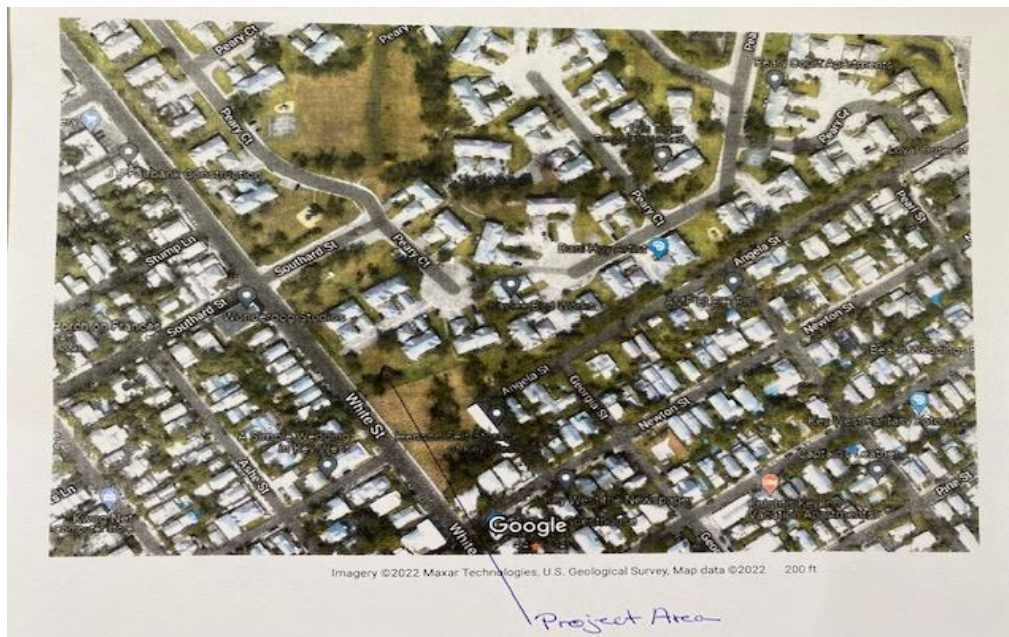


## Archaeological Investigations of the Peary Court #3 Construction Area Within Buffer Zone as Delineated in 1991 by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Archaeologists.

By Diane Silvia and Malachi Fenn July 20, 2022

In 1991, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Archaeologists conducted investigations at the historic Key West Post Cemetery. This report contains a detailed history of the Military Post and the Key West Post Cemetery. Through their fieldwork, the Corps Archaeologists determined there were still human remains within this Cemetery and recommended a 25 foot buffer zone from the northwest cemetery boundary that had been delineated with a fence. A new fence was installed 5' beyond the cemetery boundary, along the property line. The proposed building location known as Peary Court #3 includes 20' of this buffer zone. (Archaeological and Historical Investigations for the Proposed U.S. Navy Peary Court Housing Project Key West, Monroe County, Florida by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District for the Naval Air Station, Key West, Florida 1991) (Figure 1. Project Location)



To ensure no human burials or significant cultural deposits are located in the buffer zone area recommended in the 1991 report and planned for development as housing, Diane Silvia inquired about obtaining a permit. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was contacted about obtaining a permit for archaeological investigations in the buffer zone. Ingrid Gilbert, Chief of Keys Permits Section, replied that a permit was not needed on June 27, 2022. The Bureau of Archaeological Resources, Florida Department of State, was also contacted to see if they required a permit. On June 28, 2022, Brandon Ackerman, Senior Archaeologist and Permit

Administrator, replied that no permit was needed as this is private property. On July 6, 2022, Kelly L. Chase, Compliance and Review Supervisor, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historic Resources, Florida Department of State reached out to ask if State or Federal funds are being utilized for this development. Jeffrey D. Cornfield, owner and developer, responded that the project was privately funded.

### **Methodology**

Archaeological investigations of this buffer zone prior to construction were planned to ensure that no human burials are located in the area of potential impact, “the buffer zone.” Work would be similar to that performed by the Corps Archaeologists using a front-end loader and backhoe to remove topsoil in several layers down to caprock. Areas of protected trees were marked with orange field fencing and left undisturbed. The work was directed and monitored by professional archaeologists. If archaeological features such as postholes or remnants of structure foundations were encountered, they would be recorded. Fill from features excavated with hand tools would be screened for small artifacts. If any suspected burial feature were encountered all work would stop and the Bureau of Archaeological Research, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State would be notified immediately.

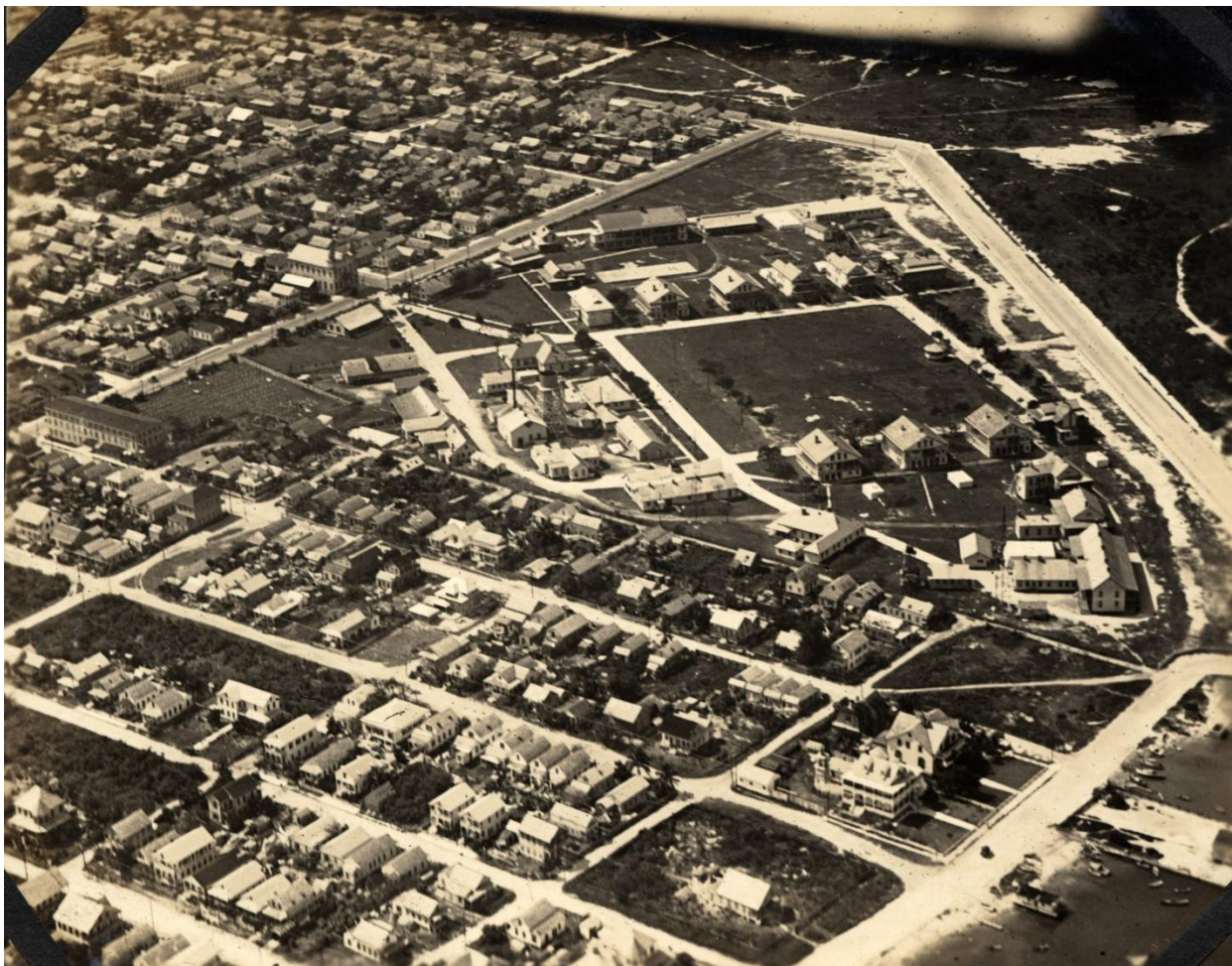
Following this investigation, a report would be issued documenting the work and if artifacts or features are located an Archaeological Site Form will be completed and submitted to the Florida Master Site File.

A historic photo of the Key West Post Cemetery shows neat rows of gravesites prior to burial relocations.



The 1920's photo below shows the Post Cemetery and the project area to be investigated.

Titled: The area of the Army Barracks in the 1920's. From Heritage House Collection donated by Campbell, Poirier and Pou.



A 1940's photo shows a building encroaching on the buffer area delineated by the Army Corps of Engineers Archaeologists.

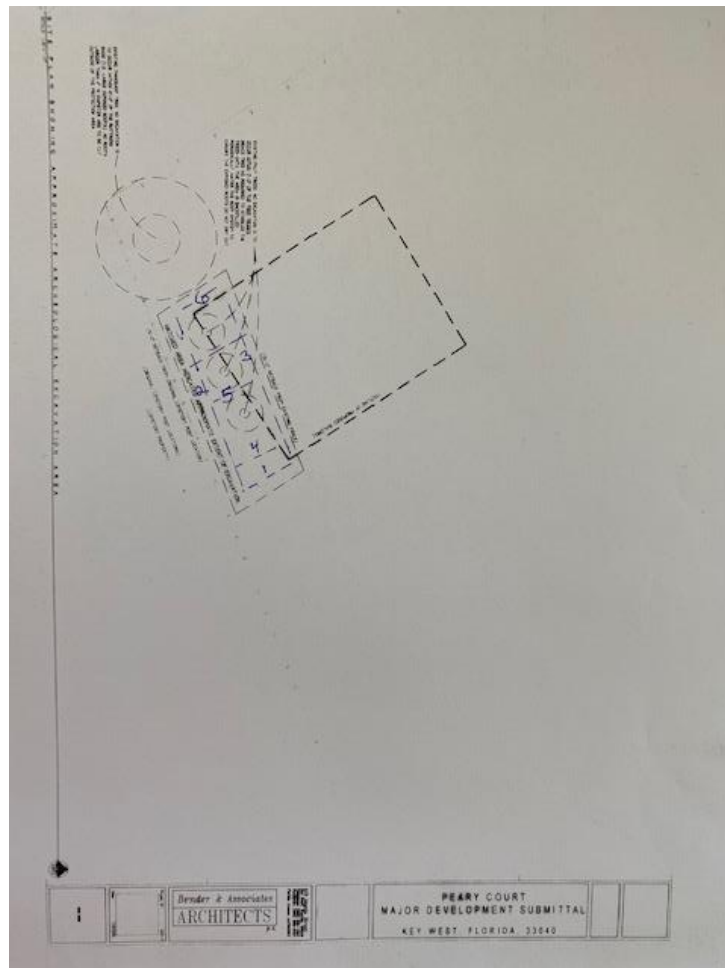
Titled: Aerial photo of Key West Bight and Harbor C. 1940. From Monroe County Library Collection.



The historic buildings were removed when the military abandoned the property and a new building erected near the buffer zone which burned down in recent times. A large drainage swale is now located in a substantial portion of the buffer zone adjacent to the current day metal fence. As the Key West Post Cemetery appears to have been well defined by wood fencing and burials interred in neat rows, the probability of burials in the buffer area was deemed low, but not without possibility.

### Fieldwork

Archaeological fieldwork took place on July 15, 2022. Diane Silvia, Historic Florida Keys Foundation, Ph.D., RPA (Registered Professional Archaeologist) and Malachi Fenn, Florida Public Archaeology Network- Southeast Region Florida Atlantic University MA., RPA conducted these investigations. Evan Bell was the operator of a E321 Bobcat with a backhoe and a S750 Bobcat with a 72" blade used to remove and backfill topsoil. Six areas, referred to as Trenches 1-6, were excavated in the buffer area avoiding the existing trees. Soil profiles were recorded in each of these trench areas.

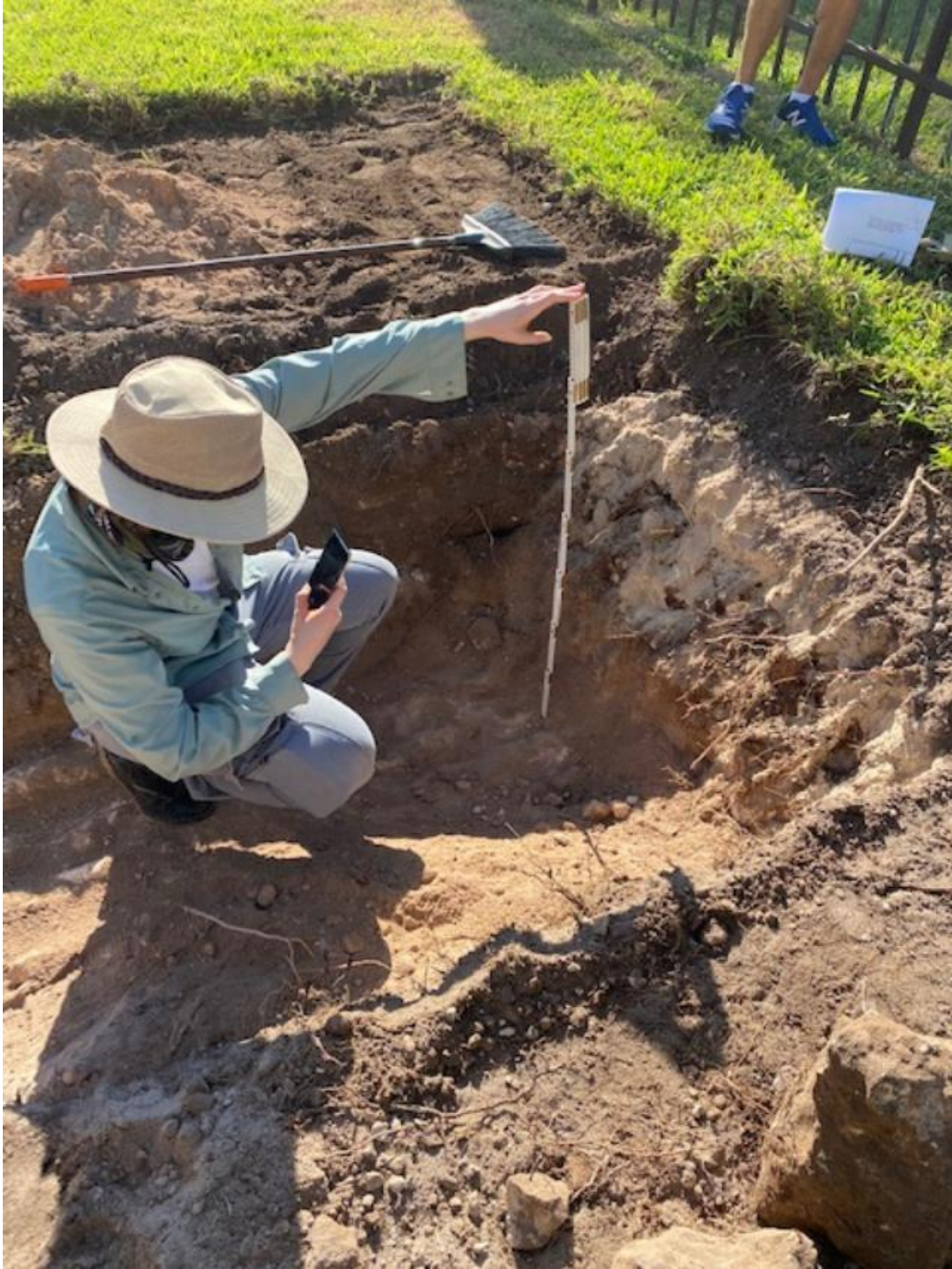




Bobcat used in excavation.



Evan Bell and Malachi Fenn excavating Trench 1.



Malachi Fenn photographing profiles.





Malachi Fenn recording profiles.

## Results

In general, soil consisted of a layer of dark gray-brown, silty sand and root mat ranging from 6" in grassy areas to 22" in thickness near the existing palm trees. Below this, was a layer of gray and tan mottled sand with Miami oolite rock inclusions. Some of this material appears to be fill. These strata appear to have been previously disturbed by activities associated with the existing swale drainage system, sewer work, and prior construction. Below this, is sterile, very compact tan coarse sand and Miami oolite caprock.

Little historic cultural material or recent trash was encountered during this project, an unusual occurrence in historically occupied locations in the Key West Historic District. A representative profile photo for each trench is given here. For further profile photos see link [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14c2EDJv82H1c0IrcOSyrMcVM\\_3\\_wmY9K?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14c2EDJv82H1c0IrcOSyrMcVM_3_wmY9K?usp=sharing)

### Trench 1

Glazed terracotta sewer pipe fragments and a sewer pipe with a concrete cap were located in Trench 1. One light blue-green bottle base fragment, one clear glass fragment, and one rusty screw were recovered.



## Trench 2

Trench 2 yielded a recent, plastic, Caldwell Banker, ballpoint pen.



### Trench 3

An unidentified bronze artifact was recovered in Trench 3. It is a cylindrical hollow piece  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " (4.45 cm) in diameter with a hole lengthwise through the center. One end of the hole is smooth and flat, the other has an internally, threaded neck. This may be some kind of plumbing valve.



Unidentified bronze fitting

## Trench 4

Glazed terracotta sewer pipe fragments were encountered in Trench 4.



## Trench 5

One small brick fragment was found in Trench 5.



## Trench 6

A 3 ½" square wood fence post piece with chamfered edges, in a broken concrete base that had provided about 8" of concrete coverage around the post, was located in Trench 6. A large brick 9 ¼" long by 4" wide and 3 ¼" high was also found, along with a golf ball.





Post fragment in concrete

### **Recommendation**

Little cultural material was located within this project area. The area has been previously disturbed by a drainage swale, sewer work, and construction activity. No evidence of burial activity was found, and no further archaeological work is recommended in the construction area investigated here.