

FLORIDA ANTIQUITY

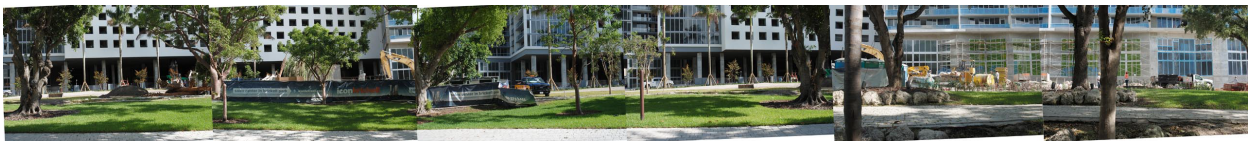
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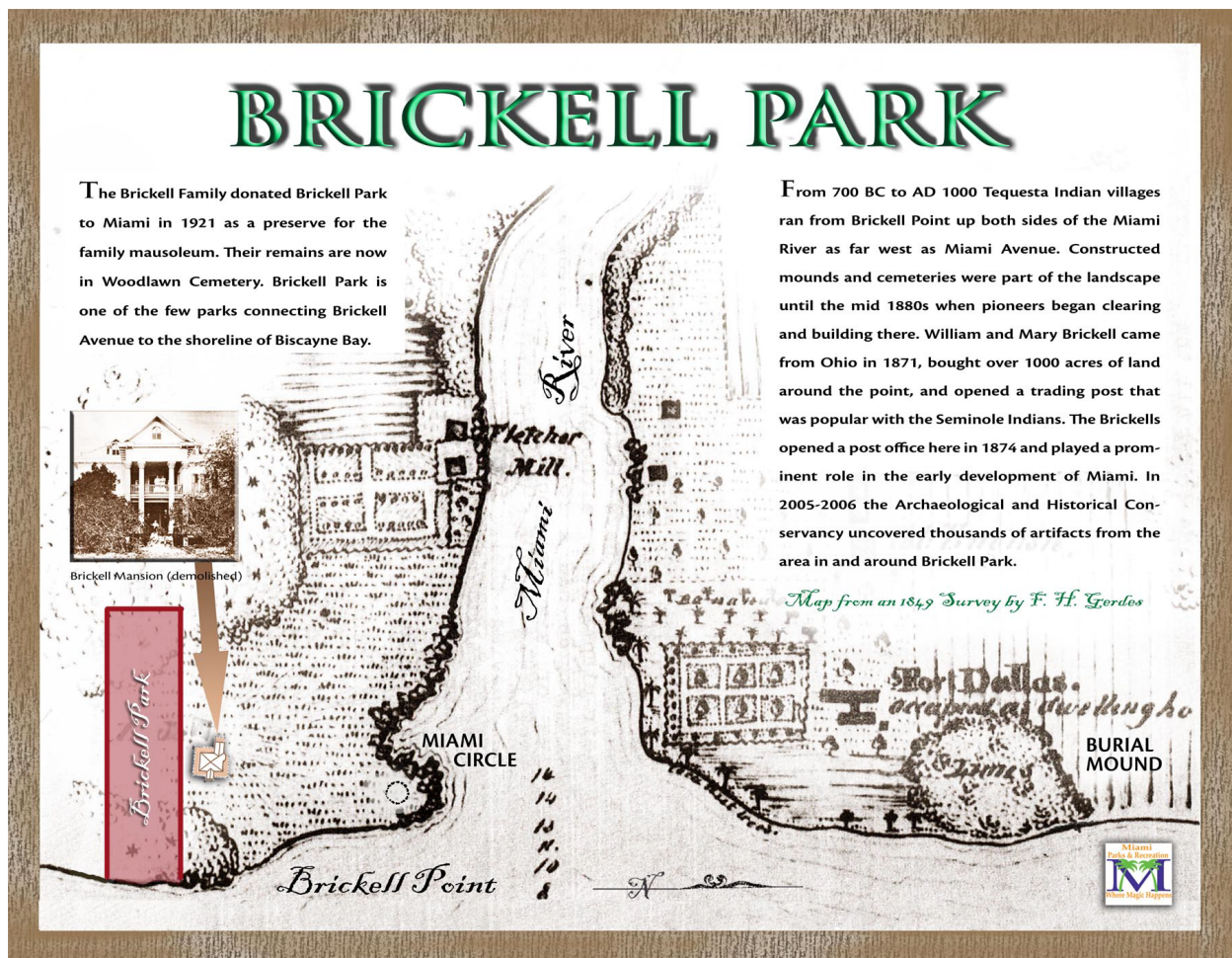
Newsletter of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc., Davie, FL

RENOVATED BRICKELL PARK RE-OPENS

After two years of being off-limits to the public Brickell Park has re-opened. The park is one of Miami's oldest, created in 1921 when Mary Brickell donated the two acre parcel to the city. The park was under wraps during the construction of the Icon Brickell condominiums and Viceroy Hotel, billed as "a 10 acre enclave, including two parks, book-ended by Miami Circle Park and Brickell Park." The development cut 20 feet into an existing road easement at the north border of the park which required archaeological excavations prior to construction.



Brickell Park looking north toward the condominium and hotel construction.



Interpretive sign designed by AHC for Brickell Park.

Brickell Park continued:

The investigations were conducted by the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy and resulted in the documentation of thousands of prehistoric and historic artifacts. Buried within a black earth midden were the fragmentary remains of twelve individuals, likely Tequesta, interred at least 1,500 years ago. Located only 1,000 feet from the Miami Circle, the excavations provided a glimpse of a rich history dating back at least 2,000 years. As in the case of the Circle, exotic trade goods including basaltic axes, chert, and quartz were uncovered. Also found were hundreds of post holes cut into the limestone bedrock.



Historic black glass jewelry found at Icon Brickell.

During the condo construction the historic Brickell mausoleum was protected by plywood sheathing. With construction complete the park was re-landscaped under the watchful eyes of archaeological monitors. The park's extensive archaeological deposits were protected under a layer of fill placed over an environmental cloth by the developer. The park was re-opened with the dedication of a new interpretive sign in October 2009.

BREAKTHROUGH AT THE MIAMI CIRCLE



Ground-breaking ceremony at the Miami Circle.

"Eleven years ago when the Miami Circle was discovered, thousands of you contacted your local, state and federal officials to ask, and sometimes demand, that this site be preserved," Secretary of State Kurt Browning began, addressing a crowd of people under a tent on a Friday afternoon, August 14, 2009. The occasion was the dedication of a new park designed around the famous site, which became Florida's 41st National Historic Landmark at the beginning of the year. After speeches, the group gathered around the Circle as officials donned helmets and brandished shovels for the ceremony.

The Secretary's remarks reflect not only the drama of the public acquisition of the site, but also the long struggle to allocate funding to stabilize the waterfront and plan the park. The National Landmark designation encouraged agencies to expedite the project by adopting a two phase plan. Phase I entails constructing a bus loop at the foot of Brickell Bridge and a river walk leading along the waterfront to Brickell Park. The river walk will be interspersed with lights, overlooks, benches, bike racks, and interpretive signage. The landscape will be contoured, planted, and irrigated. A handicapped-accessible path to the edge of the circle is also planned as part of Phase I.

Miami Circle continued:

Phase I is budgeted at \$750,000. Envisioned for Phase II is a metal staircase providing pedestrians with a walkdown to the park from Brickell Bridge, and interpretive enhancements such as a molded cross-section of the circle. Phase II is contingent upon funding. Construction on Phase I is schedule to begin this spring.



Rendering of the site plan for Phase I of Miami Circle Park.

THE DIRECTOR'S SNAPSHOT: DROUGHT STRICKEN LAKE BARES ALL

The drought months of 2006-2007 had reduced the water table of Lake Okeechobee to record lows, three feet below the conventional eleven feet mark. Our airboat pilot and guide, Boots Boyer, had grown up on the lake and had not seen it this low. It was Boots who had contacted the Palm Beach County Archaeologist, Chris Davenport, after discovering pottery sherds and bones exposed on the dried lake bottom. Today, AHC archaeologist Joe Mankowski and I were fortunate to join them on a survey of several newly exposed sites, all uncovered by the receding lake waters.

Our first destination is a thin hazy line of trees above the horizon. Boots avoids the shoals, the logs, and the alligators as if he has internal sonar. We follow the edge of the grassy march that skirts the island until we reach a small cove that penetrates into the marsh. The cove is relatively deep with prominent muddy banks, and it is here that we jump from the airboat. As far as the eye can see, potsherds protrude from the mud. Twenty of thirty meters away is a human cranial fragment. A child's worn mandible lies near the roots of a pond apple tree. No human bones are collected, knowing that the summer rains are only weeks away and soon all will once again disappear below the rising waters.

Director's Snapshot continued:



Lake Okeechobee: view north of exposed cultural materials in the lakebed.

It is obvious that some type of mortuary activities had been conducted along this ancient shore. Could these human bones have been dispersed because a charnel house had been destroyed by a hurricane? Possibly the bodies were once staked into the sloping sediments of the lake, not unlike the Archaic Period mortuaries at Windover, Warm Mineral Springs, and Little Salt Spring. A few sharpened wooden stakes observed on the shore suggest that possibility.

A thick wall of pond apple trees rise from behind the lake shore. At their edge the outlines of a historic fishing boat protude from the sand. Among the tree roots I find a chert cobble and then another. I alert the group to the discovery and soon everyone is finding cobbles as well as flakes and broken tools. It is obvious that scores of cobbles litter the site and probably hundreds lie buried. This discovery is extraordinary because chert is not native to South Florida. The nearest chert outcrops occur in Tampa Bay, 130 miles away. The extent and quantity of these chert cobbles suggest that the site was an important center for trade and possibly lithic tool manufacturing. Only two other cobble-rich sites have been previously recorded in South Florida: Fort Center on Fisheating Creek located on the west side of Lake Okeechobee and the Miami Circle located at the mouth of the Miami River. This new discovery suggests a trade network-



Remains of a historic fishing boat exposed in the lakebed.

Director's Snapshot continued:

that moved chert from central Florida to Lake Okeechobee eastward across the Lake, and possibly through the Everglades and south to the Miami River.

With the powerful impressions of the site still fresh in my mind, we board the airboat to visit a second site on the lake shore. Within minutes we arrive at a white sandy beach. At first glance artifacts are not apparent but Boots tells us that he has seen hundreds of potsherds littering the beach and that locals have been collecting them by the bucket-full. A careful walkover reveals scattered potsherds and large quantities of shell artifacts—Busycon adzes of all types and sizes and Busycon celts—similar to types found in coastal Palm Beach County. Then Joe uncovers a cache of Strombus celts, all recently revealed by erosion and scattered within an area of less than one meter. Caches of Strombus celts have been reported throughout southeastern Florida but this is the first one documented in Lake Okeechobee.



Shell pendant and perforated shell gorget found on exposed beach.

Next a spectacular discovery is made. Three beautiful shell pendants are found and not far away is a perforated circular shell gorget. The extraordinary number of worked shell artifacts echo the lithic materials of the cove site. It seems likely that the white sand beach is a shell tool manufacturing center. Unlike the cove site, no human bones are seen.

It has been an awesome day. As we head back to the dock Chris is already planning the next site visit when he can begin excavating test holes across the site to determine the depth and extent of the deposits.

Bob Carr
Executive Director

Florida Antiquity is a publication of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy. AHC was incorporated in Florida in 1979 as a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization with the mission of investigating and preserving significant archaeological and historical sites across Florida and the Caribbean.

MEMBERSHIP

Members and donors receive complimentary admission to special events and are eligible to participate as volunteers on excavations. Membership costs and donations are tax-deductable.

Memberships	
Student	\$15
Regular	\$25
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Institution	\$100
Corporation	\$500
Partnerships	
Sherdmaster	\$1,000
Potlatcher	\$5,000
Potmender	\$10,000
Site Master	\$25,000 or more

HISTORY

Beginning with excavations at the Cutler Fossil site in Miami-Dade County, AHC has documented over 1000 sites throughout Florida and the Bahamas including excavations at the Miami Circle, Ten Thousand Islands, the Ortona Canals, Fort Pierce, Okeechobee Battlefield and Fort Van Swearingen. AHC played a pivotal role in preserving these and other sites including Snake Warrior Island, the Ortona Mound Complex, the Loxahatchee Battlefield, Otter Mound and the Pine Islands in Broward County.

At Preacher's Cave on Eleuthera Island, where a prehistoric and 17th century site occur, AHC documented the first macro evidence of maize cultivation in the Bahama archipelago. AHC also provides site management plans, site tours, and interpretive design and development—the exhibit hall at Long Key Nature Center set a new standard for Broward County parks and natural areas.

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