

Historical Archaeology in Palm Beach, Florida: the Maddock family and the Duck's Nest residence

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Palm Beach island, located on the Atlantic coast of South Florida (fig. 1), is one of the regions with more intense archaeological work as a result of the enforcement of the local ordinances for the preservation of historical and archaeological resources. In this context, the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc. (AHC), a Florida not-for-profit organization dedicated to the investigation and preservation of archaeological and historical sites, has significantly contributed documenting the local heritage. One of the projects was to document and mitigate new development at the Duck's Nest residence, the oldest historical house on the island, located at 305 Maddock Way.

The road is named after Henry Maddock, who came to Palm Beach in the late 1800s. Maddock was from Brooklyn, New York, where he sold his family's line of pottery which he imported from England. Historians have guessed that his familiarity with shipping led him to the idea of barging a prefabricated house in pieces to the "Palm Beach wilderness" in 1891. The house likely was built by the Long Island Portable Housing Company of Brooklyn and suffered different changes

along time. It is centered on the original lot facing west toward a long dock on Lake Worth. East of the house was a freshwater marsh, across which Maddock's grandson, Henry, built a causeway in 1936 that extended 1400 feet eastward. The house was named after the flocks of ducks that populated the marsh (Grunke 1971).

Duck's Nest (8PB78) is one of few noteworthy homes built in the period 1891 to 1925—when Addison Mizner arrived to build his first house at 102 Jungle Road, inaugurating the Mediterranean revival (Wesley 1973). Duck's Nest is also the oldest home continuously owned by one family on the island. This historic Palm Beach landmark has survived more than one potential threat of demolition. The property was recently added to the neighboring lot to the east, 303 Maddock Way.

Between 2018 and 2019, the AHC conducted a cultural resource assessment of the parcel, resulting in the discovery of site 8PB18590. The site was characterized by intact reddish sandy stratum containing shells, faunal bone, prehistoric ceramics, a limestone spoke shave, and a carved bone pin. The site appeared intact around the historic

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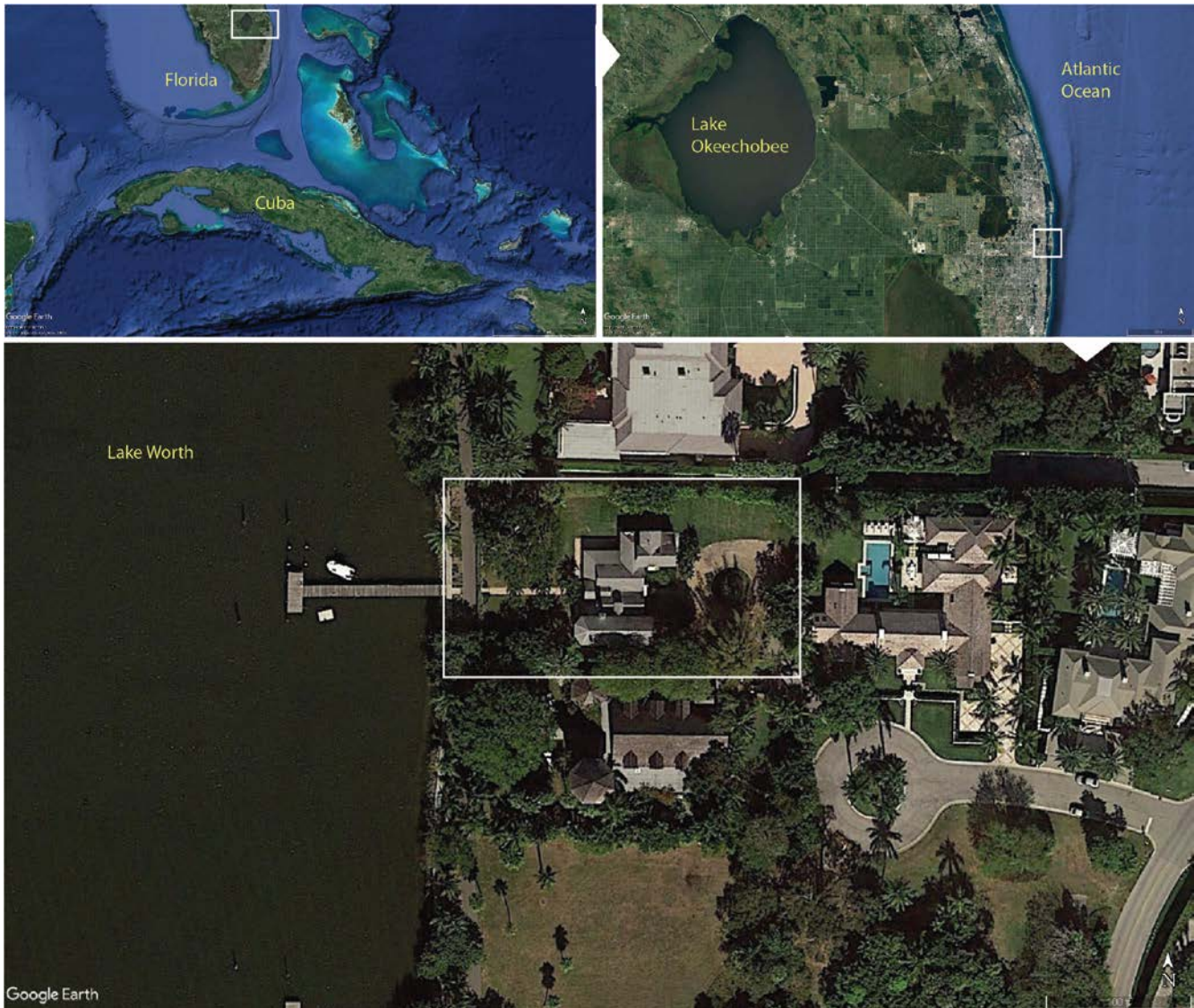


FIG. 1. Location of the project parcel, abutting Lake Worth, in Palm Beach island

structure, while other areas had been adversely impacted by previous development. Additional archaeological excavations were proposed to determine the extent and significance of the archaeological deposits within the footprint of the proposed new development, which included an exfiltration area, drainage trenching, swimming pool, and tree removal and replanting, and extensive excavations for perimeter walls and drainage ditches.

The archaeological work included a total of 29 excavation units, ranging in size between 1x1m to 1x2m, following the ground disturbing areas due to the new development. It was determined that 8PB18590 is a multicomponent site, including prehistoric and historic components. The latter

will be the focus of the present report, which included whiteware, glass bottles, iron nails, glass and carnelian beads, and a resin toy soldier.

Documenting historical occupations

The historical component of the site was characterized by a total of 343 artifacts, including ceramics (n=14), glass (n=203), metal (n=125), and nacre (n=2). The historic ceramics included whiteware (n=4), ironstone (n=3), earthenware (1), kaolin tobacco pipe (n=1), and construction materials (bricks, n=5). One English whiteware sherd had a transfer print of a dark blue motif and a maker's mark of the Maddock family (fig. 2). The mark incorporates a crown and ribbon sym-

bol that identifies the manufacturing company as John Maddock & Sons, Royal Vitreous, England. John Maddock & Sons produced highly durable, utilitarian ceramics from 1855 to 1985 (Corbin et al. 2010). The inclusion of the word “ENGLAND” in the mark suggests a post-1880 date, and after 1896, Maddock added Ltd. The lack of this word indicates a date between 1880 and 1896. The same maker’s mark was found on a sherd in a trash pit dating from late 19th to early 20th century in the Deering Estate south of Miami (Haiduven 2001). The rest of the whitewares and all ironstone fragments were plain ranging in color from white to blueish for the ironstone sample. The only earthenware sherd is likely part of the base of a vase. A kaolin tobacco pipe likely dating from late 19th century was found during monitoring on the west side of the house. All historic ceramics are dated from late 19th century to mid-20th century.

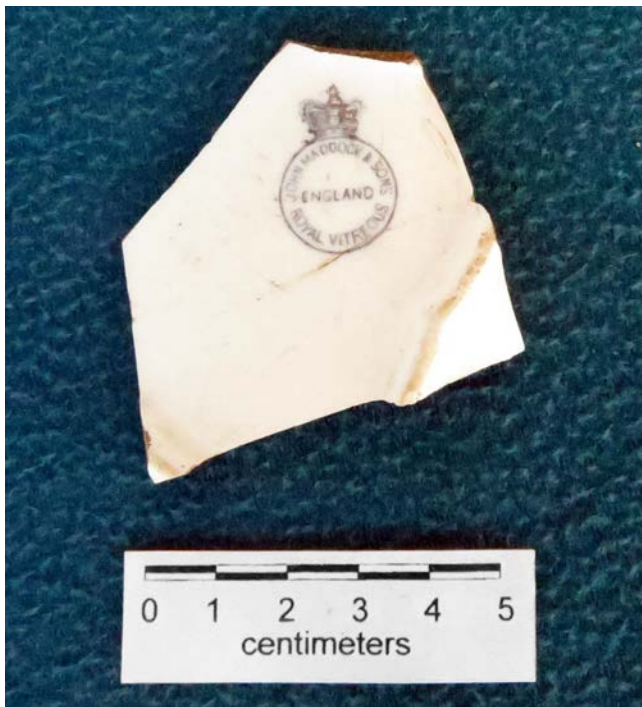


FIG. 2. Whiteware with the maker’s mark of John Maddock and Sons, Royal Vitreous, England, dating between 1880 and 1896

Glass materials included several bottle bases, necks, and body sherds, some of them with inscriptions. Alcoholic (fig. 3) and medicine bottles (fig. 4) characterized the sample. Two medicine

bottles with inscriptions included a colorless bottle fragment with the inscription: “...ORTH... CIN-CINNATI” and a colorless bottle with the oval inscription: DRUGGIST & APOTHECARY / TITUSVILLE. A glass lid for a fruit canning jar, a Mason Jar, was found in Unit 9, with the inscription: TRADE MARK MASON’S IMPROVED / REGISTERED MAY 23^D 1871 (fig. 5). Bottles date from mid-19th century to mid-20th century.



FIG. 3. Bottle base, likely used for wine



FIG. 4. Medicine bottle



FIG. 5. Fruit canning jar lid (Mason Jar)

Metal artifacts include two coins, one 1951 nickel and one 1899 Liberty Head V nickel (fig. 6) found during a metal detecting survey near the west-central area of the parcel. Other artifacts include numerous iron nails and fasteners, copper fasteners, lead slag, bullet casings, an iron sailboat pulley, and unidentified fragmentary objects. Two buttons were encountered, one of them is a nacre and metal snap button. The artifacts and coins support the typological chronology, dating from late 19th century to mid-20th century.

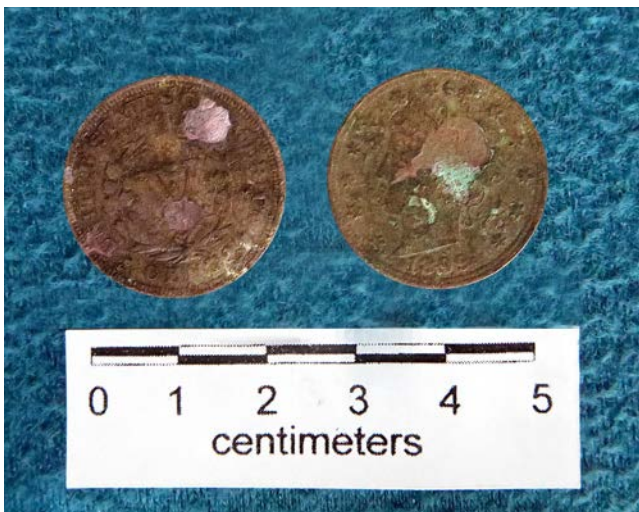


FIG. 6. 1899 Liberty Head V nickel

Two nacre buttons were recovered during monitoring while screening the spoil from the perimeter wall trench on the west side of the parcel.

A mid-20th century toy soldier (fig. 7) was found during monitoring a drainage trench located on the northwest area of the parcel, in between the residence and a ficus tree. The soldier is made on a green resin or plastic, measuring 7,5cm tall, although part of the legs, head, and hands are missing. The military outfit is represented by four attached components, two on the sides, one in the front and one in the back, likely representing an after-World War II period, dating by mid-20th century.



FIG. 7. Toy soldier from mid-20th century

An earlier historic component is represented by six beads found on the west side of the house, one of them in Unit 5 and the others during monitoring. One of them is a reddish faceted carnelian bead with narrow, milky bands (fig. 8), likely produced in Cambay, Western India (Handler 2007). The bead is similar to two others found in the Newton plantation in Barbados, dating from late 17th to early 18th century (Handler 2007). Two similar specimens were recovered in Miami

Dade County, one at 8DA1058 -an Everglades tree island (Carr 2012)- and the other at the Deering Estate, both sites dating from the period of the Spanish contact, 16th to 17th century. The faceted carnelian bead encountered at the Deering Estate coincides in size (~30mm) with the one reported here. The context was dated from the late 16th to early 17th century, based on a San Luis Polychrome majolica sherd and a green-glazed olive jar sherd recovered from the same context. Additionally, two radiocarbon dates corroborated the chronology, dating a charcoal and a shell in 1455 AD – 1665 AD (Haiduven 2001). Handler (2007) states that these beads “remain unusual and unique material legacies of the transatlantic slave trade to Britain’s American colonies”. However, these beads are not consistent with a slave trade context in the South Florida discovery sites. Five beads are made of glass (fig. 9), two of them white and the others green. They are tubular, with striation marks due to the manufacturing process.



FIG. 8. Carnelian bead, surface collection

The site’s historic component represents at least two separate events. First, the Duck’s Nest residence, built by Henry Maddock in 1891, after shipping the house in pieces from New York, and its continual use until the present. Activities associated with the Duck’s Nest have resulted in historic refuse and trash pits occurring on the parcel, with the two trash pits and extensive materials

occurring west of the house near the shore of Lake Worth. A whiteware with the maker’s mark John Maddock and Sons was particularly significant considering its chronology (~1880-1896) and family history.



FIG. 9. Glass tubular beads, western porch

An older historic occurrence is represented by the assemblage of beads; five glass and one lithic, uncovered on the western portion of the site, west of the house. The beads include five drawn glass and a carnelian bead dating from ca. 1650 to 1750. No other diagnostic material from that time period was found, however, lead slag and a musket ball may be contemporary with the beads. The assemblage is unusual and represents a time period rarely encountered in Palm Beach archaeological sites. Carnelian beads have been associated with English and Spanish occupation in the Caribbean (Deagan 1987; Handler 2007) and in South Florida (Carr 2012; Haiduven 2001), which open a door to understand the site as an earlier contact period location.

It is important to highlight the report of the carnelian bead, considering its rare occurrence in archaeological deposits in the continent, likely because of its origin from India. On the one hand, at least two previous reports included carnelian beads in south Florida, associated with the Spanish contact period, showing the significance of

the grey literature (technical reports) and its significant role in archaeology, although many stories of the past societies do not include them in the bibliography. On the other hand, the lack of identification is likely contributing to obscure its occurrence in published sources. This report contributes to its characterization and identification.

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