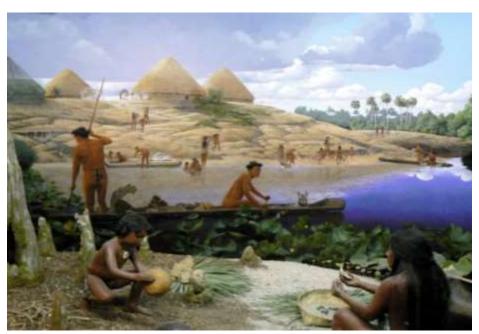
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE CITY OF LAKE WORTH BEACH

Background

In 2020, the Historical Society of Lake Worth (HSLW) commissioned archeological research regarding the archaeological resources that reveal something of the "pre-history" of the area in the pre-Columbian era between 1000 BC and 1500 AD. The research was conducted by well-regarded local anthropologist, Dorothy Block, M.A. (Anthropology, emphasis Archaeology). The full research paper is being submitted to a professional, peer review journal for future publication. Block has prepared summary below highlighting key findings -- with special focus on areas of interest to HSLW members.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

The paper presents data about pre-Columbian sites in and adjacent to the city. Data sources include newspaper archives, ethnographic accounts, museum records and information on file with the State of Florida. Block's work adds a new site, Marion's 1913 Mound (named for Marion Cone of HSLW), to Florida's Master Site File of archaeological sites. It also locates The Lake Worth Mound on the Casino property and expands the known boundary of the Littlefield Site in College Park.



Source: Kenn Orphan Museum of Florida History, Tallahassee FL.

LAKE WORTH BEACH SITES:

Block's paper focuses on Pre-Columbian Mounds found in and around the City of Lake Worth. This summary focuses principally on the sites within city limits. Include are Marion's 1913 Mound, Lake Worth Mound, and the Littlefield Site. A fourth possible site, the Winn Dixie Site remains unsubstantiated. In addition to the mounds, an isolated find, the Lake Osborne Canoe, is discussed. Two sites adjacent to Lake Worth on the barrier island are also explored: The Patrician Site and the Lake Worth Casino, Palm Beach.



Exhibit 3. Location of Sites Discussed. Source:

Source: Block -- The Archaeology of the City of Lake Worth Beach

The Curious Case of the "Lost" Lake Worth Mound

As noted in Block's paper, long-time residents of Lake Worth have heard tales of a "lost" Indian Mound somewhere in the southeast part of Lake Worth. But the existence of the mound – its location and its contents -- have been obscure up until now. For this mound Block –with the assistance of HSLW members – was able to assemble the fragments of the story of an important LWB mound

Marion Cone, Vice President of the HSLW, found a 1913 *Lake Worth Herald* article reporting that "in laying off the new addition to Lake Worth, one of these mounds has been found right in the center of the street at the corner of O Street and Second Avenue." Another article in the paper quoted a 1912 article promoting the Town, noting that "a solitary Indian Mound surrounded by

wild woods marked the spot where flourishing Lake Worth is now growing beyond the most vivid imagination."

Meanwhile, Block's research located an entry in the collections log at the Smithsonian Institution museum in Washington that correlated with the article. This mound was discovered in thick undergrowth when the developers of the Town of Lake Worth (The Palm Beach Farms Company) were grading streets for the new southern addition in 1913, they uncovered a mound. Orin Randolph, the Chief Engineer (see box) recognized it as a burial mound, and he took care to have the human remains preserved and sent to the Smithsonian.

Orrin Randolph, an experienced irrigation, railroad, and municipal engineer from Colorado, came to Florida as the Chief Engineer 1913 for the Palm Beach Farms Company, laid out the original town of Lake worth and subsequently became chief engineer of the 200 square mile Lake Worth Drainage District. He later become President of the Palm Beach Bank & Trust Co – and the developer of Northwood

As per the Smithsonian report:

This mound was about 125 feet in diameter, and from 12 to 14 high. A number of human skulls and bones in fragmentary form were found at the base of this mound, near the center. So old were these skulls and bones that many of them crumbled to pieces at the touch. In all, 30 pieces of bones were found. These were carefully collected and packed by officials of the Palm Beach Farms Company and forwarded to the Smithsonian Institute [sic] in Washington. Since that time every resident of Lake Worth, and of Palm Beach County for that matter, has been speculating on what manner of people those ancients were. [LWH 1913c]

The Lake Worth Herald articles gave the mound location as Addition 1-- south of the original City limits. From years of studying original City plat maps, Cone knew that the streets had been renamed over the years – and working with Ted Brownstein --local author and expert on early local history -- was able to establish that what had originally been the intersection of O Street and Second Avenue is now Federal Highway and 10th Avenue South. Thus, this research has connected the original record regarding the discovery of the mound, clarified the location, and connected it to the material sent to the Smithsonian. As published in the Lake Worth Herald, the original Smithsonian report on the bones sent by Randolph judged that they were Pre-Columbian, but follow up efforts by Block and Brownstein to learn more have met with limited success. The full report by Smithsonian anthropologists have not been found. There is only brief confirmation in the Division of Anthropology Annual Report 1913 – 1914 of "a report on parts of a crania and skeletons from Lake Worth, Florida."

Lake Worth Mound

Block's report includes information about this mound which has long been on file in State of Florida records and was also discovered in a search of Smithsonian archives. In 1933-- when part Ocean Boulevard near the Casino was moved 150 feet west -- a pair of curious citizens -- Sam Schlappich and Ralph McCune (see box) recalled stories that during construction, laborers where frightened upon discovery of human bones. Schlappich -- with McCune's help -- decided to explore the burial mound. Digging in "ocean beach sand" that was covered in vegetation, they found skeletal materials and grave goods approximately 2 feet below the surface:

Schlappich (like Randolph before him) dutifully wrote of his discovery to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington: "The mound is not really a mound as it resembles a bank of sand thrown up above the level of the surrounding levels...three feet or more in some places. It is circular in shape and looks like a ring of sand about fifty feet in diameter. The elevation of the circle being about three feet."

Digging down, they found the remains of three individuals, one with a complete skull "nested upon the bones of the body in such a manner as to lead me to suppose that the body of this individual had been buried sitting down.... with the legs in the extended position...skull, spinal processes, ribs, etc. were all jumbled ...skull resting upon it facing the east coast or shoreline".

The account also notes "tiny" bones of a "one-year old child" were observed during excavation, though most of the bones disintegrated when the men tried to remove them. In addition, bone fragments, a few sherds of pottery, and a shell artifact were sent to the Smithsonian for analysis and curation.

Samuel J. Schlappich, (1878-1969), aside from owning a shoemaker shop – a celebrated Florida artist, photographer, writer. His woodcarvings were featured in the Century of Progress Fair in 1933 and the World Fair 1939 and are now displayed in the Lake Worth Public Library. Picture of one of his wining carvings below

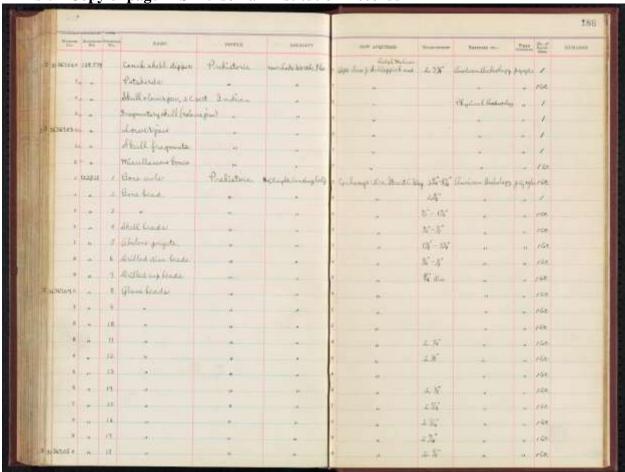
Schlappich and the Smithsonian staff had an extensive correspondence that is preserved in the Smithsonian archives. Although he had no technical training in archelogy, Schlappich was an artist (see box) and could recognize skilled workmanship. As he noted:

I am also including a dipper or CONCH shell which was found buried with the fine specimen of the (large 55-year-old male) of the complete skull.... It was found in what might have been the position of his right hand when freshly buried. It seems to have been prepared very carefully as the two small holes in the end of the shell wereput there for some purpose....The manner of trimming out the interior of the shell is rather clever and shows quite a clear conception of, and skillful workmanship in execution of its design. The shell artifact measured 20 cm (7.5 in) long.

Block's investigations located the Smithsonian log of the material sent and their description. The material dug up by Schlappich and McCune had been analyzed by professional archeologists at the Smithsonian based on the science of the time. The pottery shard composition suggested that

the mound material was certainly "Pre-Columbian.". As shown in exhibit xx below, the Smithsonian Archives retain the original record of the material sent by Schlappich.

Exhibit 4 Copy of page in Smithsonian Institution Records



Source: Smithsonian Institution

Littlefield Site

The Littlefield Site is located in College Park near the crossroads of Wellesley Drive and North R Street. Unlike Marion's Mound or the Lake Worth Mound, this site was discovered by archeologists, members of the (now defunct) Palm Beach County Archaeological Society (PBCAS), during excavations in the 1970s and was subject to follow-up research over the next 30 years. Early observers noted a mound that extended from the western bank of Lake Worth eastward and originally measured 500 ft in length and 6.5 ft high—presumably not just for burial but for building sites. The initial investigations suggest that the mound would have been a prime spot for human habitation -- elevated and dry and near both fresh and saltwater resources for food sources.

The site contained habitation remains – including contain abundant oyster shell and some whale vertebrae. Block's paper notes that the site analysis yielded several charcoal features, including fire pits which could have been used for cooking or above-ground firing of ceramics. Ceramics and shell artifacts found on the site suggest the site dated 500-1200 AD.

The site is of special interest: while it has been substantially impacted by development, Block identified a considerably expanded extent of the site including elevated areas on private property that may remain intact and other portions of the mound in unmodified areas of the College Park Neighborhood.

Lake Osborne Canoe and Paddle

In addition to the mounds in Lake Worth, the remains of a wooden dugout canoe and fragment of a paddle were discovered underwater at the south end of Lake Osborn – a finding included here since most of the Lake is in the City of Lake Worth. Tracking mentions of the canoe through multiple sources, Block's paper traces the handling of the canoe over 30 years.

The bow of the Canoe was reportedly discovered in 1975 by Ralph Duxbury – a Lake Worth resident -- and brought to the attention of the PBCAS. While there remains uncertainty as to the canoe's provenance, one archeologist employed by the Loxahatchee River Historical Society asserted that the shape of the canoe suggests it is Pre-Columbian – i.e., before the time of European contact with Florida.

OTHER SITES ADJACENT TO LAKE WORTH

In addition to the sites within the Lake Worth Beach City Limits, there are three other nearby known sites of importance that are included for relevance. These include:

- <u>Lake Worth Casino Midden</u> –was a large shell midden located immediately to the south of Lake Worth Beach's Casino and Pier. Discovered in 1946, it was destroyed during development of condominiums on the site -prior to any site analysis.
- The Patrician Site -- a large habitation area near 3200 South Ocean Boulevard. Discovered during construction in 1977, the ridge covered over 3 acres with a high point over 35 feet above sea level. The Patrician site was well documented by PBCAS. Archeological investigation yielded an abundance of human remains, a wide range of pottery sherds, shell tools and ornaments. Based on these collections and radiocarbon ages, the site was occupied from 1000 BC (3,000 years ago) to around 1200 AD. Artifacts from the site are curated by Florida Atlantic University.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research presented shows that the City of Lake Worth Beach is home to three important archaeological/cultural resources. Two of these are sand burial mounds; Marion's 1913 Mound in southeast Lake Worth and Lake Worth Mound on the barrier island in the general vicinity of the Lake Worth Beach Casino. While these two sand burial mounds have been significantly disturbed the past, it is possible that skeletal material still exists below the present-day surface of the ground.

Finally, Block's paper makes recommendations about how Lake Worth Beach should manage its archaeological resources. In short, the city should map archaeological sites onto its planning maps based on information on file in State of Florida historical archives. Further, archaeological review and mitigation should be a condition of permitting future construction and other ground disturbing activities on and near the sites. While Block's paper focuses on Pre-Columbian

archaeology, pioneer sites may also be designated as archaeological areas in state and local archives so they, too might be afforded protection and be subject to research which will illuminate the more recent past.