

It is an image carved into a ground-level bedrock ledge in Westford, Massachusetts. The site is on the eastern side of Depot Street, just a half mile from the center of Westford. This is less than an hour's travel from Boston, a few miles west of Route 495 at Exit 32. The image has been fading over the years due to acid rain and salt from the main road that is only a few feet away from the ledge.

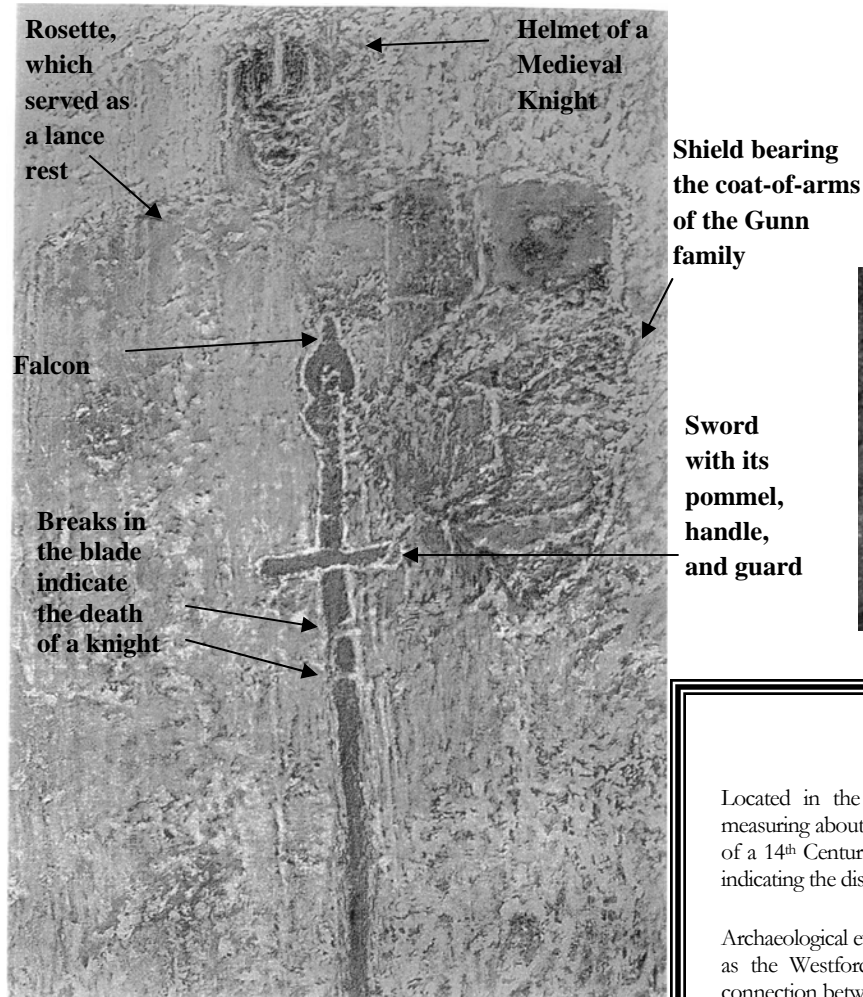


Photo of the 1991 rubbing of the Westford Knight by Marianna Lines.



A modern granite marker beside the Ledge in Westford is inscribed as follows:

“Prince Henry First Sinclair of Orkney born in Scotland made a voyage of discovery to North America in 1398. After wintering in Nova Scotia he sailed to Massachusetts and on an inland expedition in 1399 to Prospect Hill 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”



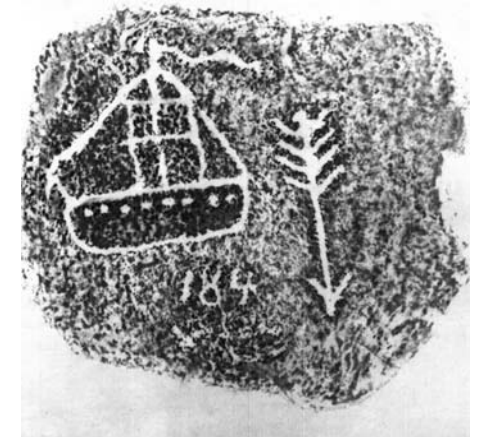
Take a close look at the rock surface. There are little weatherworn holes, which outline the shield. Near it you can see two straight, parallel lines of holes; these form the sword. Other parts of the Knightly figure will begin to appear.

The Boat Stone

Located in the Library in Westford, there is an oval shaped Stone, measuring about two feet in diameter. Carved into its surface is the picture of a 14th Century sailing ship. Also there are some numbers, presumably indicating the distance to where the campsite was located.

Archaeological evidence indicates this was probably carved at the same time as the Westford Knight carving. It is presumed that there is some connection between the Boat Stone and Prince Henry Sinclair's presence in Westford in 1399.

A construction crew discovered the Boat Stone many years ago when a road was being built.



History

- 1883 The "History of the Town of Westford", by R Edwin R. Hodgman, published in 1883, describes the presence of markings on the ledge. It said the rude outlines of the human face have been traced upon it, and the figure is said to be the work of Indians.
- 1940s William B. Godwin, Director of the Wadsworth Atheneum, and Malcolm Pearson, photographer, examined and photographed the carving in the early 1940s. Later, Godwin published a book *The Ruins of Great Ireland in New England* in which Pearson's photo of the carving was featured. He mentioned that the broken sword was a Viking symbol for the death of a fallen warrior.
- 1950s Frank Glynn, president of the Connecticut Archaeological Society, thought the sword was of Viking origin. T.C. Lethbridge, curator of the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in England, identified the sword as a large hand-and-a-half wheel pommel sword of the fourteenth century type. Further, he suggested that the arms, armor and heraldic emblems were a kin to the first Sinclair Earl of Orkney.
- 1974 Frederick J. Pohl, student of pre-Columbian exploration and writer, made a thorough study of the life and travels of the Earl of Orkney, including the Carving. He published his findings in "Prince Henry Sinclair – His Expedition to the New World in 1398"
- 1970's James Whittal, Director of the Archaeological Department of the New England Antiquities Research Association, began his many studies of the authenticity of the Westford Carvings.
- 1970's Alister MacDougall, the Town Historian of Westford, erected a granite monument beside the Westford Knight Carving.
- 1991 Marianna Lines, under contract with Niven Sinclair, made a cloth rubbing of the Westford Knight Carving. It revealed more detail than was previously known.

Background Story

A long standing tradition of Clans Gunn and Sinclair is that under the leadership of Prince Henry Sinclair, their ancestors visited America nearly a century before Columbus' voyage of discovery. It is believed that members of the Sinclair expedition reached the shores of Massachusetts in about 1399, and travelling inland, the party climbed to the top of what is today called Prospect Hill in order to better survey the surroundings and establish their orientation.

As the story goes, tragedy befell the party as one of Henry Sinclair's lieutenants and fellow knights suddenly died, possibly by an Indian arrow or a poisonous snake. As was a custom in those days, a funerary effigy was made to memorialize the fallen knight. It is likely that the job was done by the party's amourer who, using a hammer and sharp punch, pecked a series of holes into a nearby expanse of rock, outlining a man-sized image of the fallen knight – complete with helmet, a broken sword and shield featuring the heraldic symbols of the Gunns. The knight to whom this make-shift memorial was made is believed to have been Sir James Gunn, a friend of Henry Sinclair, and the break in the sword blade symbolized his death.

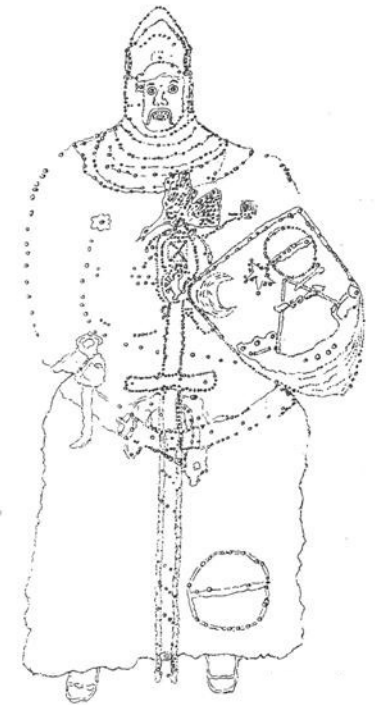
Somewhat worse for wear in its present weathered state, the Westford Knight is regarded as one of several "footprints" left by Henry Sinclair's expedition to the New World. Clans Gunn and Sinclair have been working with the city government of Westford to come up with ways to protect the Knight from further deterioration.

To learn more about the Westford Knight, the reader is directed to a recently published book on the subject by David Goudsward titled *The Westford Knight and Henry Sinclair*. Also, a couple of articles about the Westford Knight are featured in the Jan-Mar 2009 issue of *Yours Aye*.

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The Westford Knight



The enigmatic image of a knight carved in rock in Westford, Massachusetts is regarded as one of several "footprints" left by Prince Henry Sinclair evidencing his voyage of exploration to America in the late fourteenth century (sketch by Frank Glynn)