Moltke further stated, "In my heart of hearts I agree with Jon Helgason. On the other hand, there has been so much fuss over this stone this inscription that a stop must be put to it."

August 30 – William Thalbitzer, a Danish professor at the university of Copenhagen.....

October 8 – Hjalmer Holand provided testimony in the district court in Alexandria, Minnesota, about the details of how he obtained the stone from Olof Ohman and it's eventual disposal. The court hearing was prompted by the Chamber of Commerce so that Holand's story would be officially documented for any future purposes including possible litigation.

1952

Wahlgren

1953

February – Erik Moltke wrote another article that was highly critical of the KRS entitled, "The Ghost of the Kensington Stone," that appeared in Scandinavian Studies, volume 25, number 1.

1958

Wahlgren, Erik – Publishes the book, The Kensington Stone, A Mystery Solved, The University of Wisconsin Press, 228 pages. Professor Wahlgren's book is a strong denouncement of the authenticity of the KRS.

For the fact is that while the genuineness of the Kensington stone is near to becoming something of a religion for certain Americas, a matter of national order (see base).

honor if we may say so, we here in Europe
are not hampered by prejudices in
this regard. We look upon the
inscriptions as a document to
be subject to verbal, unbroken,
scientific, linguistic and numismatic
investigation, and - every orthodox or
~~sp~~ skeptical American should take
note - the first impressions
inscriptions make on every legitimate
hand Scandinavian came here
to open his eyes wide in
astonishment over the fact that
anyone could possibly argue in
favor of the genuineness of such
an inscription, and a closer
inspection makes him shake his
head, " "

1962 – The KRS, Big Ole’ and the Granite 5:1 reproduction of the stone appear at the World’s Fair in New York

1966

June/July – Aslak Liestol wrote an article that was published in Minnesota History, 40:59; that dealt with the runes of the KRS. *“They were of the kind ‘in continuous use by nearly all social groups’ of that period, but among all 12,000 [of the runes found in Bergen] not a single one of the ‘strange forms occurring in the Kensington alphabet’ occurs. Mr Liestol stated that if a runic inscription had actually been carved in the 14th Century, it surely ‘would have been written with the runes which the people of those days were accustomed to using.’”* This statement is not consistent with the runes in the Codex Runicus, the Mariaklagen and runic inscriptions elsewhere in Scandinavia.

*runes by Liestol's criteria these
runes - runs could be rejected as well.*

1968

Blegen, Theodore C– Publishes the book, The Kensington Rune Stone – New Light on an Old Riddle, Minnesota Historical Society, 212 pages. Professor Blegen concludes that the stone is a hoax that was probably perpetrated by Kensington residents Olof Ohman, Sven Fogelblad and Andrew Anderson.

Back from the Dead (1982 to 2000)

1986 analysis by RNI

1987

August 12 – The Echo Press in Alexandria, Minnesota, reports the first public announcement of the discovery of the Arabic ten, the “J-rune” and the “e-dialect” on the KRS by Dr. Richard Nielsen.

10 17

1988, 1989, 1990

1993

Summer – Rhoda Gilman, a retired staff member of the MHS, wrote an article titled, “Vikings in Minnesota: A Controversial Legacy,” in the MHS publication Roots.

A New Century of Investigations (2000 to Present)

2000

July 14 – The KRS is brought to the American Petrographic Services Inc. laboratory for the first time. Several prominent geologists from Minnesota examine the stone for several hours and exchange ideas about how to proceed with a forensic evaluation of the inscription. The individuals included Dr. John Green, Ken Harris, Dr. Charles L. Matsch, Gerard Moulzolf P.G., Dr. Richard Ojakangas, Dr. Paul Wieblen and Scott F. Wolter P.G.

November 10 – Dr. Richard Nielsen, Archaeologist Alice Kehoe, Chemist Barry J. Hanson and Geologist Scott F. Wolter present lectures that are favorable to the authenticity of the KRS at the Midwest Plains Archaeological Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota. Included in the presentations was the first modern geological analysis of the weathering that confirmed Newton Winchell conclusion that the inscription was very old.

[Wallace quote]

2001

January 4 - American Petrographic Services Inc. published a report written by Scott F. Wolter P.G. that documented the geological and physical features of the KRS. The report concluded that the inscription was an authentic artifact. Wolter wrote the following on page 8, conclusion number 5, *"It is clear that the four man-made fracture surface types on the KRS, exhibit weathering (primarily mica degradation) consistent with being buried in the ground for at least decades and probably centuries. This being the case, the logical conclusion is that the KRS is an authentic artifact, presumably made at the time it is dated (1362 A.D.)."*

April - Dr. Richard Nielsen publishes a 75-page paper on the language of the KRS in the publication, Scandinavian Studies.

May 13 – Janey Westin and her father Robert Johnson discover the AVM Stone on a small island in a shallow lake that partially surrounds the hill where the KRS was found.

October - The KRS travels to Vienna, Austria, to be displayed in an exhibition about mysterious artifacts in history for 6 weeks.

November 6 – A letter written by two women is received by the MHS claiming responsibility for carving the AVM Stone with three unnamed accomplices in the spring of 1985. They were inspired to produce a "fake" rune stone after hearing about the KRS during a lecture about famous fakes at the University of Minnesota by Anatoly Lieberman. The stone becomes an important control sample for comparison of weathering aspects with the KRS.

2002

February 24 – A symposium about the KRS is held in Thousand Oaks, California. The speakers include Dr. Richard Nielsen, Barry J. Hanson and Professor Henrik Williams from the University of Uppsala, Sweden. Professor Williams proclaims that based upon Dr. Nielsen's work that the KRS was deserving of further study.

June 14 – Dr. Richard Nielsen, Scott F. Wolter P.G. give a three hour presentation on the KRS at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The individuals present representing the Smithsonian were Anthropologist Elisabeth Ward, Senior Linguist Ives Goddard, Linguist Intern Iris Hahn and Geologist Dr. Sorena Sorenson.



LuAnn Patton, Elisabeth Ward, Richard Nielsen and Iris Hahn at the Smithsonian Institution on June 14, 2002.

September – **Barry J. Hanson** publishes his two-volume book, Kensington Runestone – A Defense of Olof Ohman the Accused Forger, Morris Publishing.

September 3 – Lars Westman, a journalist from Sweden visits St. Paul, Alexandria and Kensington, Minnesota for an article about the KRS that is published “Vi” Magazine.

December 31 – Scott F. Wolter publishes a report that includes a CD of 689 images of the entire KRS inscription entitled, “Photo-Library of the Characters of the Kensington Rune Stone Inscription.” The photographs were taken using both high and low angle reflected light at magnification ranging from 3.75 to 64 times. Several new important aspects of the inscription were documented during the course of this work.



A purposeful punch was added to the lower right leg of the "R" rune located in row #1, character #7. This punch was added after the lower leg was carved and was not known until now.

2003

Show the R as well

March 3 – Scott F. Wolter and Tony Masciadri collect 23 chip samples for testing from slate tombstones in the Hallowell Cemetery in Hallowell, Maine.

Imulation to the M. in Sweden

*Bunny Rune *XR+ = hav
havpe*

Här is there is

*Här 10 mans (There is a
decade of men)*

*Recent
discovery*



Tony Masciadri ponders how a roughly 200-year old slate tombstone became engulfed and uprooted by a large tree. Tony and Scott Wolter collected 23 chip samples from slate tombstones for testing in the Hallowell, Cemetery in Hallowell, Maine, on March 3, 2003.

April 2 – A one-day forum on the KRS is held at Fort Snelling in St. Paul, Minnesota. 35 invited guests from several disciplines (geology, linguistics, archaeology, history and media) attend to discuss the various aspects of the controversy.

Geology of the KRS

Scott F. Wolter

4-5-03

“What is the Kensington Rune Stone?” Those were the first words that came out of my mouth as Barry Hanson told me his incredible story over the phone the first time he called me on July 13, 2000. As he told me the incredible tale of this well-known Minnesota legend, I was thinking to myself, “Did I miss school the day they talked about this?” When he asked me if we could perform an examination of the physical features on the stone I said, “Sure.” I then gave Mr. Hanson, who had been named the coordinator of research on the stone by the Runestone Museum in Alexandria, the same sermon I give to all my customers. We can certainly perform a laboratory analysis of the stone. However, I can’t guarantee that we will be able to give you a definitive answer with regard to the authenticity; but we might be able to. What you need to be prepared for, is that we may end up giving you an answer that you won’t like. Regardless of which way the testing goes, you’re still going to have to pay the bill. If you’re comfortable working under those conditions then we’re all set. At that point Barry looked at me and said, “That’s fine.”

Little did I realize that this rather large stone slab would be unlike any other “rock” project I had ever been involved in. My first thought was that regardless of which way our investigation went with regard to shedding light on the authenticity, this would be an interesting and fun project that might also be a good marketing opportunity. It’s always a good thing to be able to schmooze with customers about our involvement in high profile projects. One example is the tremendous opportunity we had to perform all the forensic testing of the fire-damaged concrete at the Pentagon after 9-11. It was certainly an honor and a privilege to be involved; but one of the biggest rewards for APS has come in the recognition and prestige of being associated with such an event. I constantly have to remind myself not to come across as trying to capitalize on that horrible tragedy. However, it doesn’t seem right to deliberately shy away from it either. I have and will always try pick the appropriate times to “toot the APS horn” when talking about rebuilding of the Pentagon. The notoriety of the Kensington Rune Stone and the 100 year-old controversy would also definitely be an interesting story to tell.

Barry and I agreed that we needed to meet to discuss further details about the work plan and background information. Our first face to face meeting was on July 10, 2000. Barry was about in his mid-50's with a medium build and nearly white gray hair. It was quickly evident that he was an ardent supporter of the authenticity of the stone. He has a strong, deliberate presence and had firm ideas about the scope of testing that he wanted performed. I found it interesting how quickly he jumped into the depth of the controversy surrounding the stone and his obvious disdain for individuals I knew nothing about. He certainly seemed knowledgeable about all aspects related to the stone, but I was more interested in talking the specifics of what our laboratory would be doing. A mouse in the corner probably would have enjoyed listening to our conversation. Barry and I both are strong-willed with firm ideas about what we believe in. It wasn’t apparent to me at the outset, but these similarities in our personalities would eventually lead to confrontation. As tempting as it is to want to assign blame to the other party, it takes two

to have a dispute. I no doubt played a role in the unfortunate events that would eventually unfold.

As part of Barry's presentation he alluded to the high-profile nature of the KRS and how we should consider the benefits of furthering a worthy cause. In other words; we should feel obligated to perform as much gratis work as we could. I could appreciate his point and said we would give him as much of a deal as we could. Even though that "little warning bell" was going off in my head, I didn't hear it. I should have put the scope of work and the estimated charges in writing. My lapse was understandable since we rarely work with contracts and I've worked with most of my customers for many years. We've rarely had issues getting paid and had never been sued over work we performed. My relaxed style of business has served APS well and whatever "ringing" I may have heard I dismissed thinking I could negotiate my way through it.

Before concluding our meeting we scheduled a tentative date to have the stone brought to our lab. Barry said we would have to confirm arrangements with the director of the Runestone Museum; LuAnn Patton. He then leaned toward me and sharpened his gaze. "LuAnn can be difficult to deal with." He then offered advice about how best to handle her. By the time he left I was convinced this museum director was some kind of she-monster. It wouldn't be long before a clearer picture of my "Rune Stone" clients would begin to emerge.

The Geologic Dream Team

she - beauty

After Barry left I thought long and hard about the entire story. I made a point to ask several acquaintances and friends if they had heard about the KRS and to my surprise, most of them had. Not only had they heard of it but the general consensus was that it was a hoax. I also wondered how I could not have caught a whiff of this story at some point in the past. I rationalized that because we moved around so much while I grew up (28 different homes by the time I was 21 years old) I must have missed school that day. After considering the situation and the potential ramifications I decided to bring in a little help. I picked up the phone and made a call to the UMD geology department. I tracked down my college advisor and mentor in geology, Dr. Charles L. Matsch. I told Charlie about the interesting project we were about to begin and asked if he would be interested seeing the stone and offering some suggestions for the investigation. He had definitely heard of stone and not only did he agree to come down but suggested I invite some other geologists to review the stone as well. We made a list that included two more of my professors, Dr. John Green and Dr. Richard Ojakangas, two retired U of M professors, Dr. Paul Wieblen and Dr. Robert Johnson, and Ken Harris, glacial geology expert at the Minnesota Geological Survey. Because of the high profile of the stone I wanted to get as much input and suggestions as I could from this highly accomplished group that I like to call the "Dream Team" of Minnesota geology.

On July 14, 2000, the Kensington Rune Stone arrived at American Petrographic Services Inc. for the first time. When I went to the lobby to meet the director I wasn't sure what was going to happen. Barry was already there and he introduced me to LuAnn. She had short blond hair, a warm, friendly smile and I would soon learn that at 42, she was just a few months older than me. I was caught a little off guard by how friendly and nice she was and wondered where the woman was that Barry had described. LuAnn introduced me to a museum board member Ken Anderson,

Pictures of him

a tall, friendly Scandinavian gentleman with a big bushy beard who made me wonder if he was a reincarnated Viking explorer. Barry and I helped Ken load the heavy crate onto a two-wheeler and bring it up into the laboratory. Under LuAnn's watchful eye Ken opened the crate and the three of us lifted the very heavy stone onto a makeshift mobile table. After my blood pressure returned to normal from straining under the weight, I focused my gaze on the tabular shaped stone for the first time. It reminded me of a rather crudely made tombstone. The inscription was very clear and I was instantly struck by how fresh the carved characters appeared. My first impression that I would eventually learn was the same as many people in the past, was that the inscription did not appear to be very old. The stone struck me as having been carved by someone of great skill working with a hammer and chisel. Within a few minutes the lab phone rang and it was the front desk. My three professors had arrived from Duluth.

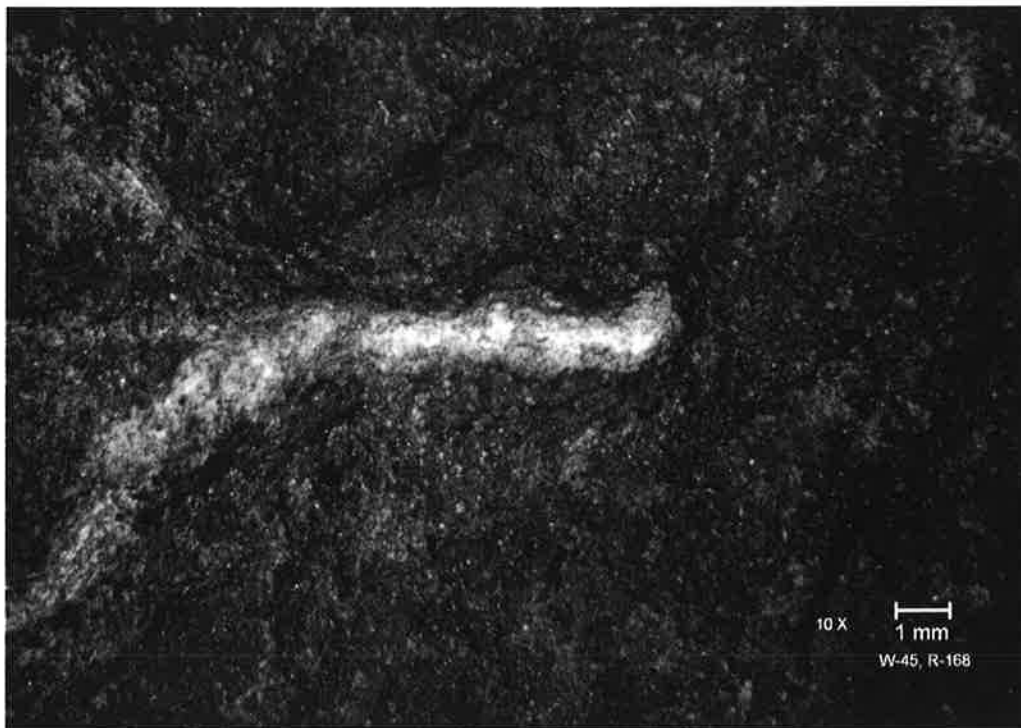
It had been almost 20 years since I had last seen them all in the same room together. I was thrilled that they made the effort to come. They entered the lab, pulled out their hand-lenses and immediately began to pour over the stone. The room got very quiet as they focused their attention on the stone. They had barely begun their observations when the phone rang again. This time it was Bob Johnson and Paul Wieblen. What happened next was little bit of shock to me. When Paul entered the lab he was greeted by my professors as though they were receiving royalty. It was obvious they knew him and had great admiration. He was highly respected in the geologic community and best known for being the guy NASA hired in the late 1960's to head up the research on the moon rocks brought back on the Apollo space flights. This was exactly what I wanted and was thrilled to have the input from such an accomplished group.



Left to right, Dr. Richard Ojakangas (kneeling), Dr. John Green, Ken Harris, Gerard Moulzolf, Scott Wolter, Dr. Charles Matsch, Barry Hanson, Robert Johnson and Dr. Paul Weiblen (kneeling).

They spent over three hours examining the stone and bouncing ideas off each other. At one point we flipped the stone over to examine the back side of the stone. The most obvious feature that we all noticed immediately was the pronounced glacial striations. They seemed relatively deep and were aligned almost perfectly parallel to the longest dimension of the stone. What was odd about this was that there weren't any striation on any of the other sides of the stone. Since all but one side of the stone had the same weathered appearance, there had to be special circumstances at work for the striations to be only of the one side. I threw out the idea that the stone was still part of the bedrock when the ice passed over creating the striations. Eventually, the stone was plucked out and carried within the ice where it was protected. When it eventually melted out the scenario must have been relatively tame.

I thanked each of them before they left and felt even more confident about the work plan I had chosen to pursue. It wasn't until the following day that I could focus my full attention on the stone. We had recently purchased an articulated arm for the microscope and it worked perfectly for examining this much larger than we were used to sample. With LuAnn quietly sitting nearby and Barry poised across the stone from me, I focused the microscope and was immediately struck by what I saw within the characters. In several areas I could see pencil lead and ink from clumsy or careless observers in the past. It made me wonder if the consensus of opinion that this was a fraud made people feel that it was unnecessary to exercise care. What disturbed me even more was that it was quite apparent that the entire inscription on the "face" side had been re-cut with a sharp instrument. This "re-tooling" was also present on the side of the stone except the cuts appeared to have been applied with generally less force. Thankfully, approximately a dozen of the characters on the left side did not appear to have been re-tooled at all.



The well-developed, rust-colored iron oxide deposits within this original groove on the split

side have been cut through or “re-tooled.” Roughly 90% of the inscription has been re-tooled.

While examining these characters I noticed that several contained reddish-brown iron oxide deposits. I pointed these out to Barry and he asked if these deposits indicated significant age. Even though they looked like they had been there for a long period of time, I really wasn't all that impressed. Assuming these deposits were the by-product of decomposing pyrite crystals, I relayed to Barry how they could develop relatively quickly depending on the conditions that were present; perhaps as little as a year or two. The next thing I noticed made my brow furrow with anger. On the top line of the side was a rune with heavy iron-oxide deposits that had been clearly and deeply cut through. My disgust was because I assumed the groove had been cut in the recent past. I would eventually learn that this was not the case and that these re-tooled deposits would become an important piece of evidence.

In addition to the iron oxide, I also noticed several characters with white coatings within the grooves. I took a small scraping and examined it under the polarized light microscope. I expected to find calcite which is a common deposit found on glacial erratics. There was good amount of secondary calcite on the back side of the stone but this material was whiter in color. To my surprise it turned out to be gypsum. Even though gypsum is occasionally found as a secondary deposit I didn't expect it. These curious gypsum deposits within the runes would bother until Barry mentioned the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. had made three casts of the stone in the 1940's. Suddenly it hit me. These deposits had to be remnants from the gypsum-based plaster used to make the casts. I was glad Barry mentioned it because now it all made sense. Modern plaster is made with gypsum and a powdered calcite as filler material. Older plaster was made with pure gypsum.

The Core and the Chip Sample

Over the next two days we made numerous observations and took dozens of photographs. By this time I felt pretty comfortable with the reflected light observations we had made and knew it was time to get into transmitted light work. We needed to identify the mineral make-up of the stone and to do this meant I had to get a sample and make thin sections. The only proper way to do this was to cut a core sample from somewhere on the stone. This would obviously be a sensitive issue and wondered how our new friends would react to it. To my surprise they took to the idea very well. LuAnn seemed to trusting and said that if we needed to do it to “go ahead.” Barry also seemed fine with the idea.

On October 3, 2000, it was coring day and we brought the stone down to the materials lab on the first floor. As the stone was placed on two 4" x 4" boards and the coring machine was put into position, I was busying getting the video camera ready to record this special day in the life of the KRS. I occasional glanced over at a slightly nervous Museum Director. LuAnn was smiling and chatty but I knew this was her way of keeping calm. I tried to reassure by explaining that we were taking the core from the back side and did not need to affect the inscription at all. There was no way that I was going to suggest this and in my view, it was unnecessary.

One of the observations we made were several curved fractures along the bottom of the edge of

the side of the stone with the last three lines of the inscription. These conchoidal-like fractures appeared to impact fractures and indicated to me that this entire side of the stone had been broken-off intentionally. This entire side had a different appearance than all of the other obvious glacial surfaces. I was convinced that whoever carved this stone had intentionally shaped, or dressed it first.

I decided that I wanted to take the core through the white root-leaching areas that branched off. Within this area was another feature that I decided might be important to take a closer look at. A perfectly straight, fine dark line that traversed across the surface seemed very interesting. It could have been either a bedding plane or a joint fracture and the core would answer the question definitively. Once the coring machine was in position we rolled the cameras and gave Don Gherman the thumbs up to proceed. The spinning 1 ½" diameter diamond-studded barrel began cutting cleanly into the stone as water being pumped in to cool the barrel slowly flowed away from the hole. Everyone's eyes were riveted, especially LuAnn's. I tried to reassure her with an occasional calm wink, but she told me later it didn't help. She was a nervous wreck. After about ten minutes, the core barrel had penetrated the planned 2" depth into the stone. The water and core machine was stopped and Don slowly pulled the barrel out. The coring had gone perfectly and it was now time to break off the core. I offered Barry the honors and handed him a screwdriver and a crescent wrench to use as a hammer. I showed him where to place the screwdriver and told him to give it whack. He lightly tapped the top of the screwdriver but he was being a little too careful. Realizing he was uncomfortable I asked Barry to let me do it and gave it a good hit. The core broke off at the bottom and we pulled out an excellent core sample. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief and her normal easy smile returned to LuAnn's face.



Barry Hanson lightly taps a screwdriver trying to break off the core sample drilled from

the back side of the Kensington Rune Stone on October 3, 2000.

Unfortunately for LuAnn we were not done taking samples off her precious stone. The SEM work at Iowa State University had gone very well with samples from the core. We had a good understanding of the freshly fractured and glacially weathered surfaces. The mica minerals that looked so fresh and pristine on the fresh surface had disappeared on glacial surface. The question now was what happened to the micas of the man-made surfaces? The only way to answer that question was with another sample. It seemed pretty straight forward that we could get the information we needed by taking a sample from anywhere on the split side. This idea seemed perfect to me. This side clearly had been made before the inscription was carved and presumably at about the same time. I wouldn't need much of a sample to test in the SEM so I felt confident to go ahead. The stone was back in the Museum and Barry had returned to his home in Maple, Wisconsin. I picked up the phone and laid out the plan to LuAnn. We made arrangements to go up the Museum in Alexandria to take another sample. This time however, our method for obtaining a sample wasn't quite as sophisticated.

On October 21, 2000, while on our way to collect fossils in South Dakota on a separate trip, my family and I stopped at the Rune Stone Museum. Brian Williams, a member of the Museum Board of Directors, let us in and helped remove the glass protecting the stone. We had brought all the necessary equipment; a small sledgehammer, a 1/2" steel chisel and a five gallon bucket to catch the chip sample. That was the plan anyway. I picked an area in the lower third of the split side away from the inscription. The stone sat nestled in its metal cradle angling slightly backward from vertical. I asked my son Grant to hold the bucket and put the chisel into position. With one quick stroke I struck the end of the chisel and could hear a small piece fly off and hit the side of the bucket. "Good catch Grant." The chip was the perfect size and it didn't deface the stone. I challenge anyone to find the spot where I took it.

When the chip went into the SEM I started to get excited. This was pretty much the moment of truth with regard to the micas. I was thinking that the micas would probably be in tough shape if the weathering was old. When the first image came into view at the same 500x magnification, I was shocked at what I saw; or by what I didn't see. The mica minerals on the weathered side of the chip sample were gone. They had completely weathered away. I could feel the smile forming on my face as the realization of what the image before me meant. The time it took for these minerals to weather away took longer than Olof Ohman had been on this planet in 1898. My gut feeling after only a few hours of examining the stone turned out to be right. **Years ago I read Donald Trump's book, The Art of the Deal. He said he had three rules for negotiating. "Go with what you know, go with your gut and sometimes, the best deals are the ones you don't make." Rule number 2 also works with geology. My gut would talk to me again in about 9 months only this time I didn't hear it right away.** (The Romance of the Stone) The only scenario that made sense to me was that this damn stone was the real thing. I chuckled to myself thinking about what the people who were convinced that this stone was a hoax would think when they heard these results.

The American Institute of Professional Geologists

As the investigation was beginning to wind down, I asked Barry about how the Museum wanted

to use the information we were gathering. He said he wanted have the test results presented at an upcoming archaeological conference in St. Paul. I was starting to feel comfortable with what we had learned about the stone and how I could present the information. However, I thought about how nice it would be if I could give the findings a trial run. I came up with an idea that, if I was able to pull it off, would provide a professional critique of the results as well as a practice run. I called Bruce Johnson, the current President of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Institute of Professional Geologists (A.I.P.G.). This organization was a group of knowledgeable professionals that I knew well and was a Past President of. I also knew that they would give both Barry and I honest feedback. The Midwest Plains Archaeological Conference was scheduled for November 10, which did not give us a lot of time since I was calling Bruce in late October. He was able to get the scheduled speaker for the November meeting to move his talk back a month. It was great that this group went out of their way for us.

Our luncheons are held on the first Tuesday of every month except June, July, and August. The September meeting is always trumped by our annual fall field trip which made our presentation the first for the group in five months. We had a good turnout of about 65 geologists and almost all of them had at least some knowledge of the Rune Stone. Barry gave his presentation first, speaking primarily about how the stone was found and where other investigators had fouled up their investigations that led them to conclude the stone was a hoax. I watched as Barry's eyes widened with intensity as he spun his story, and himself, up as he went along. He sure wasn't shy about expressing his disdain for the numerous "academic fools" he talked about. After 15 or so minutes it was my turn. I laid out the findings in as factual and unemotional way as I could. After watching Barry present, I was a little concerned about how he was received and made an extra effort to be as "even keel" as I could.

Once we were finished we then opened things up for questions. The comments were very favorable toward the work we had done. I was a little surprised, but overall felt quite happy that my peers did not have any major objections. Barry did receive a comment from Charlie Tiller, a geologist not afraid to speak his mind, that he thought that his presentation was too confrontational. This comment really opened my eyes to Mr. Hanson because Charlie's sentiment echoed my own and made me more aware of our new friend and how he went about his business.

With the conference only a couple days away, I came up with the idea of using two slide projectors so the audience to see two images at one time. My hope was to contrast the differences between the SEM images of the fresh and weathered surfaces for maximum impact. This also gave me an opportunity to call the organizer of the conference who was also our State Archaeologist; a fellow named Mark Dudzik. Barry had talked about Mr. Dudzik and did not have many kind words to say. Because I had a somewhat tainted view of Barry, I took his words with a good-sized grain of salt. As it turned out, Barry was right on the money.

I called Mr. Dudzik and could tell instantly by his airy tone that he was not short of self-confidence. I made a conscience effort to be polite and our conversation started off just fine. I asked him a few questions about the KRS and he quickly made his negative opinion known. At one point I became a little agitated by his attitude and asked him why he was so sure of his opinion; and I stress the word opinion. He immediately became defensive by assuming I was a

“true-believer” and threatened to cancel our session, “if any of your people try to turn this into a three-ring circus.” I have to say that I was a little shocked by his reaction, but I assured him that we would all behave ourselves. By the time we hung up I had an even better feel for the highly charged emotional and contentious nature of the KRS. I thought to myself that this conference was going to be interesting indeed. I would soon find out that Mr. Dudzik had a couple more surprises for me.

Midwest Plains Archeological Conference

The day before the conference I was finally able to meet the fellow I had heard so much about from Barry and LuAnn. Dick Nielsen arrived at the APS lab and introduced himself. Dick was stocky fellow, about six feet tall with a gray goatee and a steely gaze. He was 67 years old and highly intelligent. Dick is an engineer by profession with a Masters degree in mathematics. I would also later learn that in his younger days he was a sailor in the Coast Guard and had lived several years in Denmark. He was a self-educated and extremely knowledgeable in runes, but as I would find out later, not an academic “scholar” at some prestigious University. To many academics he was regarded as an amateur not worthy of the time spent discussing a long ago dismissed subject like the Kensington Rune Stone.

Barry had been keeping Dick informed of our progress and he had many questions for me about our work. Dick and I sat at the microscope as I took him through my findings. He was especially intrigued about the micras and quickly grasped my explanation of the weathering. We talked at length about the micras and he caught on quickly when I used the “box full of playing cards” analogy to describe them on the surface of the stone and he couldn’t have been delighted with what it all meant. I had many questions for him too. I was very curious about the inscription and what exactly it said. He explained a few details but what stuck with me was that he recently had the opportunity to be the first to study old medieval diplomas from the same time period as the date on the stone. He said he was finding plenty of new information that was consistent with the KRS inscription. It all sounded good to me. The next day all three of us would get a chance to tell our stories.

LuAnn and Barry came by the office with the stone and followed Janet and I to the Radisson Hotel in downtown St. Paul. We checked in to the conference at 1:30 p.m., a good hour and a half before our presentations was to start. I was looking forward to meeting Mr. Dudzik in person and went to the registration desk to find him. I asked the first person I encountered if I could speak with Mark Dudzik. A fellow in the back responded and as he walked up to me we each extended our hands. Before we could shake hands, I introduced myself. When he heard my name he quickly pulled his arm back and turned to the wall immediately to his right. Realizing he had been more put off by our initial conversation than I thought, I said that I only wanted to know where our presentations were supposed to be. Without looking at me he pointed and told me the room number. I then thanked him and walked away a little bewildered.

I was chuckling to myself when I rejoined our group and relayed the story. We found the room and started to get set-up. One thing that we all decided would be a good idea was to have the stone displayed during the session. It seemed appropriate to have the “accused” present while the arguments were made. The stone also created an air of seriousness to the session that set

dates
from Vol Nielsen
many
was leader a Doctor of Science in runes

what I thought was the appropriate tone. By 3:00 p.m. the room was full with over 100 people. There were several people in attendance that I didn't know at the time but would eventually get to know quite well. The first of the individuals was a senior archaeologist from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee named Alice Kehoe. Alice was the first speaker and talked about not only the possibility of a Norse party making it to Minnesota in the middle 14th Century, but that the history of that time made it quite likely. This information was all new to me and it was fascinating. I thought to myself that if the weathering was consistent with the stone being very old, then the history should make sense also. Apparently it did. Dick was the next speaker and he talked about the various aspects of the runes, words, numbers and dialect of the inscription being like the walls of a house. They all need to fit together or the house (inscription) falls down. His presentation was also very compelling. It was now it was Barry's turn. He did a much better job than he did at the A.I.P.G. meeting. He also gave a nice introduction to the work we did in the laboratory. I had both projectors ready and started in. As I approached the point in the talk where I showed the SEM photos of the various surfaces, I could tell the audience understood what I was saying. When I flashed the photo of the split side surface where the micas were gone, I heard a low collective gasp in the crowd. They all got it at once. That was a moment I will never forget.

After wrapped up my talk and thinking the session was over, I took my seat next to my smiling wife Janet. All of a sudden another gentleman was introduced that I didn't know. His was a physician named Jon Polansky. Jon talked about how his job entailed overseeing the research and development of new medicines and began to favorably critique the research that all of us involved had performed. I remember thinking that I didn't know whose idea this was but that it was a damn good one. It put an unbiased stamp of approval on the work performed and a very nice finishing touch to the session. When Jon was finished and the session was over there was almost a festive mood to the people immediately afterward. I remembered someone saying that the well-known critic of the Rune Stone, Birghitta Wallace, had attended the session. I had heard much about her in the short few months I had been involved. Barry had made his disdain for her work (later documented in his 2002 publication, The Trial of Olof Ohman) known numerous times in our discussions. Obviously, I didn't have an opinion about her one way or the other. I had however, become very interested in the controversy and wanted to meet as many of the key characters as I could of this "generation."

No gutter
of



The Kensington Rune Stone and its supporters at the Midwest Plains Archaeological Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota, on November 10, 2000. Left to right: LuAnn Patton, Jon Polansky, Scott & Janet Wolter, Alice Kehoe, Richard Nielsen, Barry Hanson and Ken Anderson.

Birghitta had already left the room by the time we had finished answering questions and had packed up to leave. LuAnn, Barry, Janet and I were not going to stay for the dinner and Birghitta's keynote address about the Rune Stone. I did, however, convince our group to stay long enough for us to have one drink at the social. I told them that I just wanted to quickly meet her and decide for myself what kind of person she was. Janet and I strolled in together while Barry tried to locate her. I had no clue as what she looked like and within a couple minutes Barry pointed her out. Jan and I moseyed up while she finished her conversation. I then introduced myself to which she said in a slightly chastising voice, "I know who you are, I heard your presentation." I quickly interjected that I was not there to confront her about her views about the Rune Stone. I explained my interest in the controversy in general and was only interested in meeting some of the current participants. To her credit she accepted my explanation and instantly warmed to both of us. Birghitta is an attractive older woman with a very charming demeanor. I could certainly imagine her using these polished skills of persuasion in impressing her opinions on people. I introduced her to Janet and they were making small talk as I stood by. After several seconds I suddenly noticed a pressure on my elbow and my arm being lifted up. I barely had time to turn my head when I realized it was Mark Dudzik. He whisked in between us and with his other hand grabbed Birghitta's arm and pulled her forward. Janet and I stood

flabbergasted as we both heard him say, “Come along Birghitta, we need to sit down now.” Even Birghitta was taken aback. Apparently Mr. Dudzik was playing watchdog and thought we were giving her a bad time. Next time he should eavesdrop a little before coming to the rescue.

The conference was a learning experience for everyone, but especially for me. I had my first taste of the passions and the politics involved in this mysterious controversy. It would be the first lesson in my education of how complex the issues were surrounding this stone. I was beginning to understand the differences between the scientific process that is my world and the way of doing business in the fields of archaeology, history and language. They are not just a little different; they are often times worlds apart. To me, the physical aspects of the stone, like the thousands of concrete and rock samples I’ve examined, exhibited the evidence that told a straight-forward and factual story. All the aspects related to the stone, including the linguistics and language, took a back seat to the geology. I wasn’t used to people not wholeheartedly accepting our test results. For some reason the arguments against the stone were carried by people who said the language and runes did not work. It would be a while yet before I would get my arms around what was going on.

Trouble with Barry

Now that the conference was over all I had left to do to complete the project was to finalize my written report. I also felt that with the successful presentation at the conference it was time to send an invoice to Barry for a part of the charges. Most of this invoice was for charges incurred for the SEM work at Iowa State University. A couple of days after sending the bill my phone rang. It was clearly agitated Barry Hanson who was calling asking me why I sent the bill to him. I said, “You told me that everything goes through you and that includes the bills too.” At that point we had a long talk about what exactly the arrangements were. All along he had led me to believe that there was plenty of money to do the work. I had taken his word for it like I did with all my customers. My philosophy has been that a person’s word is good until they show me they can’t be trusted. This approach has served my business well. I’ve only been stiffed a few times of the several thousand projects we have worked on. Not a bad record. By the questioning tone on the other end of the line I was wondering if this would be one of those rare times.

I had a hard time understanding why the coordinator of the testing was so unhappy. The results of our testing appeared to breathe new life into the discussion of the authenticity of the KRS. The feedback from the conference was pretty much all positive and LuAnn Patton and the members of the Rune Stone Museum board seemed pleased with our work also. As I look back on that time I think the problem between Barry and I was personality conflict. He definitely has a strong personality and likes to be in control of most situations. I would probably be described by many people the same way. I believed that I was hired to perform a forensic laboratory investigation. I felt that Barry needed to give me the basic information I needed and then get out of the way and let me do my job. Barry wanted to be present, as much as possible during the analysis, and at times I felt he was trying to steer me along. This was when I had a problem and we began to clash. At times, I have to admit that I intentionally tried to pushing his buttons. I didn’t do this to be an ass; I did it as my way of trying to get him to back off. This was a mistake on my part and only made the situation worse. What I should have done was to call a “time-out” and set the ground rules for how I wanted to work. I should have reached an understanding with

Barry and maybe things would have worked out better. Either way, we both began to not trust each other.

Janey Westin examines the stone

Paul Wieblen

Holding onto the report

Dick Nielsen

Going south with Barry

The April meeting in Alexandria where Barry gets fired

The AVM Stone

A couple of weeks after the fireworks in Alexandria, on May 24, 2001, the KRS was back in our lab for more observations by Janey Westin and me. LuAnn accompanied the stone as usual and the three of us went about our work. For some reason I noticed that LuAnn and Janey were acting a little squirrely. I can't really explain what they were doing specifically, but there was something going on with them. Around lunchtime I suggested we go out and get something to eat. I went into my office to check messages before we left and LuAnn followed in and closed the door behind her. She leaned against the door and looked at me with this silly looking grin on her face. I thought for a second she was going to say she liked me or something. After a short pause she said, "Janey found another Rune Stone." I looked at her not comprehending what she had said and said, "She found a what?" I called for Janey and closed the door behind her. She had the same silly grin on her face. I told them both to sit down and to start talking. Janey then told me the story.

A week and half earlier which happened to be Mother's Day, May 13, Janey and her father Robert decided to drive up to Rune Stone Park on the old Ohman farm to hike around looking for mooring stone holes in glacial boulders. She said they paddled a canoe out to a little island in a shallow, marshy lake due north of Rune Stone Hill. They hiked around the island and found four mooring stones. It was getting late in the day and the sun was starting to set in the west when Janey and her dad decided to head back to their canoe. To get there, they had to climb over a large pile of field-cleared glacial boulders on the west end of the island. For some reason Janey said she stopped for a moment to look back where she had just walked when something caught her eye. On the top of one of the boulders, in 2" tall letters, she saw an "AVM." At first she couldn't believe what she saw. Janey and her father were well versed in the KRS story and realized a connection right away. She said there was more to the inscription and said she wanted me to come and take a look at it. When she was finished with her story I was ready to jump in the car that instant.

We made plans to head up to the island three days later on Saturday, May 27, 2001. Janey, Bob and I stopped first at the farm to talk to the farmers whose property they found the stone on. This was the same farm that was owned previously by Nils Flaaten; Ohman's neighbor who was with him the day he found the KRS. We knocked on the door around lunchtime and a pretty woman in her early 50's answered the door. It was a strange moment trying to figure out what to say to her. We had talked about what to say on the drive up from the Twin Cities. We speculated that these people must know about the history of the KRS and wondered how they

would respond. We feared that they would want nothing to do with anything related to the KRS, let alone another Rune Stone. After discussing several strategies we didn't the honest straight-forward approach was the best. It turned out to be the right one.

Both Arlen and Ruby Sabolik could not have been more cooperative. They instantly saw eye to eye with us on pretty much everything we said and wanted to do. They gave us permission to go out to the island and said they would come out a little later after wrapping up a few chores. We unloaded our canoe and paddled the 100 or so yards across the water. As we approached the island I couldn't help but let myself entertain the possibility that this might have been the place where the KRS party had camped. My first impression as I walked onto the island is that this would be a perfect place to for a visiting party in possible hostile territory to camp. It was surrounded by water and old growth trees that were a perfect camouflage. You can easily see out but it would difficult to see in. The ground gently sloped up to an elevation about 10' above about the lake. The island was roughly teardrop shaped with a length of 150 yards and 100 yards wide. The East-West property line between Sabolik's to the North and the Park property to the south roughly cut the island in half. Along the full length of the property line were large boulders that had been cleared from the surrounding land. Arleen and Ruby would later tell us that the lake had formed when outlet stream that drained the area had been damned about five years earlier. The dam had raised the water level about 5 feet creating the lake. They said before that the land now underwater had been cornfields.



The AVM Stone inscription after the lichen was removed from everywhere except the "A." A dark gray, approximately 2 ½" wide band of biotite-rich schist runs at a 45 degree angle through the inscription.

Janey and Bob led me to the pile of rocks and she stopped in front of the stone. The area was lush with underbrush but the inscription on the large boulder was easily visible. An involuntary shudder went down my spine as I pulled out my hand-lens and descended onto the stone. The stone is a light pinkish-tan colored granite gneiss with a very pronounced 2 1/4" wide band of light to medium gray schist that cross-cuts the middle of the inscription at roughly at 45 degrees. The inscription is roughly centered on the top side of the boulder and appeared to be weathered. When I starting looking closely at the characters in the lighter colored, granitic areas, I noticed what looked like very small, brown colored, circular shaped, iron oxide stains. In the middle of each stain was a tiny dark mineral. Curiously these stained areas were only within the carved letters. I couldn't find any staining on any other part of the boulder. My initial reaction was that something wasn't right about them. If these were weathering pyrite crystals I wouldn't expect them to be there if the inscription was carved hundreds of years ago. For that matter, I wouldn't have expected them to be there if it was just over a 100 year old. Eventually, I would learn that neither scenario I considered would be the right one.

The other thing that seemed odd was that the characters that were cut in the dark gray schistose band were white and looked relatively fresh. This should have been another clear tip-off, but again I put the apparent inconsistency away for the time being. Looking back now, it's obvious that my "gut" was telling me that something was wrong. Part of the reason that I didn't pursue the hunch at that time was because I was caught up in the excitement that was effusing from Janey and Bob. Subconsciously, whatever doubts lingered in my mind I certainly wasn't going to bring them up now. The other reason I didn't react more was because I knew eventually I would have time to more carefully study the stone. Now was not the time to start drawing any conclusions. In the back of my mind I kept thinking about the quick opinions made regarding the KRS that turned out to be erroneous. There was plenty of time to formulate an opinion.

The stone is intermittently covered with yellow-colored lichen that partially obscures the inscription. After careful deliberation between the three of us, we decided to remove the lichen. This gave us a chance to inspect all parts of the inscription with the exception of the lower left leg of the "A." While Janey carefully scrubbed the lichen off with water and a brush, we heard Arlen and Ruby paddling across the lake. We each had several questions to ask them that they were happy to answer.

Arlen said that he had cleared the boulders and made the pile, and that the lichen had only grown on the rocks in the last five years since the water came up. Ruby interjected that she remembered Arlen saying that he thought he saw some scratches on a boulder several years back. Arlen's memory was jogged and they remembered joking about how it might be another rune stone. Arlen was unsure if this was the same rock, but I was convinced that it was.

Before long the sun was down and darkness set in. Arlen and Ruby went back to the house while the three of us were ready for round two of our investigation. We highlighted the inscription with a flashlight and could finally see it clearly. The inscription read, AVM : 1363 : ALU :. We took lots of photographs and recorded video. At around 1:00 a.m. we paddled off the island and went to our hotel. It was definitely a memorable day.

On Monday, the 29th I called Dick up after faxing him a copy of the inscription. He said all the

runes could have been copied from the KRS except one. Dick said the second rune on the second line was a special "S." It was very different than the rune for "S" on the KRS and was only found on the island of Gotland in the 14th Century. He then faxed me a couple examples of inscription that had this special rune. Sure enough, it was the same rune and Dick said that it was highly unlikely that a forger would know about this rune. Based on this he thought it was likely that the inscription could be genuine. Now I was really confused. On one hand, the iron-oxide halos and the fresh looking characters in the schistose band were saying, "not old"; and on the other hand, Dick's opinion was that the "S" rune was saying "very old." My mind was further clouded by the excitement of Bob, Janey, and her mom, Betty. My main thought was to be patient and cling to the hope that eventually I would get the stone into the lab and test it. I also kept in mind a saying I'd heard a long time ago that seemed appropriate in this case, "Never make a decision until you have to." The one thing I did have was the luxury of time.

Fortunately, I was involved with some very bright people. Bob was a retired University of Minnesota professor and was married to an intelligent woman. Betty and Bob had raised four daughters including Janey, and all of them were bright and thoughtful women. We decided to form a committee to plan and make decisions about what to do with the stone. The group included Janey, Bob, Arlen, Ruby and me. After several meetings we agreed on the following items. First, we had to figure out a way get the stone off the island. If word got out about the discovery of another rune stone we feared that people would come around and possibly deface it. Second, we knew that the stone needed to be examined in our laboratory in a similar fashion as the KRS. The third thing we felt was important was that if the island was a possible camping spot we needed to perform an archeological assessment.

I put in a call to the Minnesota Historical Society and spoke with Chuck Diesen who suggested I call Christina Harrison. Christina was the archaeologist who performed a dig on Rune Stone hill in 1972. She was intrigued with the story of the new stone and agreed to look at the photos we took. On May 30, Christina met with Bob, Janey and me at my house to look at slides of the stone. She thought the inscription was interesting and agreed that an archaeological assessment was the proper next step. Christina also relayed the difficulties she experienced during the dig near the site where the stone was originally discovered. She said that many of the local people, who were obviously supporters of the stone, thought she was incompetent when she didn't find anything. The experience clearly left a bad taste in her mouth but she didn't seem deterred in helping us.

Over the course of the next several days the local archaeology rumor mill began to churn. I heard negative stories about Christina and several other people. When I talked to Christina about what I'd heard, she acknowledged that the profession was highly political and that "If you were not part of the inner circle, you won't get contracts." When I brought up Mike Michlovic's name, an archaeologist who was recommended to Janey, Christina said that he was a well respected. Mike was also known as someone who was highly skeptical of the KRS. Personally, I didn't really care what he thought about the KRS, all I cared about was if he could do a good job for us. I called Mike on June 19, and after we discussed the project he agreed to work with us. Mike suggested a phase I archaeological assessment. He explained that the phase I included two traverses across designated areas where approximately a dozen test holes were dug. Each hole is about a foot across and roughly 18" deep. The idea is to get through the soil horizon into

natural, undisturbed glacial material. The material removed is screened for artifacts or any evidence of previous human activity. He offered to let me work as an assistant to help keep the cost down. He said to do the work and write a report would cost about \$1500 dollars. This amount was within the budget that the committee had set up and we gave him the go-ahead.

The other major task was to figure out a way to get the stone off the island. LuAnn suggested we talk with her husband Al, about his good friend and fellow police officer Brad Lake. Janet and I had met Brad on an earlier trip to Alexandria and he seemed to be the kind of guy who would love to help if he could. I called Brad on June 18, and told him the story and what we wanted to do. He was enthusiastic that he could help figure out a way to get the stone off the island. When the committee met the next time our plans for the Stone seemed to be falling into place. The date of Monday, July 9, was set for the extraction. Arleen and Ruby thought a Monday would be the best day because there would be fewer people at the park which looked down perfectly at the island. This would hopefully draw less attention to the activity on the island.



Looking north from the top of Rune Stone hill at the island where the AVM Stone was found. The stone was found in a pile of field-cleared boulders under the trees on the east end of the island.

The weather was perfect as Janet, Grant, Amanda and I drove out to Sabolik's for a pre-extraction meeting. The meeting was video-taped with the committee members in attendance, Brad and his brother Bruce, LuAnn and her husband Al, Dennis Anderson and a friend of Arlen and Ruby's named Pryce Score. Pryce was the President of the bank in Kensington and was there to give the Sabolik's advice. We all sat around the kitchen table as Brad explained the carefully considered plan he and Dennis Anderson had devised. Dennis is an Alexandria businessman with the desire to help, and the equipment we needed to do the job. They had put

together a professional looking notebook with photos that impressed everyone. The meeting ended at noon just as Mike Michlovic and Christina Harrison arrived. After we all made our way to the island Janey and I showed Mike and Christina the stone. They both examined the stone but had relatively little to offer. Mike and Christina then walked the island and talked about doing an archeological assessment. He estimated that a Phase I assessment would involve two to three people and take could be completed in one day. To help keep the cost down, Christina volunteered to help.

While Janey and I were talking to Mike and Christina, Brad, Bruce, Al, and Dennis were getting all the gear into place. The Douglas County Sheriff's office let us use their 16-foot, flat-bottomed rescue boat and Dennis brought cables, chains and a heavy duty four-wheeler. At around 1:30 p.m. we gave the word to begin extraction. Once again the video camera was rolling to record the event. The first thing to do was to move the boulders surrounding the AVM Stone. This is where we all had a chance for the guys to show off our muscles. Fortunately for us there several large trees that provided plenty of shade around the pile of boulders. We still worked up plenty of sweat and the shade also provided a haven for mosquitoes. After an hour or so the boulders closest to the stone were moved and we began digging the dirt out underneath it. I did most of the digging and it turned out the stone was larger than we had originally estimated. We originally estimated its weight at about 1500 pounds but it probably was more like 2000. Still, we were able to successfully load the stone onto the 71' Chevy car hood that was now serving as a sled. Using a come-along with chains, greased boards, and Dennis on his ATV, we slowly moved the stone on its sled to the other side of the island. Once we had moved it to a slight downward sloping grade we removed the chains and come-along for the final push to the pontoon boat. The last 40 yards to the boat would be done in one final sprint. The greased 2" x 10" x 16 feet long were positioned under the sled with the stone. Every available free body leaned into the stone to push as Dennis revved his ATV. On the count of three Dennis hit the gas and the rest of us started pushing. The sled started moving as we ran and pushed as the stone gathered speed. Once the stone got going, those us pushing either fell down or followed as Dennis raced directly into the lake. The water and mud was flying into the air from under the wheels of the ATV until it and the sled came to a stop in about a foot of water.

The pontoon boat was rigged with 4" x 4" beams that the sled would sit on as well as a ramp that we used to pull the stone onto the boat with; again using the chains and come-along. Once the stone was secure on the boat, six of us took a position around the boat. We then made our way, wading slowly across the waist-deep lake with the precious cargo in tow. A half hour later we reached the shore where Arlen was waiting behind the wheel of his John Deer tractor. We hooked a cable to the sled and Arlen dragged the stone across the field and into one of his large metal sheds for temporary storage. After a lot of good planning and hard back labor, the job was finished at about 6:30 p.m.



After the successful removal of the AVM Stone, the extraction crew was tired and wet, yet they were all happy and proud. Left to right: Bruce Lake, Dennis Anderson, Janey Westin, Al and LuAnn Patton, Scott Wolter and Brad Lake.

The following morning, July 10, Dennis Anderson provided a private conference room for a post-stone extraction meeting of the AVM Stone committee. Janey, Bob, Betty, Arlen, Ruby, LuAnn and I were present. Plans were made to contact Mike Michlovic to go ahead with the Phase I assessment the last week in July, (July 25 or 26) and to have a press release about the discovery of the stone sometime in August. I felt that now was a good time to bring up the issue of physically testing the stone. To my complete surprise Bob strongly objected. He looked at me and said, "You're not cutting into that stone." When I asked him about his concerns he gave two reasons. His first reason was that he felt the physical testing would not be convincing to people who do not believe in the KRS. His second reason was because he had not seen the report of the work we did on the KRS. I was quite surprised to hear his reasoning and found both arguments to be rather poor. I had a hard time understanding since he had attended the presentation of our work in November of last year.

Suddenly, I found myself in a terrible quandary. My first inclination was to strongly challenge Bob for his position. However, by doing that I would put Janey in a bad position with her father and I just couldn't do that. I did extend an offer for Bob to come into our lab and show him our results as well as let him read my report. The meeting adjourned and we all went home feeling satisfied about the work we had accomplished. I felt awkward the whole ride home from feeling like I'd been hit with a left hook out of nowhere. I had assumed that we would be testing the stone before the press conference and now the plan had changed. Suddenly I felt like an outsider within a group of people I had grown quite close to. I don't remember if I realized it or not at the

Peg wrote about the St Paul conference

time, but I was feeling that “gut” instinct that had been slowly gnawing at me from the first day I saw the stone. Regardless of what I considered to be a setback for me we continued on with the plans that the committee had agreed to.

The date of July 25 was set for the archaeological dig. On July 23, I contacted an old football buddy who was now a reporter at the Minneapolis Tribune newspaper about doing a story about the stone. He suggested Peg Meier, who has been writing about the KRS for 25 years. He also suggested that we brought her in now so she can write a better story. I first called Janey since this was her discovery and she was receptive. I then call Peg and offered her the story. She was very receptive and we decided it would be a good idea to have come along for the Phase I dig. The next day we again made the two-hour trip to Alexandria and had dinner that evening with LuAnn and Al. When Jan and the kids and I returned to our hotel room there was a message from Ruby Sabolik. I returned the call and she told me that Marion Dahm had been out to the island that day using divining rods. Marion is well-known supporter of the KRS who has lived in the area for over 80 years. Some people think he and his friends are a little “out there” with their ideas and divining rods. Ruby said he had located two structures that the KRS explorers stayed in. He also pointed out the “fake Runestone” that he and a couple of his buddies apparently found in 1995. Obviously, we were both surprised and somewhat disappointed. I had a very restless sleep that evening.

Before Michlovic, Dean Sather, Christina and Peg Meier arrived we had a committee meeting at Arlen and Ruby’s to decide on what to say about Marion Dahm’s visit the evening before. In addition to saying he had prior knowledge of the AVM Stone, he went with Ruby and Arlen the night before and walked right up to the rock pile and pointed out exactly where the stone had been. Ruby described how he used “divining rods” and laid out the foundations to two structures that the Nordic group sheltered. It was a good thing we decided to tell the archeologists about Marion Dahm’s visit the previous night because when got out to the island there were red flags all over the place.

Peg brought photographer Stormi Greener along and they documented the day’s events. At the end of the day I thought the Phase I assessment had gone very well. Mike, Dean and Christina did a professional job and fully cooperated with all of our requests and questions. They dug a total of 14 test holes (approx. 1' x 1' x 16-20" deep) and found several artifacts that clearly indicated previous human habitation. The items included three siliceous flakes (chalcedony, chert and quartz), two pieces of charcoal, two mammal teeth fragments and one large mammal bone fragment with a charred edge, two apparent knife cuts and one clear cut edge. Mike said the island would be registered with the Minnesota Historical Society as a habitation site that was most likely Native American. He also said that they did not find any direct evidence of Norse habitation, but that you also could not rule it out. Mike said he would complete his report within a few weeks.

As we should have expected Peg started to put pressure on to run the story as soon as possible so she wouldn’t lose the “scoop.” At the same time I was pressuring Janey to get the stone to our lab before the press conference. Eventually, the decision was made to hold the press conference first. The date of August 11 was chosen with the announcement to be made in Kensington. The week leading up to the press conference I went on a vacation to the Upper Peninsula of

Michigan. We stayed in Duluth on the way back, two days before the announcement. It was that morning that I decided I wasn't going to attend the press conference. I tried to not let the idea of not testing the stone first bother me, but in the end I couldn't do it. I wasn't going to say the real reason for my protest; I just said that I didn't have anything to say since we hadn't done any testing yet. Janey was disappointed but understood my reasoning. Peg wrote a great story that was on the front page. The day of the press conference I did two radio interviews. There was a lot of excitement, but all I could think of was getting that damn stone into the lab.

The next morning Janey and her dad finally brought the stone to the lab on a trailer. When they dropped it off, I felt relieved when Bob gave me his blessing to take the core sample and do whatever I felt was necessary. The first thing we did was obtain a core sample from the back side of the stone through the same geologic zone that contained the inscription. Over the next several days we made and examined thin sections of the core to better understand the exact make-up of the stone. I also spent a lot of time examining the numerous iron oxide stains around the pyrite grains I observed only within the carved characters. Both the iron oxide staining and the fresh looking characters in the biotite-rich schistose band were driving me crazy. They were not fitting in with a weathering profile of a hundred or so years; let alone hundreds of years. Hard as it is for me to admit, I had been influenced by Dick's insistence that that damn Gotland "S" could only have been known in the 14th Century. I respected Dick's opinion we discussed the conflict many times. The weathering that I was seeing didn't fit either scenario and I didn't know what to do. There was too much excitement going on and I just wasn't comfortable with any conclusion. I finally decided to put the stone away for a while and write my report later. I told myself that I would wait until things settled down and write the report after the first of the year. After making that decision the unsettled feeling in my gut finally settled down.

Why appearing was not noticed?

The word was AVM - a non medieval word

On November 6th I received a call from Barb Averill with the Minnesota Historical Society. She informed me that two women had written a letter to the Society taking responsibility for carving the AVM Stone in 1985. At first I didn't believe her, but after listening to her read the letter the whole thing fell immediately into place. The problem I was having was that neither of the two scenarios I was considering fit the weathering profile that I was observing. The fresh appearing biotite and the weathering pyrite grains suddenly made sense. They had only been weathering for 16 years. The most unbelievable part was when she read how the women described how the second letter on the second line, the "Gotland S," was made by accident. They described how the chisel slipped and chipped out an extra piece of rock. They had made an authentic 14th Century rune by accident. It was that slip of the chisel and ~~Dick's opinion~~ that had fouled me up.

After hanging up the phone I laughed at myself for being so silly for not being able to figure things out sooner. The one thing I could say for sure was that I had learned some valuable lessons. I'll be a lot more careful about being influenced by the opinion of people from other disciplines; even people I respect as much as Dick Nielsen. In spite of this, I was proud of myself and everybody involved for the way we handled the whole affair. We treated the stone as though it were genuine artifact until it could be properly examined. Best of all, this stone now became a control sample with weathering of known age that can be used to compare with the KRS. I suggested to Arlen and Ruby that they leave the stone outside so the inscription can continue to weather. I promised that I would occasionally visit to inspect the stone to see how the pyrite and biotite weather in the future. My first visit to see the stone again was in May of

↑ = M that caused the intended ↑ to become the Gotland S

2003. Arlen and Ruby had placed the stone in the middle of her flower garden. When I took out my hand-lens and looked closely at the inscription, the pyrites were still weathering and the biotite still looked fresh.

Bob Johnson “You’re not touching that stone”
Mike Michlovic’s archeological dig
The Press conference and I do not attend
AVM Stone to the lab
National Geographic films the stone with John Barr
Puzzled by the pyrite
The Starbuck crew with Marion Dahm and Bob Peterson
Host Fest
The confession letter
The weathering suddenly makes sense and a valuable lesson learned
Guy Gibbon comes a calling
Barnes review and a presentation to the Smithsonian
Meeting Elisabeth Ward and Iris Hahn
Barry and Dick’s relationship begins to fall apart
Barry’s Books are published with very little fanfare
Lars Westman visits from Sweden
Billy Bye and his failed bid to get involved
Mike Ruddy
The photo-library of the inscription
The KRS Forum group
Trip to Maine with Dick and the Spirit Pond Rune Stones
Hallowell Cemetery, Tony and Linda Maschadri
Northman’s Rock
MHS document search
Back to Maine to propose our work and Bourne Massachusetts
Jim Mavor
Tombstone sampling with Tony
Russell Fridley & the Gran Tapes
To Iowa State and the SEM
April 2, 2003 KRS Forum
Dick and I begin the book
Buff Perry and the La Verendre Stone
Kurt Mardstedt article
Two trips to Kensington
Barsness Site
Trip to Oklahoma and the Heavener Rune stone
Michael Barnes visit
Dr. Kirby visit
Noman’s Land Island Trip
The trip to Uppsula

I had feel he
was really he always had
research to do.

MHS Document Search

As the 2002 Holiday season was winding down I realized that there would now be time to turn my attention to another area that I could investigate. The 2002-03, winter was a relatively dry one in Minnesota. We had the typical cold temperatures but there was almost nothing for snow. It was quite a different in Maine where my slate tombstones were waiting to be sampled. The New England area was experiencing unusual cold and record snowfall. As badly as I wanted to get out there to the Hallowell cemetery, it wasn't going to happen anytime soon.

I was well aware that a wealth of information about the Kensington Rune Stone was only a 10-minute drive from my office at the Minnesota Historical Society. The new History Center building was absolutely gorgeous. The only time I had been in there was when it first opened a few years ago when I was selling my Agate books to the bookstore. The exterior and interior is finished with beautiful granite and marble stone and feels like a palace when you walk in. Realizing that there would be a relative void in "Rune Stone" work I could do, I turned my attention to seeing what I could find in the MHS library.

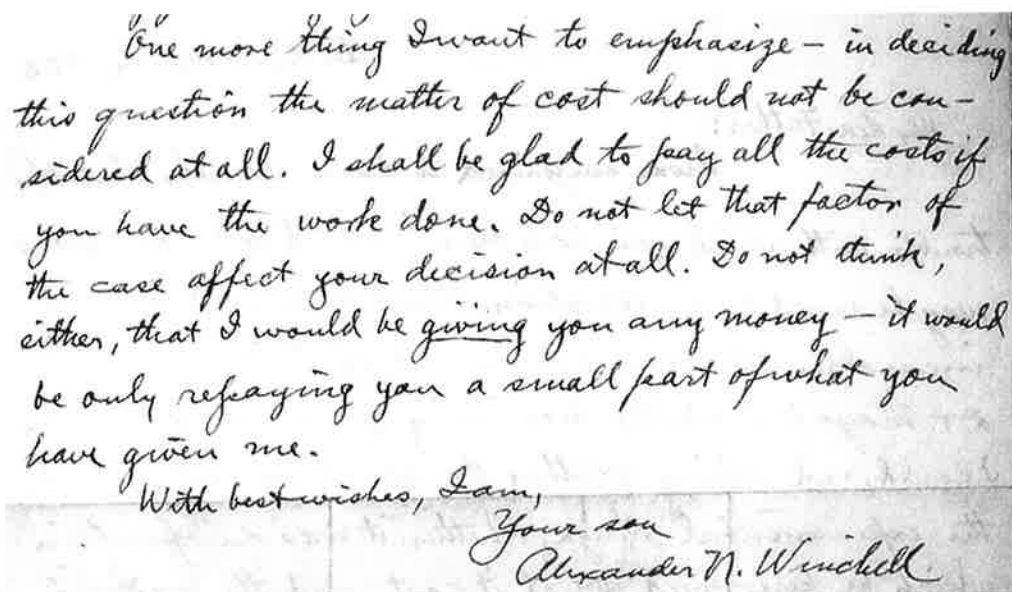
The first day I walked in didn't know where to start so I trotted up to the information desk and asked for information about the KRS. I was impressed with the helpful staff that enthusiastically helped me become comfortable locating the documents I was looking for. There were several items I was anxious to find but the one thing I most wanted to locate was Newton Winchell's original field notebook. To me it was like the "Holy Grail" of the KRS story. I'll be the first to admit that I am biased toward the accomplished pioneer of Minnesota geology. However, I know that anyone who knows anything about Professor Winchell respects his accomplishments and the kind of man his was. One of the benefits of this research was in trying to learn as much as I could about the man I consider the clear voice of reason and wisdom among the many characters in the KRS story. He played a critical role during the crucial period of time between 1908 and 1912. I couldn't wait to see what I would find.

On February 4, 2002, I visited the MHS library for the first time. Starting with Winchell, I found that there were 20 boxes of materials on file. While waiting for the first box to be retrieved I decided to see if I could find someone who would be interested in the photo-library of the runes. I thought the Society should have a copy for their archives. I was introduced to Craig Wright who sat down with me in a conference room. I ended up giving my entire power point presentation which Craig received enthusiastically. He also gave me permission to use my digital camera to photograph whatever documents I wanted. This convenience saved me a lot of time and having the original documents was invaluable in writing reports and this book.

The first box I requested was Winchell's personal letters. It was neat to see how caring and compassionate the Professor was when writing to family members. The letter that touched me the most was written by his son Alexander on March 5, 1905. Alexander talks about the arrangements he made for his father at the Mayo clinic to have an operation for a problem he was having with his prostate. Alexander implores his father to have the operation before leaving on an extended trip to the West Coast. He also tells his father that he was paying for the operation and not to give him any grief about it. I couldn't help thinking how proud I would be if my own

He
suggested
the
MHS

son grows up to be such a thoughtful adult.



One more thing I want to emphasize - in deciding this question the matter of cost should not be considered at all. I shall be glad to pay all the costs if you have the work done. Do not let that factor of the case affect your decision at all. Do not think, either, that I would be giving you any money - it would be only repaying you a small part of what you have given me.

With best wishes, I am,
Your son
Alexander N. Winchell

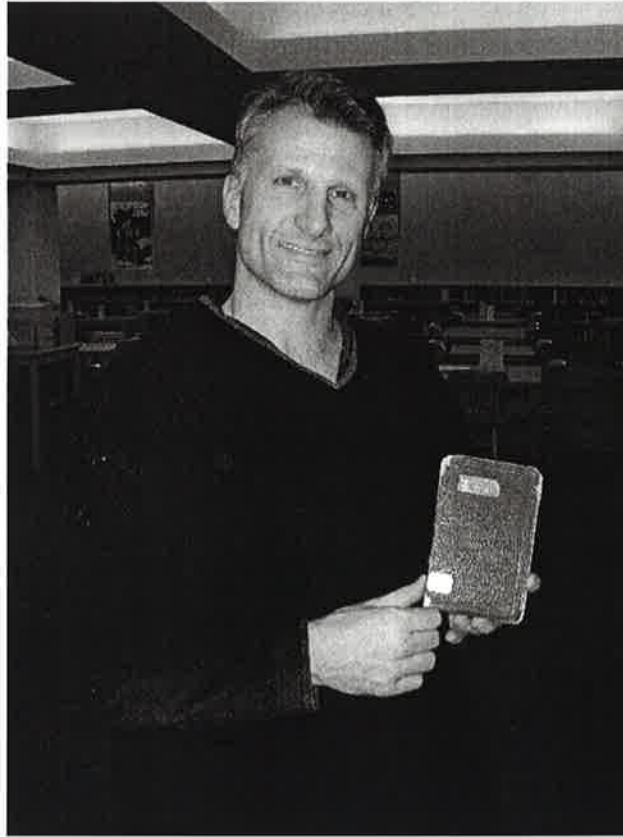
Page 2 of the March 14, 1905 letter from Alexander Winchell to his father.

"One more thing I want to emphasize-in deciding this question the matter of cost should not be considered at all. I shall be glad to pay all costs if you have the work done. Do not let that factor of the case affect your decision at all. Do not think, either, that I would be giving you any money-it would be only repaying you a small part of what you have given me."

The second box contained 10 of Winchell's geology field notebooks. I carefully looked through about 6 or 7 of them and became discouraged that the notebook might be in a different place. At the information desk they confirmed my suspicion that the KRS material was filed separately. They pulled a listing of the material in that file and sure enough, there were Winchell documents listed. I filled out the request slip for the box and went back to the table to wait. I started to put the notebooks back in the box to return them but decided to kill some time checking out the last couple of notebooks. I felt a strange kind of connection with Winchell and enjoyed scanning the neat, meticulous notes. I rapidly paged through the final book trying to finish the job and move on to the next box when a familiar pencil drawing caught my eye. In the middle of the last notebook I saw the sketch of the tree over the stone from Blegen's book. The notes are written in pencil and the book was in fairly good shape. I felt an eerie and exciting chill as I carefully paged through the notes. I came so close to missing it and who knows how long I would have searched and perhaps not found these important notes.

By N. H. Winchell

writing

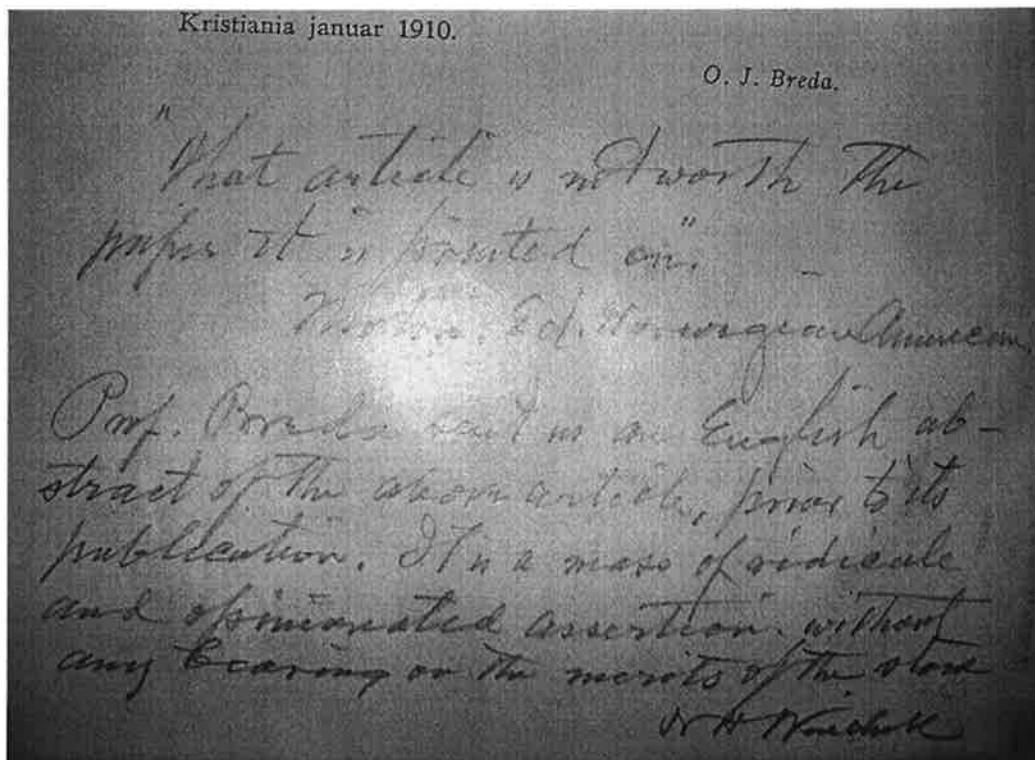


The author feeling relieved after finding N. H. Winchell's field notebook at the Minnesota Historical Society library on February 11, 2003.

I photographed all 50 pages of the notebook that pertained to the Rune Stone. By the time I finished looking at all the field notebooks my shirt was littered with several small pieces of paper that had become brittle with age. These old documents were literally falling apart and I wondered what could be done to better preserve them. I mentioned to Craig Wright that he should put this highly valuable book in a safe place. He agreed and made arrangements for the book to have special viewing procedures. During the time I spent pouring through Winchell's papers I found several eye-opening documents. As interesting as the personal letters were, I probably learned more about the intelligence of the Professor by reviewing two publications written by prominent linguists in the States at that time. He clearly learned a great deal about the language on the stone. George T. Flom and Olaus Breda each wrote lengthy papers detailing why they believed the inscription was a hoax. Winchell carefully reviewed these papers and wrote comments in the margins. He was quite blunt in his criticism of Breda and pointed out several interesting statements by Flom.

The course of time would prove that Prof. Winchell believed that the language of the inscription was vernacular and did not represent the fine literature found in the manuscript collections of the

would prove to be far more correct
Professor's of the day



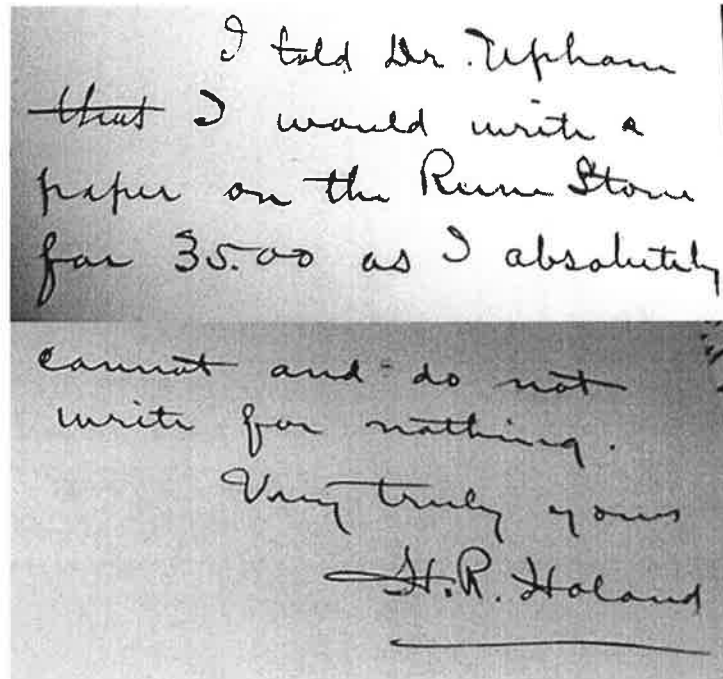
N. H. Winchell's review of O. J. Breda's 1910 paper on the Kensington Rune Stone.
"That article is not worth the paper it is printed on." March Ed. Norwegian American. "Prof. Breda sent in an English abstract of the above article, prior to its publication. It is a mass of ridicule and opinionated assertion without any bearing on the merits of the stone."

Over the course of the next several weeks I spend dozens of hours at the library and found a lot of important information.

During my document search at the Minnesota Historical Society in early 2003, I was amazed by the huge number of documents related to the Kensington Rune Stone. I took digital photographs of over 1000 pages of documents. By far the most interesting were the hand-written letters by various individuals involved in the controversy. The most prolific writer was Hjalmar Holand. I found 72 letters that he wrote to Winchell and Warren Upham alone. Some were 8 to 9 pages long. One of my frustrations was not being able to read the initial inquiries that prompted a return letter or being able to see the reply of other letters. Unfortunately, many interesting and important documents were forever lost in a fire that burned Mr. Holand's home to the ground in 1934. All of his records, letters and photographs were destroyed. In spite of this unfortunate event, there were still numerous documents that yielded plenty of relevant information.

Besides attempting to learn as many facts about the KRS story as I could, one of my other goals was to learn about the key individuals involved. The personal letters revealed a great deal about how these people's minds worked. In my opinion, the prolific Mr. Holand was the most enigmatic individual of all. The man who emerges from these letters is highly intelligent, strong-willed, diligent and thorough. He also comes across as forceful in his opinions to the point of arrogance with regard to the Rune Stone. He certainly isn't shy about his feelings toward the

people who disagreed with him about the validity of the inscription. Holand clearly made enemies who, in part because of his apparent abrasive and confrontational style, went out of their way to undermine his work. He had little time for anyone who disagreed with him and this clearly made his efforts to get his message across more difficult.

A photograph of a handwritten note on a piece of paper. The text is written in cursive and reads: "I told Dr. Upham that I would write a paper on the Rune Stone for 35.00 as I absolutely cannot and do not write for nothing. Very truly yours H.P. Holand". The signature "H.P. Holand" is underlined.

I told Dr. Upham
that I would write a
paper on the Rune Stone
for 35.00 as I absolutely
cannot and do not
write for nothing.
Very truly yours
H.P. Holand

Holand's sometimes abrupt style comes through in this August 3, 1908 letter to N. H. Winchell.
"I told Dr. Upham that I would write a paper on the Rune Stone for 35.00 as I absolutely cannot and do not write for nothing."

The Holand letters give a sense that the Rune Stone was the only thing going on in his life. This was certainly not the case. Mr. Holand experienced an especially trying event that jumped out in an August, 1910 letter.



Marinette, Wis., Aug 17 1910

My dear Prof Winchell:
Your letter came just as I left Ephraim with the bodies of two young ladies from Chicago ~~at~~ visiting at my house who were drowned while out boating with a young man. It was a very sad affair. My own two children accompanied them but were resuscitated after more than an hour's doubtful work.

A tragic event as told by Holand in an August 17, 1910 letter to Winchell.

"Your letter came just as I left Ephraim with the bodies of two young ladies from Chicago visiting at my house who were drowned while out boating with a young man. It was a very sad affair. My own two children were resuscitated after an hour's doubtful work."

Perhaps one of his most enduring qualities was his tenacity. Approaching the age of 90 he was still working hard on the Kensington Rune Stone when he wrote to the famous Minnesota historian Theodore Blegen. Holand wrote a response to the scathing accusations of his work in the 1958 book by Erik Wahlgren. He continued his lifelong work on the Rune Stone even after the death of wife.

I hope you are enjoying good health. I am feeling fine and have had no aches or pains, except for the death of my wife, for years.
Cordially
H. D. Holand

Holand wrote this letter to Theodore Blegen on November 7, 1960.

"I hope you are enjoying good health. I am feeling fine and have no aches or pains, except for

the death of my wife, for years."

These letters present a different perspective to the controversy that I felt was important for a complete understanding of the complexities involved.

The Tombstone Study

Additional Thoughts

Newton Winchell - Even though I have great respect for this brilliant man and his well reasoned approach to the Rune Stone investigation, there are a few things that have me stumped.

1. In all of his careful research and observations of the stone itself why did he never make mention of the plainly obvious and certainly relevant white root leaching on the back side of the stone? To me this is huge and I can't understand how he missed it. For that matter, I have never seen a photograph of the back side of the stone. Most egregious!
2. I strongly disagree with his estimate that the hydrothermal calcite on the face side would significantly weather in 30 to 50 years.
3. He makes no clear mention of the difference in weathering of the split side of the stone as opposed to the other sides. Yes he does!
4. He talks about the much higher water levels
5. He runs pretty far with the rocks at Big Corament Lake.
6. He should have made arrangements to bring Olof Ohman to the Historical Society in 1910.