

FORTUNE HARBOUR



The fact that some of the jasper stones found near the Norse site at L'Anse aux Meadows could be chemically traced back to Notre Dame Bay was first related to me by Parks Canada guide Clayton Colbourne. Searching for academic reference on the subject, I came across the paper "Who Lived at L'Anse aux Meadows?" by Kevin P. Smith* which confirmed what Clayton had told me: the jasper finds in L'Anse aux Meadows had been compared to samples from Iceland, Greenland, Minnesota and Notre Dame Bay, Newfoundland. While some of them matched the samples from Iceland and Greenland, one matched two samples from Notre Dame Bay taken in Robert's Arm and Fortune Harbour. When comparing the two places on the map, Fortune Harbour seems a much more likely candidate for a port of call of the Norse: the headland sticks far out and the harbour is among the most sheltered in all of Newfoundland, with an entrance welcoming seafarers coming from the North. And while it is not fully clear if the jasper finds from L'Anse aux Meadows are really Norse firestarters or remains of Indigenous tool making, they could be another piece in the puzzle about the location and expansion of Vinland.

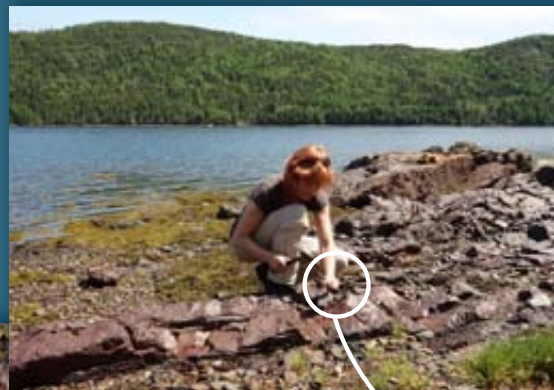
When I arrived in Fortune Harbour it appeared to me like a very secluded and sheltered place indeed. Close to what,

by extrapolation from the map in Kevin Smith's paper, I had identified as the place where the jasper sample had been taken I spoke to a lady who referred me to Tom Hynes, an old gentleman who would certainly be able to help me. She told me I would most likely find him outside his shed and old store, behind the fishplant at the end of the next side road. And that's where I met him. Soon enough Tom told me that one day some time ago, when he was still running his store, he saw two men walking across the rocks by the water behind the building. When he asked them what they were doing there they told him that they were looking at the jasper cherts, and that there was evidence that the Vikings had come to Fortune Harbour as similar jasper had been found in L'Anse aux Meadows. Without being overly impressed by these news Tom only wondered why the Vikings wouldn't have stayed in Fortune Harbour. He argued, and by what I could see around us I agreed, that it offered much better shelter than Epaves Bay in L'Anse aux Meadows as well as an abundance of the precious jasper and extensive wood resources in the hinterland which are being exploited to the present day.

* In: *Vikings - The North Atlantic Saga*, W. Fitzhugh and E. Ward Eds., Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000



Best geochemical matches for fire-starter 4A301A2-1 (see image below right) found at LAM: NF 13.1/13.2 (Robert's Arm) and NF 04 (Fortune Harbour)
Images from the paper: Kevin P. Smith, *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology 2013*



Jasper sample
dislotted behind
Tom's store



Tom Hynes in front of his store
behind which jasper sample NF 04 was taken

Timber in the hinterland
of Fortune Harbour

