

HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 12.1
Halifax Regional Council
March 22, 2022
May 17, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

For Jenny Lugar, Chair, Heritage Advisory Committee

DATE: February 24, 2022

SUBJECT: Case H00523: Request to Include the Rocking Stone and Kidston Lake Park, Halifax, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality

ORIGIN

February 23, 2022 special meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee, Item 9.1.3.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Heritage Property Act

s. 14(1) A heritage advisory committee may recommend to the municipality that a building, public building interior, streetscape, cultural landscape or area be registered as a municipal heritage property in the municipal registry of heritage property.

HRM By-law No. H-200 - Heritage Property By-law

4. The [Heritage Advisory] Committee shall, within the time limits prescribed by Council or the [Heritage Property] Act, advise the Region respecting:
 - (a) the inclusion of buildings, public building interiors, streetscapes, cultural landscapes or areas in the Registry.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Set a date for a heritage hearing to consider the inclusion of the subject property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality; and
2. Approve the request to include the Rocking Stone site at PID# 00307462 in Kidston Lake Park, Halifax, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality, as shown on Map 1 of the February 3, 2022 report, as a municipal heritage area under the Heritage Property Act.

BACKGROUND

At the February 23, 2022 meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee, the Committee received a staff recommendation report dated February 3, 2022, and received a staff presentation on Case H00523. Staff noted that should the Committee award the property a total score of thirty-five (35) points or more for the identified site, out of a possible seventy (70), then the staff recommendation is that the Committee recommend the site for registration by Halifax Regional Council.

For additional background information on this item, refer to the staff report dated February 3, 2022 (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION

At the February 23, 2022 meeting, following the presentation from staff, the Committee evaluated the proposed heritage site using the Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Sites in HRM. The Committee applied the following scores:

Criterion	Score Awarded
1. Continuity of Use	25
2. Historical Importance	15
3. Integrity	10
4. Context and Community Value	10
Total	60

Based on this evaluation, the Committee approved a motion recommending that Halifax Regional Council schedule a heritage hearing for the matter, and to approve the registration to Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality.

For further discussion on the heritage registration evaluation criteria as it relates to this application, refer to the staff report dated February 3, 2022 (Attachment 1) and the Scoring Summary for Heritage Sites (Attachment 2).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Refer to the staff report dated February 3, 2022.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Refer to the staff report dated February 3, 2022.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Members of the public are permitted to submit correspondence and petitions to be circulated to the Heritage Advisory Committee. The agenda, reports, and minutes of the Heritage Advisory Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement as it relates to this item, refer to the staff report dated February 3, 2022.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Refer to the staff report dated February 3, 2022.

ALTERNATIVES

The Committee did not discuss alternatives. Refer to the staff report dated February 3, 2022.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Staff Recommendation Report dated February 3, 2022

Attachment 2 – Scoring Summary for Heritage Sites.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Simon Ross-Siegel, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Municipal Clerk, 902.292.3962

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P.O. Box 1749
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Attachment 1 Heritage Advisory Committee February 23, 2022

TO: Chair and Members of the Heritage Advisory Committee

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 3, 2022

SUBJECT: **Case H00523: Request to Include the Rocking Stone and Kidston Lake Park, Halifax, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality**

ORIGIN

On November 23, 2021, the following motion of Regional Council was put and passed:

"That Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a staff report examining the potential for including PID 00307462 also known as Kidston Lake Park in the registry of heritage properties for Halifax Regional Municipality. The report should be referred to the Heritage Advisory Committee for evaluation."

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The *Heritage Property Act*

RECOMMENDATION

Should the Rocking Stone site at PID# 00307462 in Kidston Lake Park, Halifax, score 35 or more points on evaluation as a heritage site under the HRM Heritage Property Program, the Heritage Advisory Committee recommends that Regional Council:

1. Set a date for a heritage hearing to consider the inclusion of the subject property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality; and
2. Approve the request to include the Rocking Stone site at PID# 00307462 in Kidston Lake Park, Halifax, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality, as shown on Map 1, as a municipal heritage area under the *Heritage Property Act*.

BACKGROUND

Kidston Lake Park in the Spryfield area of Halifax is home to the “Rocking Stone”, a large glacially deposited boulder, known in geological terms as an erratic (a glacially deposited rock differing from the type of rock native to the area in which it rests). The boulder has been a well-known geological curiosity since the early 19th century due to its size and its unique trait of rocking back and forth when pushed. The Rocking Stone was designated an “Historic Site” under section 425 of the former *Halifax City Charter* by Halifax City Council on August 12, 1971. This section of the former *Halifax City Charter* was superseded by the *Heritage Property Act* in 1981, essentially nullifying any legal protection provided by the *Charter* and as such, the property currently has no official heritage designation. Since it was the former Halifax City Council’s objective to recognize the social and geological history of this site, there is an opportunity to evaluate and consider the site for designation under the *Heritage Property Act*.

On November 13, 2021, Regional Council directed staff to examine the potential of including the Rocking Stone site in Kidston Lake Park in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The subject property is in the southern portion of the community of Spryfield. It is accessed via a trailhead at the southern end of Fieldstone Street and a 260-metre long, 6-metre wide, municipal right-of-way, serving as a trail through the woodland. The subject property itself is approximately 4 hectares (10 acres) in area and spans a 500-metre stretch of Kidston Lake’s northeast shoreline (Map 1).

This application is being considered in accordance with Sections 14 (Recommendation as municipal heritage property) and Section 15 (Registration as municipal heritage property) of the *Heritage Property Act*.

HRM’s Heritage Property Program

The purpose of the HRM Heritage Property Program is to help protect and conserve significant heritage resources including buildings, streetscapes, sites, areas, and conservation districts that reflect the rich heritage found in local communities throughout HRM. One of the principal aims of the Heritage Property Program is to recognize significant heritage resources through the inclusion of properties into the Municipal Registry of Heritage Property.

Heritage Site Evaluation Criteria

Under the Heritage Property Program, all registration applications for heritage properties are evaluated by the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) using “The Evaluation Criteria for the Registration of Heritage Sites in Halifax Regional Municipality” (Attachment A), or “The Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Buildings in Halifax Regional Municipality” (Attachment B). The heritage site evaluation criteria focuses on the broader use and cultural associations of a property over time, focusing only partially on any structures that may exist there. The heritage building analysis however, focuses primarily on the structure, with the broader site history and landscape features typically being considered as secondary.

Since there are no buildings on this property, the property will be evaluated using The Evaluation Criteria for the Registration of Heritage Sites in Halifax Regional Municipality. The resulting list of character defining elements would likely have some impact on any future applications for substantial alteration under the *Heritage Property Act*, as a substantial alteration is defined as any action affecting the property’s character defining elements. A property receives the same level of legal protection under the *Heritage Property Act* under either evaluation method.

The Evaluation Criteria for scoring a heritage site are broken down into four categories as follows:

Criterion	Highest Possible Score
1. Age / Continuity of Use	25
2. Historical Importance	25
3. Integrity	10
4. Context	10
Total	70

Should the HAC score a property with more than 35 points on evaluation as a heritage site, a positive recommendation will be forwarded to Regional Council. Properties evaluated under this set of criteria, if registered, will be formally designated a "heritage area" under the *Heritage Property Act*, which provides the same legal protection as a heritage property.

Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act

HRM's Heritage Property Program receives its authority from the *Heritage Property Act* which seeks:

"to provide for the identification, designation, preservation, conservation, protection and rehabilitation of buildings, public-building interiors, structures, streetscapes, cultural landscapes, areas and districts of historic, architectural or cultural value, in both urban and rural areas, and to encourage their continued use".

Sections 14(2) and 15(1) under the *Heritage Property Act* require that notice of recommendation is given to the property owner at least thirty (30) days prior to any Council decision to include the property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The property owner is also given an opportunity to address Council before they make a decision on the registration request. Should a positive recommendation be forwarded to Council, heritage staff will ensure the required notices are sent to the owners and deposited at the Registry of Deeds.

DISCUSSION

Heritage site registration applications are evaluated by the HAC relative to four evaluation criteria as outlined above, and described in greater detail in Attachment A. To assist the HAC in their evaluation and scoring, staff offer the following comments based on a historical research report (Attachment B).

1. Age of Site or Continuity of Use:

The Mi'kmaq people of Kjipuktuk and the greater Sipekne'katik district had likely already discovered the Rocking Stone before any subsequent written reporting, owing to their incredibly long history in the area and the Rocking Stone's close proximity to a freshwater lake.

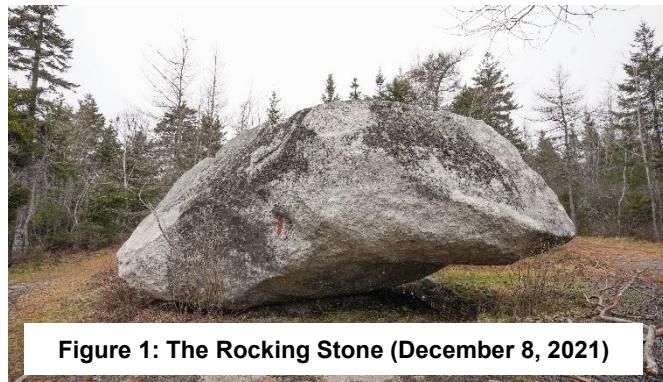


Figure 1: The Rocking Stone (December 8, 2021)

The earliest published description of the Rocking Stone is found in the August 30th, 1823 edition of the *Acadian Recorder*, in which it is described as a "wonder of nature", its "rocking is effected by the aid of a short lever, and may be set in motion by a child of twelve years of age", and "clearly evidences the skill and power of an Almighty hand!". Another early published description of the Rocking Stone can be found in the August 28th, 1828 edition of the *NovaScotian*, in which it is described as 19 ft in length, 7 ft in width, 4.5 ft in height, perched upon a swelling bed of rock, and set in an undulating motion with the ease of only one hand. The earliest identified depiction of the Rocking Stone is a watercolour painting (Figure 2) from 1836 by Sir George Back, a British royal naval officer, explorer of the Canadian Arctic, and artist.

The Rocking Stone site is approaching 200 years of continuous use as a local tourist attraction, recreational spot, and natural wonder. Throughout its long history there has been a great deal of media attention paid to this large granite boulder, and the community of Spryfield have on multiple occasions shown their commitment to the site's preservation, such as through Arthur Roy Kidston's publicized dismay over the state of the parkland following the Timberlea Lumber Company's milling activities, through prior efforts to register the Rocking Stone as a heritage property in 1971 and again in 2003, or through the Mainland South Heritage Society's efforts in the 1990s to restore the boulder to functional, rocking condition.

The earliest report which dates the original use of the Rocking Stone site was in 1823. As such the Rocking Stone site is approaching 200 years of continuous use as a local attraction, recreational spot, and natural wonder. Staff recommend a score of between 20 and 25 points for Continuity of Use.

2. Historical Importance:

Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Individuals or Groups

The Rocking Stone is a granite boulder and glacial erratic deposited in place at the end of the last glacial period, known as the Wisconsinan glacial stage, a stage which spanned 75,000 to 10,000 years ago. It has served as a tourist attraction, recreational site, and natural wonder since the early 1820s. Its history is intertwined with some of the earliest settlers of Spryfield and one of Spryfield's most enduring families, the Kidstons.

Early German Immigrants (1770-1787)

Albert Leizer was the first reported owner of the Rocking Stone site (1770-1780) and he is one of the region's first landowners. Originally from Württemberg, Germany, Mr. Leizer sold the property to Conrad Pence, another German immigrant, in 1780.

George McIntosh (1787-1845)

George McIntosh purchased the property in 1787. As Spryfield's first true developer, Mr. McIntosh is an important figure in the early history of the community where he once owned ninety percent of the lands that make up present-day Spryfield. He and his executors retained ownership of the Rocking Stone site for a total of 58 years.

The Kidston Family (1846-1958)

Elizabeth Kidston and her son Archibald acquired the property in 1846. They were the first in a series of Kidston family members to own the Rocking Stone site. The Kidston family owned the property until they sold it to the former County of Halifax as a public park in 1958. The Kidston's are an important family in the history of Spryfield. They were largely land developers and farmers.

John Kidston (1899-1928)

John Kidston was the son of Archibald Kidston. He owned large parcels of land in Spryfield, including the Rocking Stone site (1899-1928). He operated "Rockingstone Farm" carrying on the farming tradition of the Kidston family lands and running a successful dairy. John Kidston fought on behalf of the federal government in the North-West Resistance (North-West Rebellion) of 1885 to quell the resistance of the Métis and their allies, led by Louis Riel. Over 100 people died in the ensuing series of battles. He was also a member of the original Royal Canadian Mounted Police [formerly the North West Mounted Police] which sought to impose colonial order on the Northwest Territories, including participating in the suppression of the Indigenous/Métis populations and their efforts at resistance. He lost an arm in a blasting accident and subsequently succumbed to gangrene at the Victoria General Hospital in 1928.

Arthur Kidston [Sr. and Jr.] (1928-1958)

Arthur Kidston [Sr.] inherited Rockingstone Farm, including the Rocking Stone site, from his older brother John Kidston and was keen to preserve the Rocking Stone and surrounding lake and woodlands for recreational use. Arthur conveyed the Rocking Stone site to the Maritime Religious Educational Committee for use as a church camp which was ultimately unsuccessful, and the property was conveyed back to the Kidston family. On behalf of the Kidston family, Arthur Kidston [Jr.] was also keen to see the Rocking Stone site protected and used as a recreational site. He and other Kidston family members donated a roughly 10-acre portion of the Kidston lands, containing the Rocking Stone, to the former Municipality of the County of Halifax to operate as a public park.

Municipality of the County of Halifax / Halifax Regional Municipality (1958-present)

In the 1960s, with the permission of the municipality, the Spryfield Lions Club carried out a beautification project to clean up Kidston Lake Park and the Rocking Stone site, at their own expense. To provide public access to the park, the municipality expropriated lands to create an access road in 1967, which included

the remaining portion of the original Rockingstone Road. In 2004, HRM acquired a small parcel connecting the access road to a nearby cul-de-sac.

Notable Visitors

Sir George Back (1836)

Sir George Back, arctic explorer, artist, and naturalist visited the Rocking Stone where he painted its earliest visual depiction (see Figure 2). He was commander of the HMS Terror on its June 1836 expedition to the Arctic.

Andrew Bonar Law (1864)

Andrew Bonar Law, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from October of 1922 to May of 1923, visited the Rocking Stone site as a six-year-old child. He was the grandson of Elizabeth Kidston.

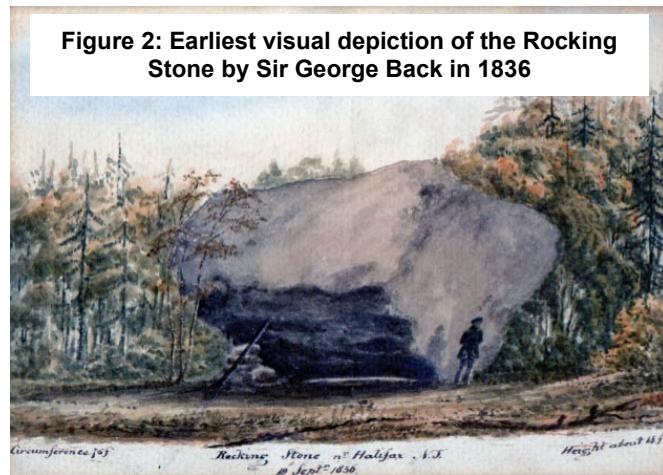


Figure 2: Earliest visual depiction of the Rocking Stone by Sir George Back in 1836

Clara Dennis (c. 1930)

Clara Dennis was a trailblazing reporter. She was one of Nova Scotia's first travel writers and one of the first women to explore Nova Scotia by car. Her articles on local and provincial history, notable people she met on her travels, as well as Mi'kmaw folklore and customs were published in newsprint and magazines. She also published three books about her travels. Her extensive collection of photographs includes one of the Rocking Stone (Attachment B).

Due to the Rocking Stone site's associations with important individuals in the history of Spryfield, staff recommend a score of 10-15 points for historical importance.

Due to the controversial aspects of John Kidston's associations with the North-West Resistance and North West Mounted Police, staff advise that this national historic event and group not be considered when recommending a score for the site.

3. Integrity:

The Rocking Stone has settled somewhat as a result of its use as a tourist attraction. Originally, the Rocking Stone could be moved with the effort of a single hand and, later, the stone was movable with the assistance of a wooden lever. In the early 1960s, slabwood from nearby logging operations and other debris had rendered the stone completely immobile; however, in the 1990s community efforts to restore the site and return the Rocking Stone to a functional rocking state were successful.

The Kidston family, who previously owned the Rocking Stone site and surrounding lands, had over time developed the area with modifications such as paths, gardens, picnic grounds, as well as hiking, boating, and swimming facilities, eventually operating the property commercially. Today, only the paths remain.

Despite almost two hundred years of continuous use, the site is largely intact and contains the following character defining elements:

- A very large granite glacial erratic [Rocking Stone], resting upon a flat granite outcrop, which could once be rocked using a lever;
- Glaciated granite outcrops and other glacial erratics of varied sizes throughout the site, including a grouping of large boulders near the shoreline of Kidston Lake;
- Physical access to the Rocking Stone site, including the last remaining section of the original Rockingstone Road;
- Continued recreational use of the site, including access to Kidston Lake;
- Surrounding woods composed primarily of black spruce and paper birch; and

- A dry barrens ecosystem listed in the International Biological Program as a place of ecological value and noted to contain the rare Greenland sandwort (a small, perennial flowering plant).

The Rocking Stone site is largely intact with the presence of original geological and landscape features. As such staff recommend a score of between 6 and 10 points for Integrity.

4. Context:

Community Value

The Rocking Stone site bears witness to the entire history of Spryfield's development. Alongside the Kidston farmhouse, it is one of the most significant heritage assets in the community of Spryfield. From its origins as a glacial erratic, deposited in situ during the Wiconsinian age, to the initial land grants of Spryfield and the surrounding area, to the site's publication and subsequent development as a local tourist attraction and natural wonder, to its establishment as a public park, the Rocking Stone site has seen continuous tourism and recreational use.

The Rocking Stone site has witnessed the generations of the Kidston family members working the nearby farmland and generations of passersby who have stopped to picnic atop of it or photograph themselves with it. It has been documented throughout history in newsprint, hotel guides, books, paintings, plans, reports, photographs, and in commemorative names such as Rockingstone Road and Rockingstone Heights School.

The Rocking Stone has been a widely visited attraction. In 1828, Joseph Howe somewhat derisively wrote that the Rocking Stone had been "rolled over and over by pedestrians and equestrians, who have speculated on its position, and favoured the world with its dimensions".

Due to its inherent value to the community of Spryfield and its documentation in local/regional history, staff recommend a score of between 6 and 10 points for Context.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The HRM costs associated with advertising and processing this application can be accommodated within the approved 2021/2022 operating budget for C340 - Heritage and Planning Information Services.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process for a heritage registration is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement was information sharing achieved through public access to the required Heritage Advisory Committee meeting. As a provision of the *Heritage Property Act*, no registration of a municipal heritage property shall take place until Regional Council has given the owner of the property an opportunity to be heard.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant environmental implications associated with the recommendations in this Report.

ALTERNATIVE

The Heritage Advisory Committee may choose to refuse the application to include the Rocking Stone site, Spryfield in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality as a heritage area if the property scores less than 35 points based on the evaluation criteria. In doing so, the application will not proceed to Regional Council for evaluation.

ATTACHMENTS

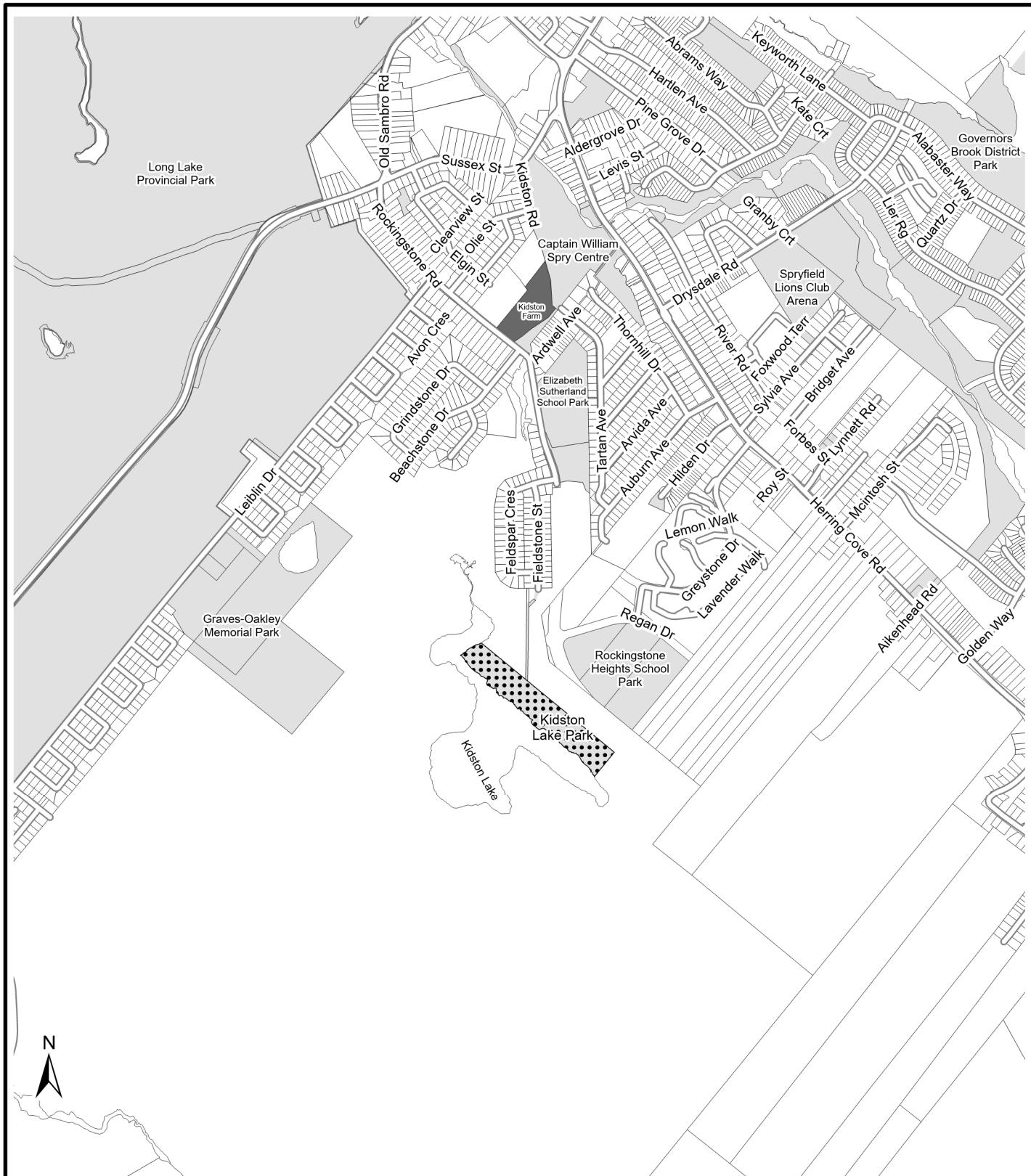
Map 1: Location Map

Attachment A: Evaluation Criteria

Attachment B: Historical Research Report

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Seamus McGreal, Planner III, Planning and Development 902.717.1563



Map 1 - Location Map

Kidston Lake,
Halifax

- Registered Heritage Property
- Subject Property
- Parkland

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0 100 200 300 400 500 m

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy/of any representation on this plan.

Attachment A

Heritage Property Program

October 2006

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION OF HERITAGE SITES HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

A Heritage site is defined as an area, cultural landscape, or feature, together with any structures thereon, which is significant to the social, cultural, commercial, military or political history and development of Halifax Regional Municipality, the Region, Province or Country. *The Heritage Value* of a site is derived from a number of sources, including age of a site or duration of use, as well as community and historical associations.

1. AGE OF SITE/CONTINUITY OF USE

1 a) Age of Site

Age is an important factor in the popular understanding of the value of heritage sites. The following age categories are based on local, national and international occasions that may be considered to have defined the character of what is the Halifax Regional Municipality and how it was developed. A site may receive points for its age **or** its continuity of use.

Date of Original Use	Points	Timeline
1749 - 1785	23-25	Halifax Garrison Town to the Loyalist migration
1786 - 1830	20-22	Boom period following construction of the Shubenacadie Canal
1831 - 1867	17-19	From Boom to Confederation
1868 - 1899	14-16	Confederation to the end of the 19 th Century
1900 - 1917	11-13	Turn of the Century to the Halifax Harbour Explosion
1918 -1945	8-10	The War Years
1946 - Present	5-7	Post-War

OR

1 b) Continuity of Use

A site may also be deemed to have heritage value because it has served the same function or a similar function over a long period of time.

Duration of Continue/Similar Function	Points	Comments
100+ Years	20-25	
75-99 Years	15-19	
50-74 Years	10-14	

Maximum score of 25 points in this category.

2. HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

Historical importance refers to relationships to important occasions, institutions, individuals or groups.

Nationally	Points	Comments: Please give reference to relationship below
Intimately Related	20-25	
Moderately Related	15-20	
Loosely Related	10-15	
Provincially	Points	Comments: Please give reference to relationship below
Intimately Related	15-20	
Moderately Related	10-15	
Loosely Related	5-10	
Locally	Points	Comments: Please give reference to relationship below
Intimately Related	10-15	
Moderately Related	5-10	
Loosely Related	0-5	

* Maximum score of 25 points in this category - scoring from only one of three categories.

3. INTEGRITY

Integrity refers to the degree to which the site reflects its original state during the period it was used. This may include the presence of physical features or structures.

Points	Comments
6-10	Largely intact with presence of original features or structures
1-5	Moderately intact with vestiges of original features or structures

Maximum score of 10 points in this category.

4. CONTEXT

A site may receive points for its relationship to its surrounding area **or** for its inherent value to the community.

4 a) Relationship to Surrounding Area

Points	Comments
6-10	The site is an important asset contributing to the heritage character of the surrounding area
1-5	The site is compatible with the surrounding area and maintains its heritage character

OR**4 b) Community Value**

Points	Comments
6-10	The site is well documented in local history (written or oral)
1-5	The site is little known or not documented in local history

Maximum score of 10 points for either relationship to surrounding area or community value for this category.

SCORING SUMMARY

PROPERTY	DATE REVIEWED	REVIEWER

Criterion	Highest possible Score	Score Awarded
1. a) Age of Site or 1. b) Continuity of Use	25	
2. Historical Importance	25	
3. Degree of Intactness	10	
4. a) Relationship to Surrounding Area or 4. b) Community Value	10	
TOTAL	70	

Score necessary for designation **35**

Designation Recommended?

YES

NO

Comments:

Attachment B

Research Report

Rocking Stone, Spryfield

Prepared by:

HRM Planning & Development
Carter Beaupre-McPhee, Heritage Planning Researcher
Jan 18, 2022

With special thanks to:
Howard V. Donohoe Jr., PhD P.Geo.

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Age of Site & Continuity of Use

The Rocking Stone [occasionally spelled “Rockingstone”] is located in Kidston Lake Park, an HRM-owned plot of land [PID 00307462] on the northeast side of Kidston Lake [originally Rockingstone Lake] in Spryfield. It is a large, granite boulder known as a “glacial erratic”, that is to say, a rock deposited in its present location by a retreating glacier (Fyon, 2021). It is a perched stone or “logan” resting atop a flat, glaciated granite outcrop and, as its name implies, can be rocked in place with relative ease using a wooden lever (Halifax Regional Municipality, n.d.). The Rocking Stone was formerly part of the Kidston Farmlands and has served as a natural tourist attraction since the early 1820s (O’Connor & Payne, 1975; Raymond, 2003).

In the glacial history of Nova Scotia, only the last two glaciations—the Illinoian and the Wisconsinan—have been identified (Davis & Browne, 1998). Subsequent glaciations tend to destroy evidence of antecedent glaciations and almost all of Nova Scotia’s glacial deposits date from the Wisconsinan glaciation, therefore it’s reasonable to suggest that the Rocking Stone erratic was deposited towards the end of the Wisconsinan age [~10,000 years ago] when late-glacial features including erratics would have been deposited by the receding glaciers (Davis & Browne, 1998).

The Rocking Stone is supposed to have been discovered by quarrymen / stone cutters who took shelter under the boulder during a rainstorm (Mail Star, 1966; Watts & Shea, 2003). These quarrymen are said to have noticed its movement in the wind and discovered that the slightest push could set the boulder rocking in place (Mail Star, 1966; Watts & Shea, 2003). However, this narrative is thrown somewhat into question as the Yeadon Homestead, upon which the Yeadon Quarries of Spryfield were opened, was not established until approximately 1832, years after the first newspaper reports of the Rocking Stone had been published in 1823 and 1828 (L.S., 1823; Shea, 2007a; The NovaScotian, 1828).

It’s important to note that the Mi’kmaq people of Kjipuktuk and the greater Sipekne’katik district had likely already discovered the Rocking Stone before any such quarrymen or subsequent newspaper reporting, owing to their incredibly long history in the area and the Rocking Stone’s close proximity to a freshwater lake (McDonald, 2017).

The earliest published description of the Rocking Stone is found in the August 30th, 1823 edition of the *Acadian Recorder*, in which it is described as being 20ft in length, 14ft in width, and 9ft in height [see Figure 2] (L.S., 1823). Another early published description of the Rocking Stone can be found in the August 28th, 1828 edition of the *NovaScotian*, in which it is described as being 19ft in length, 7ft in width, 4.5ft in height, perched upon a swelling bed of rock, and set in an undulating motion with the ease of only one hand (The NovaScotian, 1828). The earliest identified depiction of the Rocking Stone is a watercolour painting from 1836 by Sir George Back, a British royal naval officer, explorer of the Canadian Arctic, and artist [see Figure 3] (Back, 1836; Holland, 1972).

The Rocking Stone is, as of the time of writing, approaching 200 years of continuous use as a local tourist attraction, recreational spot, and natural wonder. Throughout its long history there has been a great deal of media attention paid to this large granite boulder, and the community of Spryfield have on multiple occasions shown their commitment to the site's preservation, such as through Arthur Roy Kidston's publicized dismay over the state of the parkland following the Timberlea Lumber Company's milling activities, through prior efforts to register the Rocking Stone as a heritage property in 1971 and again in 2003, or through the Mainland South Heritage Society's efforts in the 1990s to restore the boulder to functional, rocking condition (Conrad, 1963; Halifax Regional Municipality, 1971; Mackenzie & Robson, 2004; MacLean & Kidston, 2003).

The Rocking Stone has remained under ownership of the Kidston family of Spryfield, one of Spryfield's founding families, for most of its recorded history [see Figure 1] (Gray-Leblanc, 2005). With the Kidstons already in possession of a large farm nearby, Elizabeth Kidston acquired a 100 acre lot, including the Rocking Stone, from the Gardiner family [alternately spelled Gardner] in 1846 [see Figure 6] (NSPOL, 1846). The Rocking Stone lot, occasionally referred to as part of Lot 6 of the original Spryfield Lots, and variously amalgamated and subdivided since, has passed through multiple generations of the Kidston family before Arthur Kidston [Sr.] sought to preserve the Rocking Stone and surrounding area for recreational use, conveying the Kidston lands to the Maritime Religious Education Centre (MREC) in 1953 with the hope they could develop the land into a church camp (Halifax Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, 1981; NSPOL, 1953). The project proved too large for the MREC and Arthur Kidston [Sr.] died before revised plans could be implemented, so the lands were conveyed back to the Kidston family (Halifax Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, 1981; NSPOL, 1958b). The lands were subdivided, and the present rectilinear lot, known as Lot A on the 1958 Plan of the Arthur Kidston Estate, was conveyed by Arthur Roy Kidston [Jr.] and the Kidston family to the Municipality of the County of Halifax in 1958 and has remained under municipal ownership to the present day as a municipal park [see Figure 7] (NSPOL, 1958a).

Deed History for the Rocking Stone

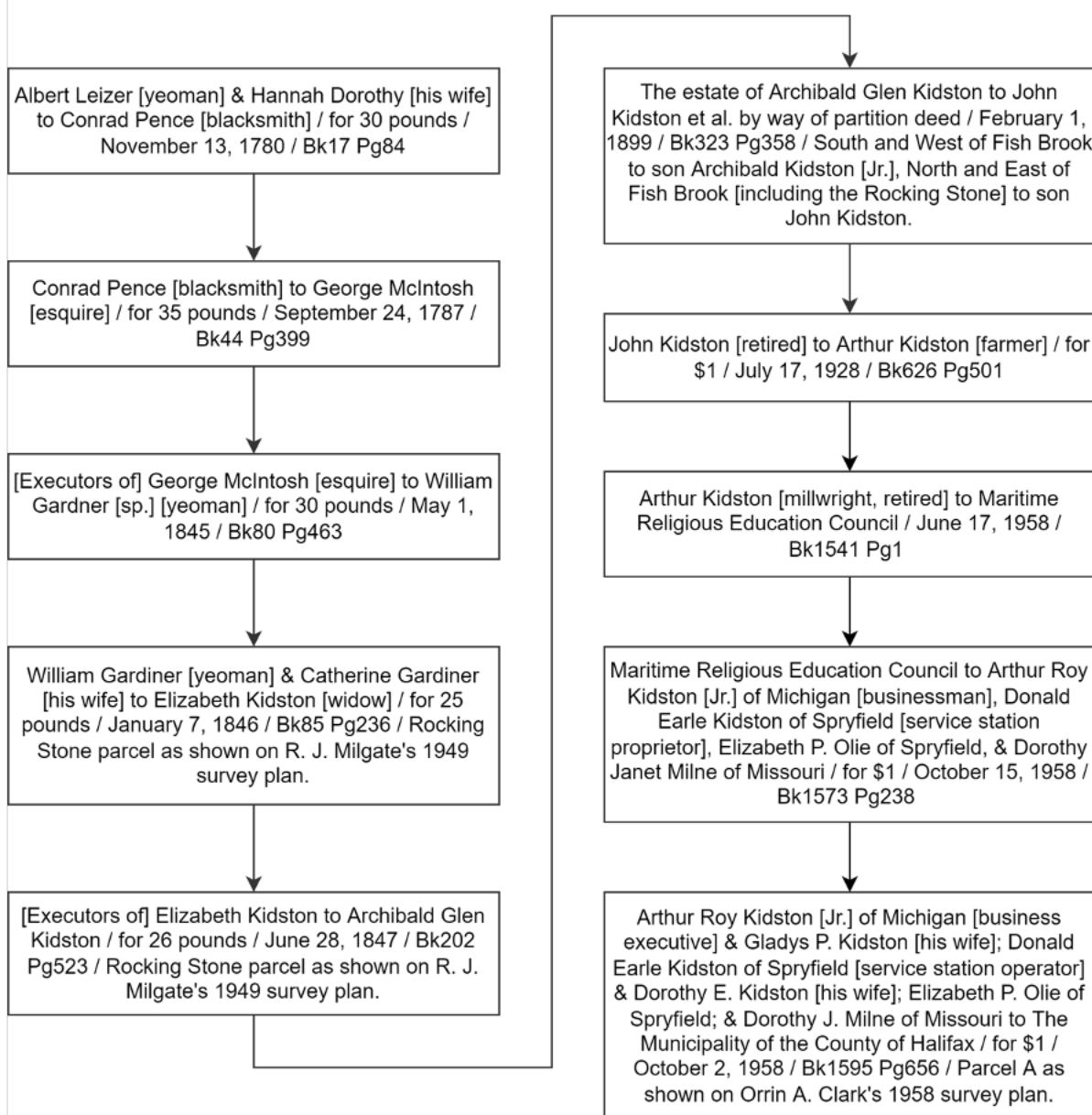


Figure 1: Deed history for the Rocking Stone.

FOR THE ACADIAN RECORDER.

Messrs. Holland & Co.

Gentlemen,

I am fully convinced that Nova Scotia would be found possessed of as great a proportion of Natural Curiosities as any part of the continent of America, were it adequately explored; but few even of what have been discovered, have we on record; and even to our inhabitants I have no doubt but that "the

half has not been told." It is no less true than singular, that we often receive the first information of such curiosities as *have been discovered* in this province, from strangers—or in other countries. It was at all events the case with myself, in relation to the "ROCKING STONE;" whose existence, I first heard of from a gentleman in the United States, who had inspected it with much admiration and astonishment.

A few days since, accompanied by a friend, I resolved to be personally satisfied of the existence and bulk of this "wonder of nature." We rode to Spryfield (the distance to which is probably six miles) and there left our gig.—Following a foot-path which led past the side of a small lake, we struck into the woods; and after walking about three quarters of a mile and pursuing the directions we had received, we came to the spot. Its most interesting appearance is at first perceiving it. It stands upon a flat stone, the surface of which is level with the ground. The rocking is effected by the aid of a short lever, and may be set in motion by a child of twelve

years of age. Although it is very difficult to attain the summit, yet we succeeded, and felt very sensibly the rocking as we walked to and fro upon it. We examined it very minutely, and discovered this vast body to move upon a pivot in the centre of about 12 inches by 6, and a slight rest at the north end. The quality of the Rock is granite, but apparently somewhat porous. After rocking, and inspecting this wonderful stone some time, we proceeded to measure its size, which we found to be as follows:—20 feet in length—14 feet in breadth—9 feet thick, and the circumference 74 feet. Its motion is from E N E to W S W. The place where the rock is situated is rather pleasant, being a plain, with the ground a little undulatory; and from its summit is presented to your view a beautiful lake, at one side stretching serenely through the bushes. It is worthy of remark that comparatively few stones appear in the neighbourhood of the rocking stone, and those quite small: so that no one can suppose it could by any accident have become disengaged from any large body of rock. It is truly astonishing, and clearly evinces the skill and power of an Almighty hand! I broke off a piece, for the purpose of ascertaining its weight, by which to form some idea of the number of tons contained in this rock. The following is a crude statement of the result:—Its length being 3½ inches—its breadth 2½ inches—its thickness 2½ inches, made 18 solid inches—and it weighed 1½ lbs. The rocking stone containing 2520 solid feet, makes its weight to be 162 tons.

I have presumed thus far to intrude upon your attention, feeling confident that a minute description of this rock would not be uninteresting to some of your readers.

I am, gentlemen, yours, &c.
Halifax, Augst 29, 1823. L. S.

Figure 2: Earliest identified published description of the Rocking Stone as written in a letter to the editor from the August 30th, 1823 edition of the Acadian Recorder (L.S., 1823).



Figure 3: Earliest identified depiction of the Rocking Stone, as painted by Sir George Back, British royal naval officer, Arctic explorer, and painter (Back, 1836).



Figure 4: 1865 A.F. Church Map of Halifax County with Arthur Kidston's name and farmhouse highlighted by the upper arrow and the Rocking Stone highlighted by the lower arrow (Church, 1865).



Figure 5: 1870 Map of Halifax Peninsula and surrounding area with the approximate location of the Rocking Stone highlighted by an arrow (Buckmill, 1870).

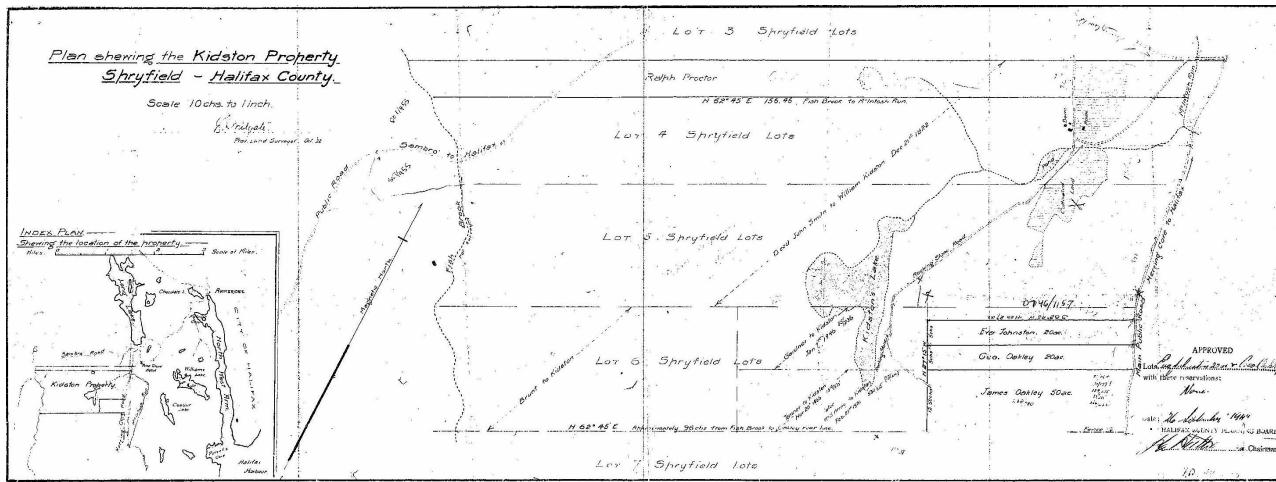


Figure 6: 1949 Plan of the Kidston Property. The Rocking Stone sits on part of what was originally Lot 6 of the Spryfield Lots (Milgate, 1949).

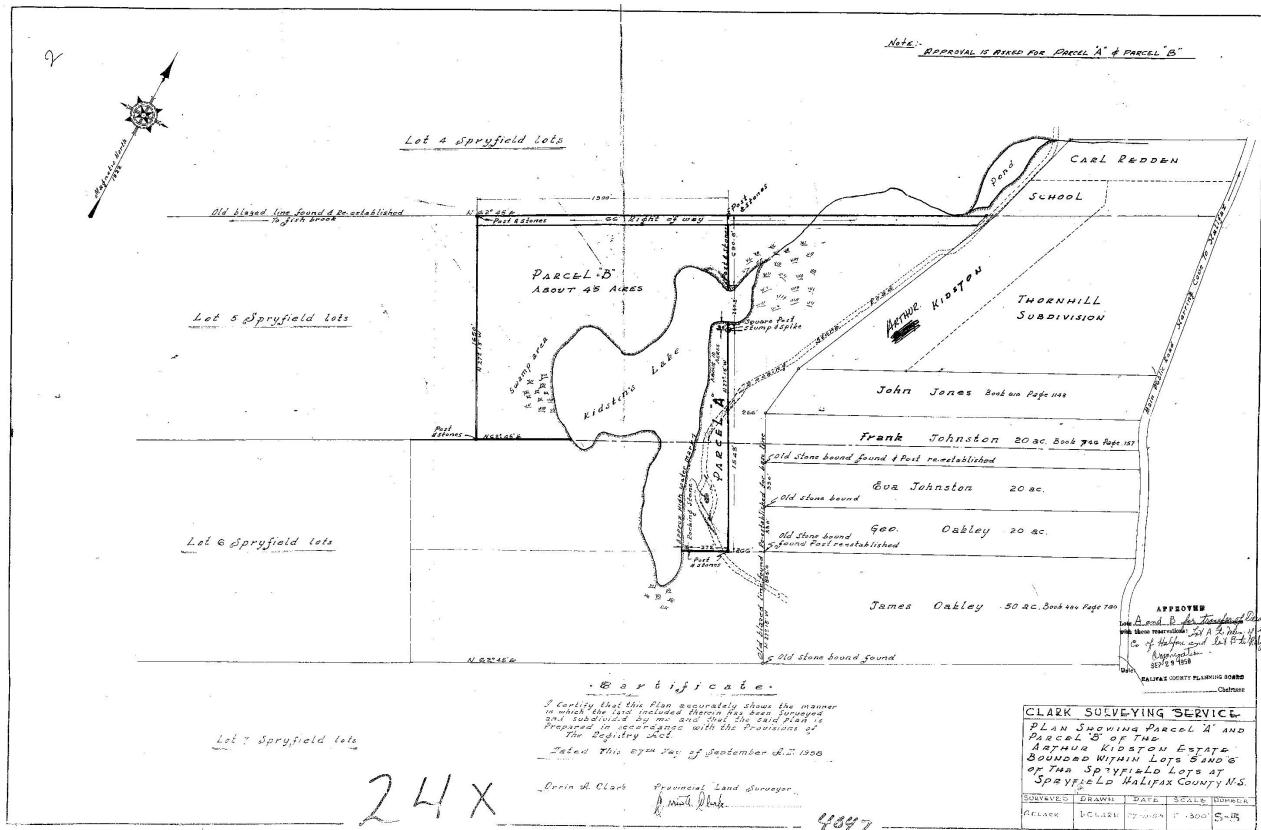


Figure 7: 1958 Plan of the Arthur Kidston Estate (Clark, 1958).

Historical Importance

The Rocking Stone is a granite boulder and glacial erratic deposited in place at the end of the last glacial period, known as the Wisconsinan glacial stage, a stage which spanned 75,000 to 10,000 years ago. It has served as a tourist attraction, recreational site, and natural wonder since the early 1820s. Its history is intertwined with some of the earliest settlers of Spryfield and one of Spryfield's most enduring families, the Kidstons.

Notable Owners:

[John Albright "Albert" Leizer \[b.1731, d.1815\] & Hanna Dorothy Leizer \[b.1729, d.1796\]](#) (Find a Grave, 2014; Punch, n.d.)

Owned from 1770-1780

Albert Leizer, originally Johan Albrecht Leisser, is notable for being the Rocking Stone's first owner and one of the region's first landowners (Russell & Geldert, 1881). Originally from Wurttemberg, Germany, Albert immigrated to Halifax in 1752 (Punch, n.d.). The Rocking Stone site, originally part of a 500 acre lot known as Lot 6 of the Spryfield Lots [see Figure 6], was granted to Albert Leizer on the 1st of May, 1770 (Russell & Geldert, 1881). Little else is known about Albert Leizer and his wife, Dorothy. The couple sold the lands to the German immigrant Conrad Pence in 1780, who sold it to George McIntosh seven years later (FamilySearch, 2019; NSPOL, 1780).

[George McIntosh \[b.~1783, d.1821\]](#) (Watts, 1979)

Owned from 1787-1845

George McIntosh is an exceptionally important figure in the early history of Spryfield. Though his occupation was usually listed as "gentleman" or "farmer", in fact, he played a crucial role as Spryfield's first true developer (Watts, 1979). He purchased the expansive lands formerly belonging to Captain William Spry, as well as many other smaller grant lands, including the Rocking Stone site [Lot 6 of the Spryfield Lots] (NSPOL, 1787; O'Connor & Payne, 1975; Watts, 1979). He lived in the former Spry "Mansion House" and proceeded to develop some of his lands and subdivide others (O'Connor & Payne, 1975; Shea, 2007b). His executors carried on doing the same after his death in 1821, encouraging farmers and quarrymen to come settle in Spryfield (Shea, 2007b; Watts, 1979). During his life, McIntosh came to own thousands of acres of land stretching from the fishing lots of the Northwest Arm out to Harrietsfield, including ninety percent of the lands that make up present-day Spryfield (O'Connor & Payne, 1975; Watts, 1979). He and his executors retained ownership of the Rocking Stone site for a total of 58 years (NSPOL, 1787, 1845).

[Louise Elizabeth \[Dawson\] Kidston \[b.1788, d.1846\]](#)

Owned from 1846-1847

The first in a series of Kidstons to own the Rocking Stone site, Elizabeth Dawson Kidston, widow of William Kidston, acquired the property on the 7th of January, 1846 from William

and Catherine Gardiner [occasionally spelled Gardner] (NSPOL, 1846). Elizabeth and her husband, William Richard Kidston [Jr.], were among the early settlers of Spryfield, and William had already purchased a neighbouring 1000 acre lot from George McIntosh in 1822 to establish a farm and homestead which he named “Thornhill” (Shea, 2007b). Elizabeth’s passing that same year [1846] saw Thornhill conveyed to their son Archibald Glen Kidston.

[Archibald Glen Kidston \[Sr.\] \[b.1824, d.1894\] \(BillionGraves, 2021\)](#)

Owned from 1847-1899

Son of William and Elizabeth Kidston, Archibald inherited the Thornhill farm, and several years later in 1851 he married Mary Stanford Dart. Archibald was reportedly a good businessman, well liked, and in addition to farming he served as a victualler [supplier of provisions] for the military (Armitage & Piers, n.d.). Upon his death in 1894, Archibald’s estate was worth approximately \$3,850 (Halifax Herald, 1895). Little other information exists regarding Archibald Glen Kidston.

[John Kidston \[b.1862, d. 1928\] \(Acadian Recorder, 1928\)](#)

Owned from 1899-1928

Son of Archibald Glen Kidston, John Kidston had acquired a large part of Thornhill through the partitioning of his father Archibald Glen Kidston’s estate. The Kidston farmlands were divided in two by “Fish Brook” [see Figure 6] and the southwestern portion was conveyed to Archibald G. Kidston [Jr.] while the northeastern portion, including the Rocking Stone, was conveyed to the other three sons, John, Richard, and William Kidston (NSPOL, 1899). John purchased his brothers Richard and William’s interests in the lands for \$600 each and renamed his section of Thornhill to “Rockingstone Farm” carrying on the farming of the Kidston lands and running a successful dairy (Halifax Herald, 1911; NSPOL, 1899; Shea, 2007b). It should be noted with sensitivity that John Kidston was a veteran of the North West Rebellion, fighting on behalf of the federal government to quell the resistance of the Métis and their allies, led by Louis Riel, in response to the government’s refusal to grant them full title to their lands, among other unfulfilled demands; over 100 people died in the ensuing series of battles (Acadian Recorder, 1928; Canadian Geographic, n.d.; Canadian War Museum, n.d.). It should also be noted with sensitivity that John Kidston was for several years a member of the original Royal Canadian Mounted Police [formerly the North West Mounted Police] which sought to impose colonial order on the Northwest Territories, including participating in the suppression of the Indigenous/Métis populations and their aforementioned efforts at resistance (Lajtman, 2020). John Kidston lost an arm to a blasting accident and subsequently succumbed to gangrene at the Victoria General Hospital in 1928 (Armitage & Piers, n.d.; Douglas, 2021).

[Arthur Roy Kidston \[Sr.\] \[b.1878, d.1958\] \(Douglas, 2021\)](#)

Owned from 1928-1953

Youngest son of Archibald Glen Kidston [Sr.] and brother of John Kidston, Arthur Roy Kidston [Sr.] was raised on a small farm in Spryfield known as Darts Forks (Douglas,

2021). A millwright and cabinet maker, he worked for W.D. Piercy Ltd., and in his spare time he built his own sawmill, which he operated well into old age (Douglas, 2021). Arthur inherited Rockingstone Farm, including the Rocking Stone site, from his older brother John Kidston and was keen to preserve the Rocking Stone and surrounding lake and woodlands for recreational use (Halifax Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, 1981). To facilitate this use and maintain the lands, Arthur met with the Maritime Religious Educational Committee on the advice of A. K. Pigott, a Spryfield schoolteacher, and ultimately agreed to convey the lands to the committee for them to undertake the project of developing it as a church camp (Halifax Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, 1981). After the land was conveyed, the project proved to be too ambitious for the M.R.E.C. and, meeting again with Arthur, they devised a more modest plan (Halifax Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, 1981). However, Arthur Kidston died before this second plan could be enacted and after much negotiation the M.R.E.C. conveyed the property back to the Kidston family (Halifax Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, 1981).

[Arthur Roy Kidston \[Jr.\] \[b.1901, d.1990\] et al.](#)

Owned from 1958-1958

Son of Arthur Roy Kidston [Sr.], Arthur Roy Kidston [Jr.] was among the members of the Kidston family which jointly regained ownership of the Rockingstone Farm from the M.R.E.C. Like his father, Arthur Roy Kidston [Jr.] was keen to see the Rocking Stone site protected and used as a recreational site, and he and the other family members donated a roughly 10 acre portion of the Kidston lands containing the Rocking Stone, referred to as Parcel A on a Plan Showing Parcel A and Parcel B of the Arthur Kidston Estate [see Figure 7], to the Municipality of the County of Halifax to operate as a public park (Conrad, 1963; NSPOL, 1958a). Despite living and working in Michigan as a foreman for General Motors, Arthur remained a vocal advocate for the park, notably decrying its neglected state and the effects of nearby logging operations in the September 12, 1963 edition of the Mail Star [see Figure 8] (Conrad, 1963; Douglas, 2021).

[Municipality of the County of Halifax / Halifax Regional Municipality](#)

Owned from 1958 to present

As mentioned previously, the Rocking Stone was conveyed by Arthur Roy Kidston [Jr.] and family to the Municipality of the County of Halifax in 1958, with the intention of it being maintained by the municipality as a public park and recreational site (Conrad, 1963). However, other members of the Kidston family with whom Arthur Roy Kidston [Jr.] shared ownership of the lands had signed off on a five-year lease to Timberlea Lumber Company for logging activity on the 10-acre Rocking Stone site shortly before the land was conveyed to Halifax County (Conrad, 1963). Halifax County itself reportedly renewed the lease for an extra year (Conrad, 1963). Logging activities and minimal maintenance reportedly led to the degradation of the park and accumulation of debris, noted in the 1963 Mail Star article decrying the Rocking Stone's immobility and the park's neglect (Conrad, 1963).

In 1967, the Spryfield Lions Club proposed to clean up Kidston Lake Park and the Rocking Stone site, as well as to install picnic tables at their own expense (Municipality of Halifax County, 1967). This proposal was discussed at a Public Works Committee meeting on June 15th, 1967, where it was agreed there would be no objection to such a project, and the Lions Club later carried out their beautification work (Municipality of Halifax County, 1967; Spryfield Lions Club, n.d.). This discussion by the Public Works Committee also called attention to the fact that the road leading to Kidston Lake Park was not at the time owned by the Municipality (Municipality of Halifax County, 1967). So, in the interest of preserving public access to the park, the municipality expropriated the access road in 1967, with the expropriated lands including the remaining portion of the original Rockingstone Road (Hattie, 1967). In 2004, Halifax Regional Municipality further acquired a small parcel connecting the existing access road to a nearby cul-de-sac to maintain public access amidst nearby residential development (Humphreys, 2004). The park remains in Halifax Regional Municipality's ownership.



ARTHUR ROY KIDSTON, BY FAMED ROCKING STONE

Figure 8: Photo of Arthur Roy Kidston Jr. standing beside the Rocking Stone amidst debris from nearby logging operations (Conrad, 1963).

Notable Visitors:

Sir George Back [b.1796, d.1878] (Holland, 1972)

Visited 1836 (Back, 1836)

As mentioned in the age and continuous use section of this report, Admiral [then Captain] Sir George Back, arctic explorer, artist, and naturalist visited the Rocking Stone in 1836 presumably before he set forth as commander of the HMS Terror on its June 1836 expedition to the Arctic (Back, 1836; Holland, 1972). As mentioned previously in this report, Sir George Back's watercolour painting of the Rocking Stone remains the earliest identified depiction of the stone [see Figure 3] (Back, 1836).

Prime Minister Andrew Bonar Law [b.1858, d.1923] (Tikkanen, 2021)

Visited ~1864 (J. Kidston, 1924)

Andrew Bonar Law, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from October of 1922 to May of 1923, was born in New Brunswick to the Reverend James Law and his wife Eliza Anne Kidston [daughter of William & Elizabeth Kidston] (J. Kidston, 1924; Tikkanen, 2021). Eliza Anne died young and Janet Kidston, Andrew's aunt, came from Scotland to help care for him (J. Kidston, 1924). Janet convinced the Reverend to allow his son to return to Scotland with her, and along the journey they stopped to spend some time with Andrew's uncle Archibald Glen Kidston at Thornhill Farm in Spryfield, where the then six-year-old Andrew is said to have gone swimming in Kidston lake and played by the Rocking Stone (Halifax Herald, 1911; J. Kidston, 1924; Shea, 2003).

The Prince of Wales, King George V [b.1865, d.1936] (Ellis, 1886)

Visited 1883 **[unconfirmed]**

A living descendant of the Kidston family has shared with staff an account passed through generations of Kidstons, wherein the Prince of Wales visited the Rocking Stone and stopping by at the Kidston farmhouse for directions along the way and tea on the way back. This story is plausible insofar as the Prince of Wales did visit Halifax as a midshipman with the Royal Navy in 1883, and the Rocking Stone was a well-recognized tourist attraction around this time (H. Hessletin & Sons, 1890; Province of Nova Scotia, 2015). However, HRM staff have been unable to locate any concrete evidence to corroborate claims that the Prince of Wales did indeed visit the Rocking Stone.

An unknown party from the Halifax Garrison

Visited pre-1906

A group of soldiers from the Halifax Garrison have been reported as rocking the Rocking Stone so vigorously that it settled slightly (Mackenzie & Robson, 2004). As a result, where the stone used to move with the effort of a single hand, it has since required the aid of a lever to get the stone to rock (Mackenzie & Robson, 2004).

Clara Dennis [b.1881, d.1958] (Nova Scotia Archives, 2021)

Clara Dennis was a trailblazing female reporter, being one of Nova Scotia's first travel writers and one of the first women to explore Nova Scotia by car (Canadian Automotive Museum, 2018). Her articles on local and provincial history, notable people she met on her travels, as well as Mi'kmaq folklore and customs were published in newsprint and magazines (Nova Scotia Archives, 2015). She also published three books about her travels (Nova Scotia Archives, 2015). Her extensive collection of photos [several thousand strong] taken during her travels includes the following photo from her visit to the Rocking Stone [see Figure 9] (Nova Scotia Archives, 2021).



Figure 9: Photo by Clara Dennis from her visit to the Rocking Stone (Dennis, Est. 1930s).

Integrity

The Rocking Stone has settled somewhat as a result of its use as a tourist attraction. Originally, the boulder could be moved with the effort of a single hand (The NovaScotian, 1828). Later the stone was movable with the assistance of a wooden lever (Regan, 1908). This is reportedly due to a group of soldiers from the Halifax Garrison vigorously rocking the stone until it settled slightly (Mackenzie & Robson, 2004). In the early 1960s, slabwood from nearby logging operations and other debris had rendered the stone completely immobile; however, in the 1990s community efforts to restore the site and return the Rocking Stone to a functional rocking state were successful (Conrad, 1963; Mackenzie & Robson, 2004). The Kidston family, who previously owned the Rocking Stone site and surrounding lands, had over time developed the area with modifications such as paths, gardens, picnic grounds, as well as hiking, boating, and swimming facilities, eventually operating the property commercially (Conrad, 1963). Today, only the paths remain. The original Kidston farmhouse does remain further up Rockingstone Road and is itself a registered heritage property, providing greater heritage context to the site of the Rocking Stone. The original Rockingstone Road has been mostly lost to development of the surrounding area; however, the Rocking Stone site and surrounding lands presently owned by Halifax Regional Municipality includes the last remaining section of the original Rockingstone Road, further contributing to the heritage integrity of the site. Overall, it is the opinion of HRM staff that the Rocking Stone site exhibits a very high level of integrity.

General:

Despite almost two hundred years of continuous use, the site is largely intact with presence of original features. The site of the Rocking Stone and neighbouring Kidston Lake has been described as a “mosaic of bare granite with lichens, low bushes, and patches of black spruce and white birch”. The Rocking Stone itself lies to the immediate northeast of Kidston Lake [see Figure 15] and the man-made Kidston Lake Beach. It is flanked either side by walking paths which lead southeast into the surrounding forest and northwest towards a small gravel parking lot which terminates the last remaining section of the original approximately two-century-old Rockingstone Road [see Figure 13] (A. G. Kidston, 2003). The surrounding forest itself notably contains remains of the stone walls of the Kidston Farm’s pastures (A. G. Kidston, 2003).

Geology:

The geological features of the site are largely intact. The site of the Rocking Stone and surrounding area features multiple glaciated granite outcrops (Davis & Browne, 1998). The Rocking Stone itself is a large porphyritic granite boulder resting upon a flat granite outcrop and measuring approximately twenty feet in length by fourteen feet in width by nine feet in height, with a circumference of approximately seventy-four feet [see Figures 10 through 12] (Donohoe, 2022; Shea, 2007a). It has been variously estimated that the Rocking Stone weighs 162 tons, 200 tons, and even 475 tons (Conrad, 1963; Quinpool, 1936; Regan, 1908). The Canadian Geological Survey has been quoted as saying that the Rocking Stone may be “perhaps the largest [rocking stone or logan stone] in the world” (Quinpool, 1936). The porphyritic granite of the Rocking Stone is composed orthoclase feldspar, quartz, and biotite mica, with small

xenoliths [fragments of one rock trapped in another] present (Donohoe, 2022). This is the same type of granite as the surrounding bedrock found at Kidston Lake Park and Rockingstone Heights School (Donohoe, 2022). The Rocking Stone was eroded from bedrock further to the northwest of its present location by a glacier, which may have carried it as far as an estimated 5-15km before melting and depositing the boulder in its present position (Donohoe, 2022).

Other geological curiosities can be found located in and near Kidston Lake Park. One of these is Table Rock, another granitic glacial erratic located near the northwestern tip of Kidston Lake and resting perched atop three smaller rocks, two of granite and one of ironstone (Conrad, 1963; A. G. Kidston, 2003). Another is High Rock, yet another glacial erratic, but unlike the Rocking Stone and Table Rock, High Rock is neither mobile nor resting improbably atop other smaller rocks (A. G. Kidston, 2003).

Vegetation:

The original vegetation of the site is largely intact. Prior research conducted for the Kidston Lake site has identified it as an area of ecological significance, most notable for the presence of a rare and threatened species of herbaceous plant called Greenland Sandwort [*Arenaria groenlandica*], also known as Mountain Sandwort (Harvey & Archibald, 1993). The Greenland Sandwort is known only to exist in this vicinity in the Maritime Provinces (Harvey & Archibald, 1993). The site is classified as a Dry Barrens ecosystem with soil consisting of a thin humus [the dark, carbon rich, non-living organic matter above the topsoil] overlying granite as well as a shallow podzolic soil in some areas (Harvey & Archibald, 1993). Tree cover consists of predominantly Black Spruce [*Picea mariana*] and Paper Birch [*Betula papyrifera*] among other species (Harvey & Archibald, 1993).

Character defining elements:

The Rocking Stone site includes natural elements which are valued for their cultural and historic significance. The site features several character-defining elements including but not limited to the following:

- A very large glacial erratic of porphyritic granite [the Rocking Stone], resting upon a flat granite outcrop, which can be rocked using a lever
- Porphyritic granite outcrops notably exhibiting oriented orthoclase crystals; xenoliths of slate, hornblende diorite, and mica-heavy granite;
- Other glacial erratics of varied sizes throughout the site, including a grouping of large boulders near the shoreline of Kidston Lake
- Physical access to the Rocking Stone site including the last remaining section of the original Rockingstone Road
- Continued recreational use of the site, including climbing boulders and swimming in Kidston Lake
- Surrounding woods composed primarily of black spruce [*Picea mariana*] and paper birch [*Betula papyrifera*]

- A dry barrens ecosystem listed in the International Biological Program as a place of ecological value and noted to contain the rare Greenland sandwort [*Arenaria groenlandica*]



Figure 10: Southern elevation of the Rocking Stone (December 8, 2021)



Figure 11: Eastern elevation of the Rocking Stone (December 8, 2021)



Figure 12: Western elevation of the Rocking Stone (December 8, 2021)



Figure 13: The remaining portion of the original Rockingstone Road (December 8, 2021)



Figure 14: A granite outcrop along the eastern shoreline of Kidston Lake (December 8, 2021)



Figure 15: Kidston Lake as seen from the eastern shoreline (December 8, 2021)



Figure 16: A collection of smaller erratics near the Eastern shore of Kidston Lake (December 8, 2021)

Context

Community Value

The Rocking Stone, alongside the Kidston farmhouse, is one of the most significant heritage assets in the community of Spryfield. It bears witness to the entire history of Spryfield's development. From its origins as a glacial erratic, deposited in situ during the Wiconsinan age, to the initial land grants of Spryfield and the surrounding area, to the site's publication and subsequent development as a local tourist attraction and natural wonder, to its establishment as a public park, the Rocking Stone has seen continuous tourism and recreational use. A tourist attraction so widely visited in fact, that in 1828, Joseph Howe, in describing the wonder of discovering something yet unseen on one's travels, somewhat derisively wrote as a counterpoint of the Rocking Stone, which had been "rolled over and over by pedestrians and equestrians, who have speculated on its position, and favoured the world with its dimensions" (Howe, 1973). It has witnessed the generations of the Kidston family working the nearby farmland and similarly witnessed generations of passerby who have stopped to picnic atop it or photograph themselves with it. It has been documented throughout history in newsprint, hotel guides, books, paintings, plans, reports, photographs, and in commemorative names such as Rockingstone Road and Rockingstone Heights School. In all likelihood, the Rocking Stone may be the most thoroughly documented rock in Nova Scotia.

There can be little doubt of the importance of the Rocking Stone to the community of Spryfield, as they have repeatedly shown in their efforts to retain the site's recreational use, to ensure its continued existence amidst the threat of surrounding development, to ensure its proper maintenance, and to register it as a heritage site (Conrad, 1963; Halifax Regional Municipality, 1971; Mackenzie & Robson, 2004; MacLean & Kidston, 2003). Finally, to further illustrate just how well-documented this site is, please find below a sampling of the many more historic photos and publications found documenting the Rocking Stone [see Figures 16 through 24].

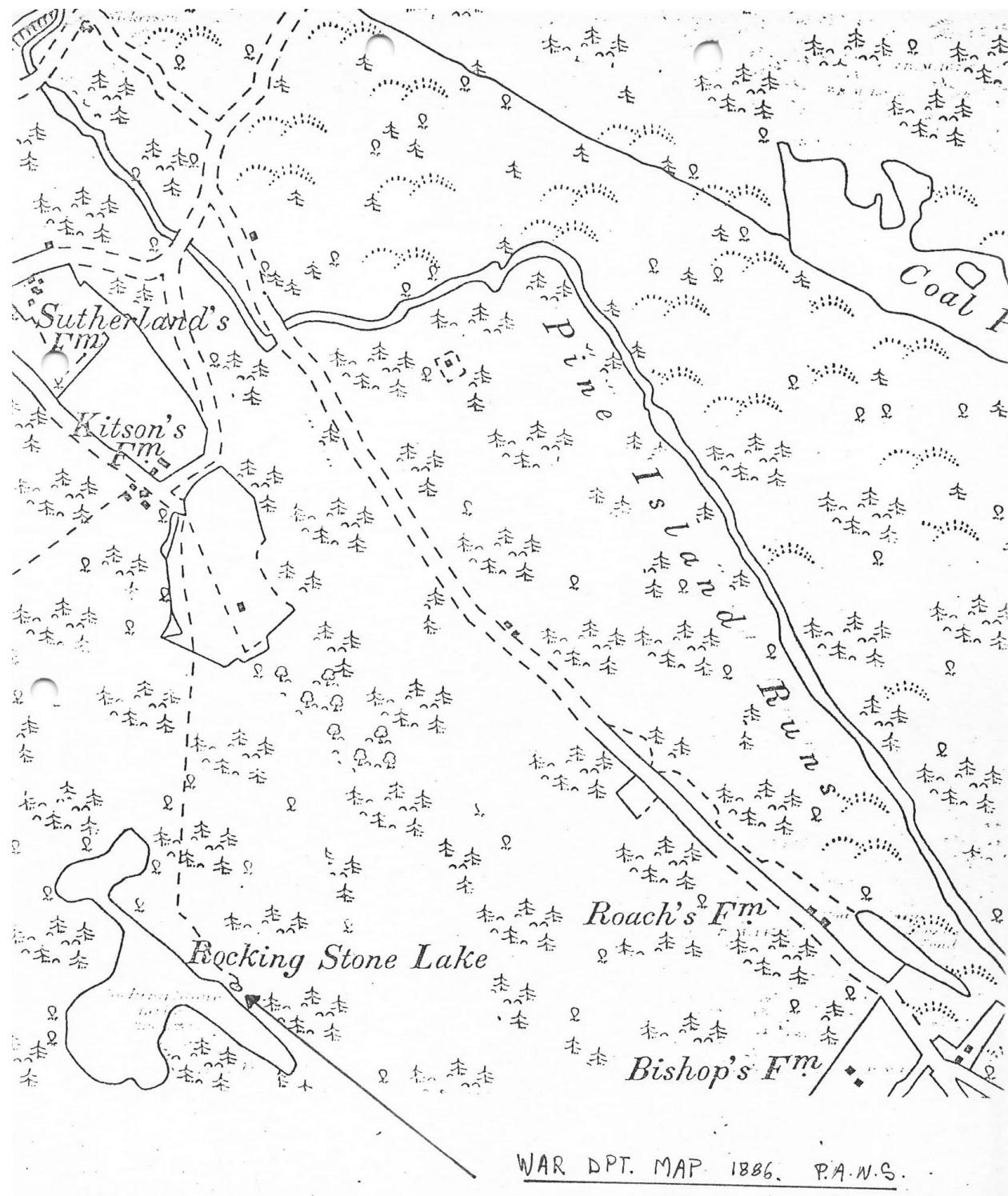


Figure 17: War Department map of Herring Cove Rd and surrounding lands (Halifax Regional Municipality, n.d.).

longer any troops stationed. About three miles from the North-west Arm is a rocking stone of very large dimensions. It rests upon a strata of rock that rises to the surface of the ground, and moves on a pivot of twelve inches by six. It is composed of granite, and when set in motion (which may be effected with ease by means of a short wooden lever) undulates from E. N. E. to W. S. W. It is twenty feet in length, fourteen in breadth, nine in height, and seventy-four in circumference, and is supposed to weigh one hundred and sixty-two tons. Within a shorter distance of Halifax, on the Prospect road, is another stone of smaller dimensions, but similar as respects its position and facility of motion.

“ And some, chance poised and balanced, lay
So that a stripling arm might sway
A mass no power could raise,
In nature's rage, at random thrown,
Yet trembling like a Druid's throne,
On its precarious base.”
—SCOTT.

Figure 18: Excerpt from the book *Illustrated Halifax* by Robert Metzler, published 1891 (Metzler, 1891).

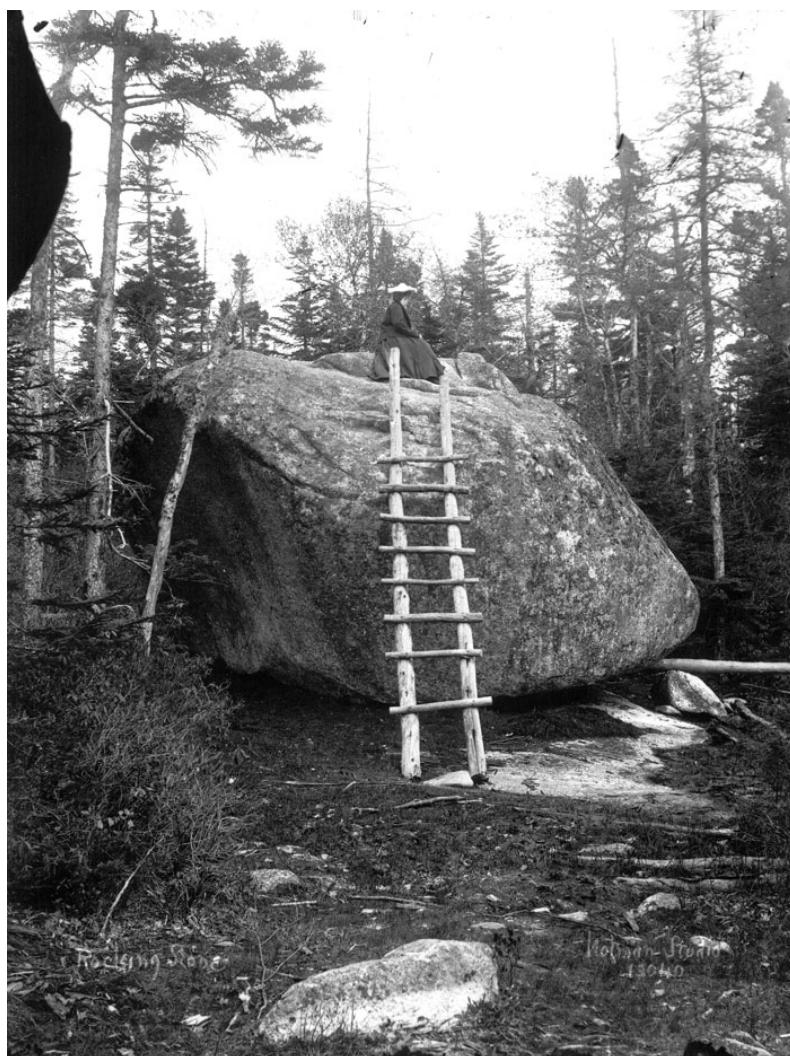


Figure 19: Notman Studio photograph of a woman atop the Rocking Stone dated 1895 (Notman Studio, 1895).

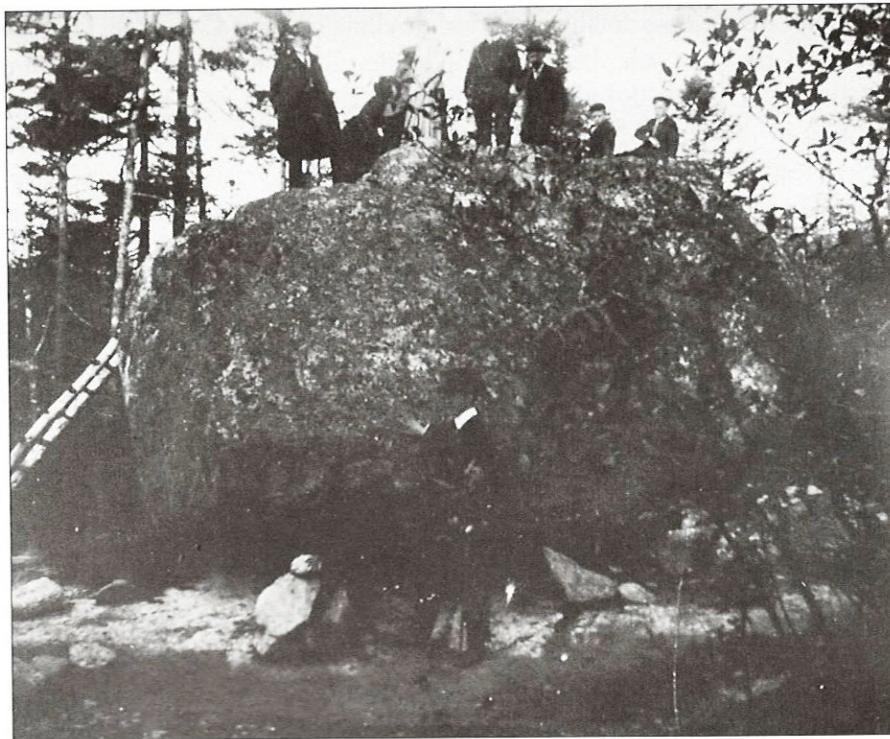


Figure 20: Photo from the book *Halifax Street Names* showing a group of people atop the Rocking Stone, dated 1905 (Mackenzie & Robson, 2004)

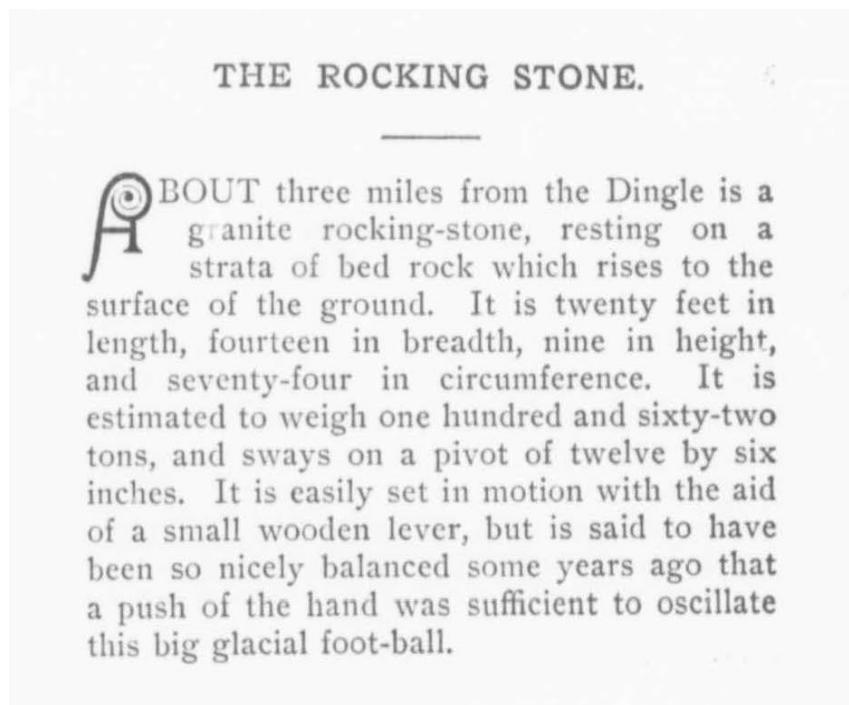
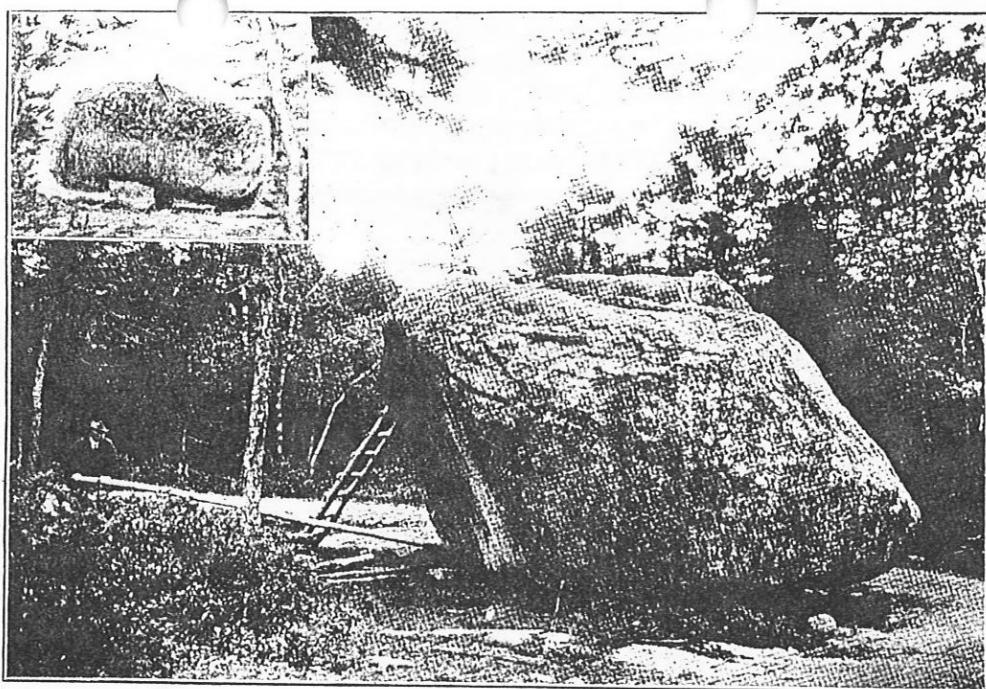


Figure 21: Blurb about the Rocking Stone from the 1908 book *Sketches and Traditions of the Northwest Arm* (Regan, 1908).



Figure 22: Canadian Girls In Training [CGIT] group visiting the Rocking Stone on May 24, 1922 (CGIT, 1922).



Spryfield granite "rocking stone," near Halifax, Nova Scotia, 30 x 24 x 15 feet, weight 475 tons, described by Canadian Geological Survey, "perhaps the largest in the world"—Inset, left, "Table Rock," 15 x 14 x 5 feet, resting on three stones of different character, raising the big rock 6 to 18 inches off the ledge—Both natural curiosities are on land of Mr. Kidston, descendant of an ancestor of Rt. Hon A. Bonar Law and still in the family. The champion "logan stone" or "perched boulder" is 100 feet circumference and rests on a glaciated surface like itself, so delicately poised, by using a pole or lever will rock back and forth. Formerly the stone would rock by hand, without a lever, but has edged into a more stable position.

Figure 23: Excerpt from the book *First Things in Acadia* [1936] by John Quinpool (Quinpool, 1936).



Figure 24: Article about the Rocking Stone from the *Mail Star*, dated 1963 (Conrad, 1963).



Community Named After Captain William Spy

Spryfield was named in honor of all sorts of grafted fruit trees. Captain William Spy, a man in the prime, the said prominent military figure in Nova Scotia during the 18th century.

Captain Spy, one of the first

Two Speeders

ROCKING STONE---The 47-ton Rocking Stone, near Placid Lake, Spryfield, has been neglected for many years but local residents and Spryfield Board of Trade members are concerned about the rock and hope to initiate a beautification program in the area. Standing in front of the rock are, left to right, George Most, past president of the Spryfield Board of Trade; Colin Baker, president; Ken Butler and Alex MacKinnon, members (Bryden, Halifax Photo Service)

Famous Rock Discovered During A Thunderstorm

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Attachment 2

Scoring for Case H00523: Request to Include the Rocking Stone and Kidston Lake Park, Halifax, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality

Criterion	Score Awarded
1. Continuity of Use	25
2. Historical Importance	15
3. Integrity	10
4. Context and Community Value	10
Total	60