

The story told in this brochure is about the Scottish nobleman, Prince Henry Sinclair, and his visit to America well before Columbus. It is adapted in large part from an article appearing in the June 1983 issue of *Atlantic Insight* entitled *Was Glooscap a Scot?* and reprinted in the August 1988 issue of *Yours Aye*.

Prince Henry Sinclair was the subject of historian Frederick J. Pohl's "*Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus*", which was published in 1961. Not all historians agreed with Pohl, but he made a highly convincing case that this blond, sea-going Scot, born at Rosslyn Castle near Edinburgh in 1345, not only wandered about mainland Nova Scotia in 1398, but also lived among the Micmacs long enough to be remembered through centuries as the man-god "Glooscap".

Henry Sinclair's ancestry was a mixture of Norman, French, Norwegian, and Scottish. The first Sinclair known in what is now the United Kingdom had arrived with William the Conqueror in 1066. Sinclair's grandfather, a friend of Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, died fighting the Saracens in Spain in 1330. His father, Sir William Sinclair, also died in battle while fighting the Lithuanians from a base in Prussia in 1358. Henry was 13 at the time. He was trained in martial exercises with sword, spear, bow and arrow. He spoke Latin and French and became a knight at the age of 21 years. He held the position of the Grand Master of Scottish Masons. His first wife, who died young, was the great granddaughter of King Magnus of Sweden and Norway. His second wife, Janet Halyburton of Dirleton Castle, bore him thirteen children.

Sinclair was installed as the Earl of Orkney and Lord of Shetland when he was only 24. The earldom included the Faeroes, the Orkneys, and the Shetlands. Norway had ruled the islands since the ninth century. As "jarl" he was next to royalty. He had authority to stamp coins, to make laws, remit crimes, wear a crown, and have a sword carried before him. He had already been rewarded by King David of Scotland for a successful raid into England, with the title of Lord Sinclair and the position of Lord Chief Justice of Scotland. Sinclair excelled in a furious time.

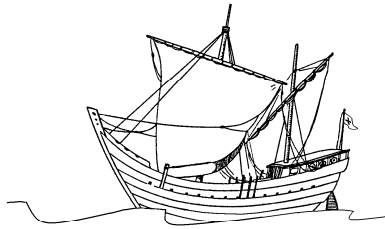
Before he was 35 years old, he had build up a fleet larger than Norway's, and Norway was by then hard-pressed to defend itself from Baltic pirates. Still, he brooded over his lack of guns. The new technology had been developed among naval powers in the Mediterranean area and was effective for Carlo Zeno "the Lion" of Venice.

The brothers of Carlo Zeno were Nicolo and Antonio who joined Prince Henry in his maritime explorations. Their first

assignment was to chart the ocean to the West. Their "Zeno Map of the Sea" was so accurate that mariners used it for the next 150 years! Nicolo and Antonio had the practice of writing to Carlo "The Lion" in Venice. This correspondence was published in 1558. Historians call it the "*Zeno Narrative*," and it is a basic source for Pohl's intriguing account.

This *Zeno Narrative* told about a survey to make a map of Greenland in about 1393; it was conducted by Nicolo Zeno, and later by Prince Henry's ships.

Not only did the Zeno Map chart the sea with uncanny precision, it also showed certain landmarks. For example, it illustrated two cities in Estotilandia (Nova Scotia), possibly founded by Sinclair - Louisburg Harbor and St. Peter's. A castle or fortification was shown. There is speculation that Zeno based his map upon a much more ancient map, coming from the Templars in the Middle East, carried in secrecy by them for safekeeping in Rosslyn Castle until Prince Henry commissioned it's update by Zeno.



The Zeno Narrative reported that as far back as 1371, four fishing boats, - the fishermen were Prince Henry's subjects - were blown off so far out to sea that they eventually came ashore on land that was probably Newfoundland. They spent more than twenty years on the island, and apparently on the land to the south, and then one of them made contact with some European fishermen and managed to return to the Faeroes. Sinclair decided to explore these new lands, and set sail around April 1, 1398. His fleet consisted of 12 little vessels appearing much like the Viking ships. The Zeno Document suggests he dropped anchor on the first of June in Guysborough harbor in Nova Scotia.

Sinclair then sent 100 soldiers to explore the source of smoke they saw swirling above a distant hill. The soldiers reported back that the smoke was a natural thing proceeding from a great fire in the bottom of a hill, where a spring from which issued a certain substance like pitch which ran into the sea. Thereabouts dwelt a great many people, half-wild and living in caves. They were small of stature and very timid. Geographical detective work, archaeology, modern science and various documents have pinpointed the burning hill as the asphalt area at Stellarton, about 50 miles direct from the head of Guysborough harbor.

Apparently Sinclair persuaded the Native Americans, the Micmac Indians, to act as guides in his exploration of what he first thought to be an island. The narrow isthmus at Bair Verte changed his mind. It was navigable by canoe to Cumberland Basin with a portage on only three miles.

The trip along the River Herbert towards Parrsboro included only one portage of just 400 yards in the 22 miles. Sinclair may then have traveled on to Annapolis Basin and across the Micmac canoe route to Liverpool. By October, he was back on Green Hill, southwest of Pictou Harbor, to attend a gathering of the Micmacs. "Twas the time for holding the great and yearly feast with dancing and merry games."

Next, he doubled back to Spencer Island, Minas Channel, and did some hunting. The meat of the animals was sliced and dried. The bones were chopped up and boiled in a big iron pot to extract the marrow. His winter campsite was on the high promontory of Cape d'Or, overlooking Advocate Harbor. During the winter, the expedition built a ship and when spring arrived, Sinclair sailed away from Nova Scotia.

They traveled southward along the New England Coast to the Merrimack River, just north of Boston. The party landed and spent the winter, living peacefully with the Indians. To the west they could see a hilltop. Accompanied by his 100 men, Henry marched inland to the summit of this hill, now called Prospect Hill, located in Westford, Massachusetts. It is 465 feet in altitude and afforded a view in all directions.

While in this area, one of Prince Henry's life long companions, by the name of Sir James Gunn, also from Scotland, died. In memory of their lost companion, the party carved a marker on the face of a stone ledge. It consisted of various sizes of punched holes, which outlined a Scottish knight with a 39-inch long sword and shield bearing the Gunn Clan insignia. Where glacial scratches or rock coloration existed, they were incorporated into the man-made design. Some holes were larger and deeper than others, probably due to the dulling of the carver's tool and centuries of weathering.

In the words of Frederic Pohl, "the following are undeniably man-made workings: the pommel, handle, and guard of the sword; below the guard the break across the blade that is indicative of the death of the sword's owner; the crest above the pommel; a few holes at the sword's point; the punched-hole jess lines attached to the legs of the falcon; the bell-shaped hollows; the corner of the shield touching the pommel; the crescent of the shield; and the holes that form a decorative pattern on the pommel." Now, weatherworn and faint, one can see just enough of the carving to visualize the rest of it.

Located beside this ancient rock carving is a recent granite monument, erected to honor Prince Henry Sinclair. Its inscription reads:

"Prince Henry First Sinclair of Orkney born in Scotland made a voyage of discovery in North America in 1398. After wintering in Nova Scotia he sailed to Massachusetts and on an inland expedition to view the surrounding countryside, one of the party died. The punch-hole armorial effigy which adorns this ledge is a Memorial to this Knight."

A primary document that proves Henry Sinclair made an exploration to North America is the "*Zeno Narrative*", a few portions of which follows:

"I set sail with a considerable number of vessels and men, but had not the chief command, as I had expected to have, for Sinclair went in his own person."

"As the sea ran high and we did not know what country it was, we were afraid at first to approach it, but by God's blessing the wind lulled, and then there came on a great calm. Some of the crew pulled ashore and soon returned with great joy with news that they found an excellent country and a still better harbor. We brought our barks and our boats to land, and on entering an excellent harbor we saw in the distance a great hill that poured forth smoke, which gave us hope that we should find some inhabitants. Neither would Sinclair rest, though it was a great way off, without sending 100 soldiers to explore the country, and bring us an account of what sort of people the inhabitants were."

"While we were at anchor there, the month of June came in, and the air in the island was mild and pleasant beyond description. To the harbor we gave the name Trin."

"After eight days the 100 soldiers returned, and brought word that they had been through the island and up to the hill, and that the smoke was a natural thing proceeding from a great fire in the bottom of the hill, and that there was a spring from which issued a certain substance like pitch, which ran into the sea, and that thereabouts dwelt a great many people half wild, and living in caves."

Support for the Zeno Document's account of Sinclair's itinerary in 1398 lies in Silas Tertius Rand's "*Legends of the Micmacs*". Rand wrote down the famous "Legends," compiled an English-Micmac dictionary of 40,000 words and translated most of the Bible into Micmac. He was self-educated, and he saved an entire oral literature from probable oblivion. We learned from Rand and from Charles Leland, a contemporary in New England, that Glooscap, like Sinclair was:

"a leader who came from the east, far across the great sea. He was a Prince. He was a King who sailed the seas. His home was in a large town on an island. He came with many soldiers. He came across the ocean via Newfoundland, and he first met the Micmacs at Pictou. His chief weapon was a sword of sharpness. He had three daughters. His character was unusual. The Micmacs described Glooscap as sober, grave, and good. He seemed to have been on the whole a noble - minded, generous sort of personage."

Sinclair, according to the Zeno Document, had similar qualities of character. He was:

"Prince as worthy of immortal memory as any that ever lived, for his great bravery and remarkable goodness."

There is further evidence supporting the claim that Prince Henry Sinclair visited the North American continent. Charles Godfrey Leland, the author of "*The Algonquin Legends of New England*", and John Dyneley Prince, Professor at Columbia University and author of various articles on Algonkin dialects, combined their talents to write the book entitled "*Kuloskap the master and Other Algonkin Poems*" in 1902.

His remarkable achievements carry many symbolic messages, which are meaningful to us today. He had the skill and the courage to sail to "the ends of the earth" in pursuit of his beliefs and to establish peaceful relations with the people he encountered. Henry was admired and his leadership was followed. Since he did not seek personal fame, his accomplishments have nearly slipped from view.

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THE STORY OF PRINCE HENRY SINCLAIR AND HIS PRE-COLUMBIAN VISIT TO AMERICA

Born in Scotland in about 1345

Henry Sinclair became Earl of Rosslyn
and the surrounding lands,
as well as Prince of Orkney.

It is believed that in 1398 he led an expedition
to explore Nova Scotia and Massachusetts.

This was 90 years before
Columbus "discovered" America



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