Hopewell Rocks

The iconic Hopewell Rocks, one of New Brunswick's most recognizable tourist attractions, are a result of the weathering of the Lower Carboniferous Hopewell Cape Formation. It is one of the most photographed geologic features in New Brunswick. Images in the New Brunswick Museum collection date back to 1885. The scenic flowerpot rocks were shaped by erosion caused by the high tides and glaciation.

The Hopewell Cape Formation can trace its history to over 600 million years ago when the rocks and pebbles that now comprise the conglomerate layers were first formed in the Caledonia Highlands Mountain range. Weathering of the highlands 350 million years ago provided the sediment load in the rivers that would become the conglomerate and sandstone rock layers at Hopewell Rocks. Conglomerate looks a bit like coarse concrete. It is a mix of boulders and pebbles cemented together with finer grained sand and silt. The roundness of the boulders and pebbles often provides a clue as to how far they have been transported by the river.

At Hopewell Rocks the flowerpot formations lean precariously along the coast. Tectonic activity caused the horizontal sedimentary layers to be tilted to a 30-45 degree angle causing vertical cracks to develop along the cliffs. Over the years, the Bay of Fundy tides have eroded the layers creating the scenic geological landscape.