

# The Schreiber Wood Project: Playing Through History

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## Introduction/Background

- General background on the Schreiber Wood Project, and the sites considered here, can be found on the accompanying poster *Facilitating Student Research on Field School Collections*.
- Delisle Schreiber and his wife Otilie lived at Iverholme (AjGw-535) with their three daughters, and his younger brother, Harrie and his wife Beatrice lived at Liselhurst (near AjGw-534) with their three daughters and two sons (Stasierowski 1980:8). The children were likely frequent visitors to their grandparents' home Mount Woodham (possibly AjGw-534), located in proximity to Liselhurst, and attended school there for a period of time.
- The goal of this poster is to create a better understanding of the Schreiber occupation of the two sites, and the lives of the children and their toys at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 1. Variety of doll fragments found on AjGw-535

## Methods

- The artifacts were collected by test pitting, unit excavation, and surface collection (at AjGw-535). This poster examines and provides preliminary interpretations based on children's toys from the 2013-2019 field seasons with the artifact found at these sites.



Figure 2. Metal toy pistol found at AjGw-534

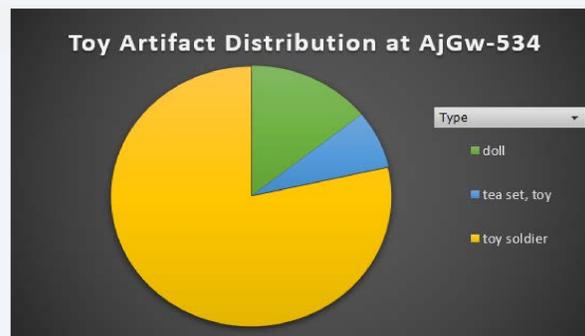


Figure 3.  
Toy artifact distribution at AjGw-534

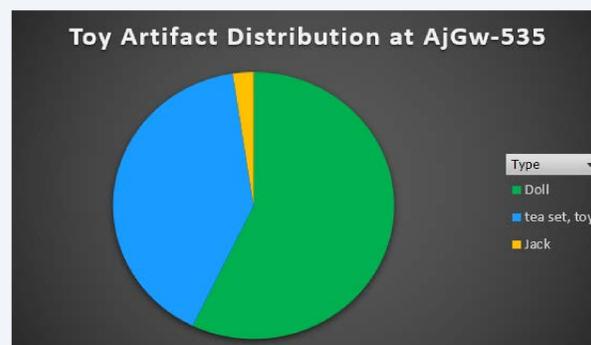


Figure 4.  
Toy artifact distribution at AjGw-535

## Results

- At the site AjGw-534 a total of 14 toy artifacts have been found; 2 ceramic doll fragments, 1 ceramic toy tea set fragment, and 11 toy soldier fragments/complete pieces (Figure 3). Many of the toy soldiers were found relatively complete and appear to be from the same set of toy soldiers.
  - This set being Britain set #44 2nd Dragoon Guards, Queens Bays (Produced 1951) (Toy Soldier 2008).
- At the site of AjGw-535 a total of 42 toy artifacts have been found: 24 ceramic doll fragments, 17 ceramic toy tea set fragments, and 1 toy jack (Figure 4). Many of the ceramic toy tea set pieces and ceramic doll fragments are in good condition with some pieces having intact makers marks.
  - There appear to be at least 8 ceramic dolls represented, based on non-repetitive ear elements

## References

- Brand, Michael. (2018). Schreiber Wood Project Final Report for the 2016 Field Season. Report on file with Archaeology Program Unit, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Toronto (PIF#P160-0004-2016).
- Calvert, Karen. (1994). Children in the house the material culture of early childhood; 1600-1900. Boston, MA-Northeastern Univ. Press.
- Doll Reference - Biggest Online Resource Identifying Dolls Antique to Modern. (n.d.). Retrieved November 1, 2020 from <https://dollreference.com/>
- Stasierowski, Marie. (1980). Liselhurst: House of Many Phases, Part 2. *Medium II* 7(12):8-9.
- Toy Soldier - My Bonhams. (2008, October 28). Retrieved November 01, 2020, from <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/15835/lot/10148/>

## Discussion

- The doll pieces found at AjGw-535 (Figure 1) appear to be German Pink Bisque dolls through the analysis of its colour, texture and makers mark indicating a German bisque doll manufacturer active from 1887-1932 (Loeffler and Diller) (Doll Reference n.d.). Along with the dolls a large amount of toy tea sets pieces were found with no discernible makers marks.
- These doll pieces, and porcelain were likely more a novelty item rather than a toy that the children played with due to their high value along with the fragility of the German bisque dolls (Doll Reference n.d.), and porcelain tea sets. If these imported dolls were used as toys this could mean that these toys were readily available to the Schreibers or the Schreibers had the wealth to continue to buy these dolls.
- The metal toy soldiers (Figure 5), and a toy pistol (Figure 2) are only found at AjGw-534 and some of the toy soldiers appear to be from a much later occupation of the site (Est. 1950s) (Toy Soldier 2008) and may relate to occupation of the site after the Schreiber's.



Figure 5. Example of toy soldiers found at AjGw-534

## Conclusion

- It appears that AjGw-534 has larger amounts of "boy" toys in comparison to AjGw-535 which has larger amounts of "girl" toys (Calvert 1994). Both the "girl" and "boys" items were valuable at the time showing that the Schreiber's may have had the means to buy these expensive and, in the case of the German bisque dolls, extravagant children's toys.
- Further research could aid in contextualizing the Schreiber occupation, and create context to the relationship between AjGw-534 and AjGw-535.
- Recently, in the 2020 field season, a metal train car was found at the slope midden (AjGw-535). This could indicate that this slope midden was used by multiple households or be evidence of the porous boundaries between those households. Further research can also be done at AjGw-534 examining the indication that some artifacts may have been deposited during post-Schreiber occupations.