



By Richard Procyk

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## The Jupiter Lighthouse Sand Dune

There is something romantic about lighthouses and lighthouse keepers. Perhaps it's the vision of foggy rainy night in total isolation facing the devouring action of the sea while performing their duties.

Our own Jupiter Lighthouse, standing a bright red against a blue sky, is a monument and a symbol of our historic past. Although it doesn't stand on a rocky cliff with large wave crashing on the rocks below, as some in northern climates, it does have the distinction of standing on a parabolic sand dune 18 feet high.

Although the history of the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse is a familiar one, the sand hill that supports it only recently was investigated during the lighthouse restoration in April 2000. At that time archaeologist, Robert S Carr (famous for his work on the Miami Circle), and his staff conducted an archaeological dig on the mound, which revealed important physical evidence.

Artifacts uncovered on the hill indicated that an English Settlement by the name of "Grenville" may have included the area around the lighthouse mound. A piece from a tobacco pipe bowl known as Jackfield ware was discovered during the monitoring of trench excavations. This represents the first documented 16th century English artifact found in the Palm Beach area, suggesting English activity during the Revolutionary War.

In addition to the Jackfield Ware, a pipe stem and a piece of "daub" from wattle and daub construction was also uncovered. This is consistent with English colonial construction, which would have occurred during the British Period (1763-1783) and after the Treaty of Paris in 1763, when England acquired Florida from Spain.

During the early years of acquisition George Grenville, the prime minister of England, and his family had numerous investments in Florida. The English settler soon arrived in several places including the Jupiter Inlet after 1763, and in a map made by the Dutch cartographer, William Gerard De Brahm, the Jupiter Inlet is listed as "Jupiter now Grenville."

The British government, as part of their reorganization of 1763, appointed two surveyors general, one for the Northern and the other for the Southern District of North American, to carry out land and coast surveys. Under James Grant, the first governor of East Florida, William Gerard De Brahm became the surveyor general of the Southern District. In 1765 De Brahm made his headquarters in St. Augustine and with several assistants, including Bernard Romans, made



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surveys of the east coast of East Florida.

In 1773, Bernard Romans visited the Jupiter Inlet and made reference to the De Brahm map stating that the “Grenville” area was so named because of a land grant to people name Grenville. The fate of these English Colonists is unclear as rumors persisted that the local Indians surround the small group and starved them out; some finally returned to England.

When the archaeologist arrived during the Jupiter Lighthouse restoration, members of the Loxahatchee River Society asked that one question be investigated concerning the 48foot sand and shell mound that supports the lighthouse – “Was it built by the local Indians (midden) or was it a natural sand formation?”

Archaeologists Bob Carr and his staff, after weeks of digging, determined that the lighthouse mound is a natural formation; a “U”-shaped sand ridge known as a parabolic dune. This investigation, however, revealed that there was an ancient midden located at the 39-foot level in the radio carbon dating traces back to AD970. This site contained oyster shell, pottery shards, and other material that is consistent with oyster shell middens.

Operating and maintaining the lighthouse is an important public service that is proved by the Loxahatchee River Historical Society and Museum.

Preserve our historic symbol of Jupiter by your support of the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse by stopping at the visitor center and gift shop in Jupiter Park for books, collectibles and lighthouse tours (561-747-8380)