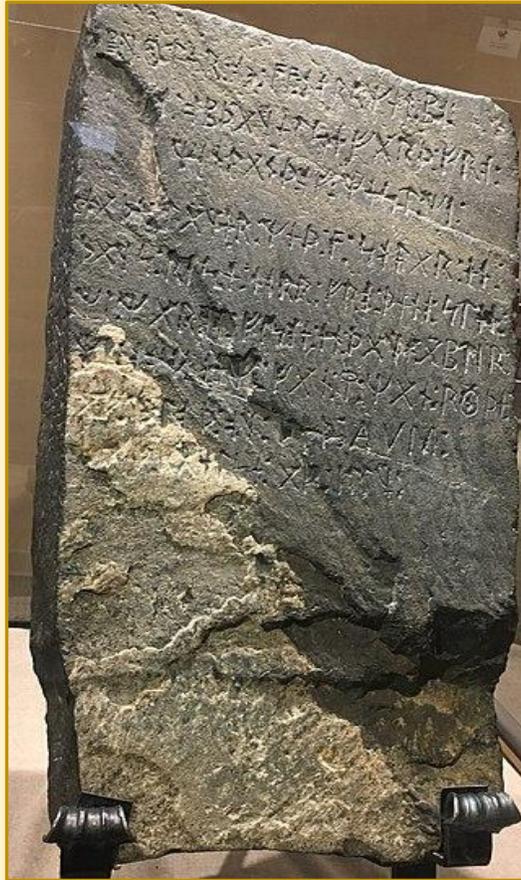


The Kensington Runestone was Meant to be Seen



(Photo courtesy of Runestone Museum)

The Kensington Runestone features two flat surfaces, one on the front and one on the side, and is 30" x 16" x 6". Although there was space on the bottom 40% of the stone that could have been inscribed but wasn't, just the upper 60% of the stone was inscribed. The upper 60 percent with the inscription would be visible because it is apparent that the lower 40 percent was intended to be mounted in some type of base.

If the Kensington Runestone bottom 40% is mounted upright in the prairie soil, it would be concealed by the thick tall prairie grass that generally grows to a height of one to two feet or more and would be unseen on the landscape unless a person was within a few feet. Due to human or natural forces, the Kensington Runestone would eventually be toppled flat on the ground to be covered over by the prairie grass and soil. The Kensington Runestone would not be visible or permanently mounted. On the original land survey map of 1866 showed Runestone Hill was prairie and probably was in 1362.

If The Kensington Runestone Was Mounted On The Prairie Soil



It would be practically impossible to see the memorial stones from the Montana battle site of Little Big Horn until you were within a few feet of them if the prairie grass surrounding them was not maintained.



In an un-maintained cemetery. This memorial stone has been toppled on the ground and is slowly being covered. It will be fully buried and out of sight in a few more years. *(Photo by Wayne Gorian)*

They Had to Build a Cairn

Only by building a "Cairn" could the Kensington Runestone be seen above the prairie grass and with some permanence. This would serve as the pedestal for the Kensington Runestone. (*Wikipedia: [Cairn](#); Google: [Images of Cairn](#)*)

A man-made pile of boulders and rocks is known as a cairn. Since the Neolithic era up until the present, most societies have constructed them. Among other things, they served as markers for property claims, burial monuments, ceremonial uses, astronomy and memorialization.

A Scandinavian Tradition of Cairns

The construction of cairns out of rocks and boulders when plentiful in the landscape is a centuries-old Scandinavian tradition, primarily practiced in Sweden and Iceland. Tens of thousands, most of which are burial cairns, are known to exist in Sweden and date from pagan to early Christian eras. The Expedition's members would be familiar with this custom and could easily build one.



Other Runestones Found on Cairns & Left in the Middle of Nowhere

Kingittorsuaq Runestone

The Kingittorsuaq Runestone (*Wikipedia*: [Kingittorsuaq Runestone](#)). was found in 1824 by a Danish exploration expedition on the uninhabited Island of Kingittorsuaq in northwestern Greenland. The Runestone was located on top of a cairn in a group of three cairns that formed an equilateral triangle on top of a high hill.



Kingittorsuaq Runestone (*National Museum of Denmark*)

The stone was dated from 1135 or 1314 and is the only runestone ever found in Greenland. This is proof that in the general time period of the Kensington Runestone, some other Scandinavian explorers had a tradition of leaving a runestone on a cairn that was on the top of a hill.

Translation:

*Erlingur Sigvatsson, Bjarni Thordarson and Enridi
Oddsson erected here three cairns on a Saturday before
Rogation day April 25th year....??*

Vérendrye Runestone

The **Vérendrye Stone** (*Wikipedia: [Verendrye Stone](#)*). was found on an early expedition into the territory west of the Great Lakes by the French Canadian explorer Pierre Gaultier de Varennes et de La Vérendrye in the 1730s. It is not mentioned in the official records of La Verendrye expeditions, but in 1749 he discussed it with visiting Swedish scientist Pehr Kalm, from whose writings virtually all information about the stone is taken.

According to Kalm, Vérendrye's expedition found the inscribed tablet on the top of one of three stone cairns. Kalm's diary reported it to be about a French foot long, nearly 13 inches (33 cm) long, and a hand's breadth wide (an early English translation gave this as between four and five inches). On it were said to be inscriptions in unknown characters. When asked, Indians of the area claimed that the tablet and the three cairns had always been there. The location I believe is in eastern North Dakota. (*Essay: [The Trail of Dakota Claim Stones](#)*)



Pierre Gaultier La Vérendrye (*Archives of Canada*)

Kalm was informed by La Vérendrye that the tablet had been sent to Quebec, where Jesuit priests had determined that it was written in "Tatarian" script (Orkhon). The Comte de Maurepas, France's Secretary of State, purportedly received it after that. There are no descriptions of the stone after that, but it has been claimed that it was transported to a church in Rouen (possibly the Rouen Cathedral) along with other artifacts, where it was later buried beneath a mountain of rubble when the structure where it was kept was destroyed during World War II.



Orkhon Script is very similar to Scandinavian Runic Script.

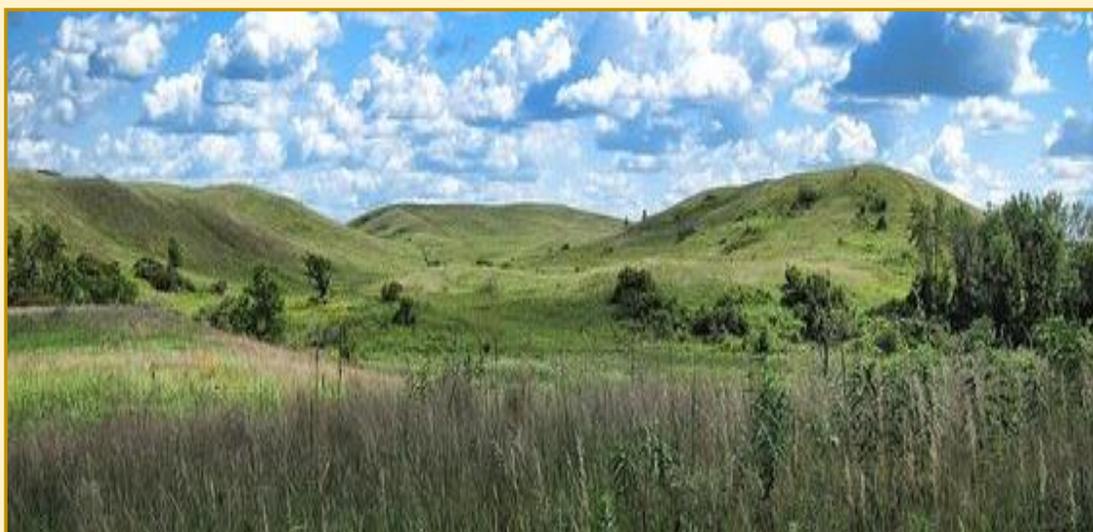
Almost for certain the inscription was written in Scandinavian Runic characters by the 1362 Expedition. The Jesuit priests in Quebec would have seen examples of "Tatarian" writing that is in Orkhon script that contained a significant number of characters that are identical to the runic characters inscribed on the Kensington Runestone.

A Cairn Solves the Problems of Visibility & Permanency

The problems could be resolved by placing the Kensington Runestone on a six-foot (Author's Estimate) or higher Cairn. Now the prairie grass and vegetation would not cover the Kensington Runestone. According to photographs of Scandinavian cairns, vegetation does not grow on the bare rocks and stones, which may impede the view of the Cairn and the Kensington Runestone.

If a cairn were of a lower height, possibly two to four feet, it would be less visible, and someone would have the solid footing and leverage to rock the Kensington Runestone back and forth, thus toppling the Kensington Runestone to the ground. A six-foot-high or higher Cairn would be challenging to climb the unstable rocky sides and risk injuries. At the top of Cairn, obtaining solid footing and leverage would make it difficult to topple.

The visibility and permanence problems would be resolved if the Kensington Runestone were mounted on the top of a cairn six feet high or higher. Additionally, the Cairn's unnatural shape on the prairie landscape would provide an unhindered view of it from a distance if it were placed on the top of the 55-foot Runestone Hill.



The area surrounding Runestone Hill in 1362 probably looked like Glacial Lake State Park which is 18 miles south of Runestone Hill. *(Photo Minnesota State Parks)*

Visualize the Kensington Runestone Cairn, with its unnatural shape atop any of the above hills. You can see how the Cairn would stand out on the prairie landscape of Runestone Hill.

Runestone Hill is a Kame Hill

Kame Hill is the geological name for Runestone Hill and all other hills in this region of Minnesota, "**Kame Hill**" (*Wikipedia: Kame*). They were made thousands of years ago during the ice sheet melting. The fact that the Kame Hills are covered in rocks and boulders is a distinctive geological feature. Rocks and boulders would have been easy to obtain on Runestone Hill to construct a cairn.



(Photo courtesy of Bob Voyles)



Several Kame Hills are located on a cattle ranch 16 miles south of Runestone Hill. Rocks and boulders are visible because of the cattle grazing and the late fall vegetation. *(Photo by Wayne Gorian)*



Along the base of Runestone Hill are several rock piles made by Olof Ohman clearing the land on Runestone Hill. This is proof of an ample supply of rocks and boulders to build the Cairn. *(Photo by Wayne Gorian)*

Reasons for The Expedition to Build a Six-Foot High Cairn

- There was a centuries-old Scandinavian tradition of building crayons.
- Simplicity to build. (Estimate of 100 to 200-man hours.)
- Runestone Hill, a kame hill, had a plentiful supply of rocks & boulders.
- It provides a solid base to mount The Kensington Runestone.
- The Kensington Runestone was less likely to be toppled by human or natural forces.
- No grass or vegetation could grow on the Cairn to obstruct the view.
- The Kensington Runestone is mounted high above the prairie grass, and the vegetation has an unobstructed view.
- The 55-foot-high Runestone Hill was a peninsula primarily encircled by water and prairie. From a distance, the unnaturally shaped 6-foot or higher Cairn with the Kensington Runestone atop was visible.
- The Expedition hoped local Indians knew of this pile of rocks with a rectangular stone with strange markings and would guide future expeditions from their Scandinavian homeland to its message.

Runestone Hill 1362

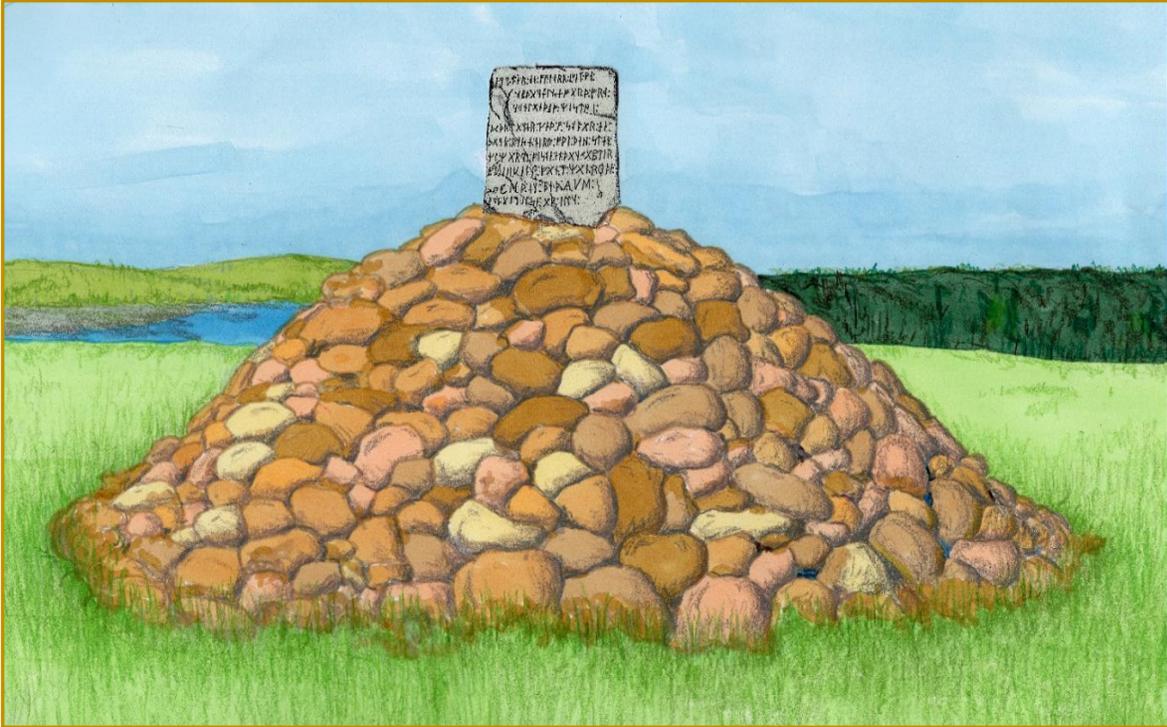


Illustration by Wayne Gorian

Runestone Hill 1910



The location of the Kensington Runestone discovery site was on the top of Runestone Hill, as shown in this 1910 photo of Ohman and associates. They even built a small cairn to hold the American flag. A six-foot high or higher Cairn with its unnatural shape could be seen for some distance, such as from Lookout Mountain a mile away in the background.

Colorized by Wayne Gorian

The Fate of the Kensington Runestone Cairn

The Kensington Runestone mounted atop this Cairn with a message for future expeditions from their Scandinavian homeland, which never came. Over the following decades and centuries, the local Indians' knowledge of these strange men that visited them was forgotten. The pile of rocks and boulders with a rectangular stone atop it with strange markings was just an enigma to them. They probably thought since the labor that went into the building of the Cairn. There was something of value hidden inside or beneath it.

Thus, began tearing apart the Cairn and scattering the rocks and boulders across Runestone Hill and tumbled down its slopes. Later, Olof Ohman, unknown to him, finished removing the rocks and boulders when clearing the land for crops. So now, the only visible part of the Cairn is some of the rocks and boulders at the base of Runestone Hill and the Kensington Runestone in the Runestone Museum in Alexandria.



Runestone Hill in 1999 *(Douglas County Parks)*