

## HISTORIC NIKE MISSILE UNVEILED IN THE EVERGLADES



Three barns surrounded by security berms in the hole in the donut. Each barn housed five missiles.

The Cuban missile crisis celebrated its 50th anniversary on November 20, 2012. For two days preceding the anniversary a reunion was held of veterans of the four Nike Hercules missile bases constructed in south Florida to counter the Russian nukes in Cuba. The main event was a tour of Section C, a base built on an agricultural holdout in Everglades National Park known as the Hole in the Donut. The hole was finally absorbed into the park, and through the efforts of one veteran, Charles Carter, the base was preserved as a historic site and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, with park rangers assigned to interpret it. AHC staff Bob Carr and Tim Harrington became acquainted with Carter while working on *The Everglades*, a cultural history of the park recently published by Arcadia. Carter offered the use of his archive of photographs for the last chapter in the book which concludes with the Cold War era. He also invited the authors to attend the reunion as his guests, from which experience this report derives.

A highlight of the tour of the Everglades base was the unveiling of a real Nike Hercules missile salvaged by Carter who, after scouring the country, found one rusting in an Alabama cow pasture. With ongoing serendipity it was restored for the occasion by students at the Baker School of Aviation in Miami whose prayers for a summer project it answered. The Nike missiles had long since been decommissioned and deconstructed, but in their day they were at the apex of U.S. Army military technology. Four booster rockets gave the Nike its long range; it could carry either standard high explosives or a nuclear warhead with a blast radius of 2 ½ miles; complex instrumentation enabled it to intercept and destroy incoming missiles air-to-air.

Nike continued:

Nearly 200 veterans attended the reunion, which kicked off with a breakfast Saturday morning. The keynote speaker, Col. Francis R. Stevens, Jr., ended his somewhat sardonically entertaining attempt to reconstruct history with a request for anyone in the audience to correct him or add to his information: no one had the whole story, and after fifty years everything was declassified. After a long silence, one man after another told his story—all but one. He announced that he would not tell what he thought should remain a secret.



Door to the launch control room beneath a berm.

One veteran informed the audience that, had Cuban or Russian saboteurs infiltrated a base, his unit had orders to destroy that base with a missile attack. Another explained that, were a missile to be fired, its booster rockets could not be allowed to fall on a Miami suburb, therefore they were designed to fall on another base. Another explained: to fire a missile it had to be rolled out of the barn and set up on a launch pad; when the rockets were fired, the fireball would annihilate the base. But by then, the men manning the base would be in a control room or bunker underground. The control room was built into a berm around the perimeter of each barn. The berm was patrolled at first by dogs trained to attack anyone other than their particular trainers, and that included the rest of the team. Mosquitos relentlessly attacked the dogs' noses, ears, paws and bellies until they had to be removed. An MP who took over patrolling the perimeter after the dogs left said it took a fast march to keep ahead of the pursuing three-foot diameter cloud of mosquitos and no-see-ums.



Barn displaying a restored Nike Hercules missile: veterans share memories with one another and with park rangers.

## Nike continued:

Along with us on the second day, touring the Everglades base, was our cinematographer colleague, Ed Carr, who was there to shoot video segments for a proposed documentary on the history of Miami seen in the light of Cuban Missile Crisis. With Ed filming, we interviewed Charles Carter and several other veterans.

In commemoration of the occasion, several books have been published including two available at the park. Taking advantage of the passage of time, as most veterans did in their reminiscences, the books confirm what stories we were told suggest: that we avoided nuclear war only by a miracle, or by many little ones in which the cool heads on the front lines of both sides of the conflict averted catastrophe.

Once, on this base in the Everglades a nuke was ten seconds short of being fired at a target approaching from Cuba when it discovered that the target was a private plane that had taken off from Mexico but ran into a storm and was blown off course to Cuba. With most of the plane's instruments damaged by the storm, the pilot was attempting to reach Miami guided by voice radio. Seconds from being vaporized he was overheard by Army radar operators, who aborted the launch.



Charles Carter, left, talks to Bob Carr about preservation of the base.

In the end, it was a victory, too, for historic preservation when Everglades National Park embraced this most unlikely episode in its cultural history and unpeaceable part of its peaceable kingdom.



Left: art adorns the Missile Assembly and Warhead Building. Right: barbed wire still looks out over the Everglades.



## LEMON CITY'S BLACK PIONEERS FIND REST

Skeletal fragments of about 40 men, women, and children—unearthed when a condo was built over their forgotten cemetery—tossed and turned for 2 ½ years between the County morgue and the AHC lab, until, duly bagged and boxed, they were loaded on a long hearse which pulled up to the Conservancy offices one afternoon and carried to the Range Funeral Home. There AHC bioarchaeologist Dr. Ryan Franklin and Miami-Dade County Archaeologist Jeff Ransom carefully arranged them in two caskets for reburial in the Lemon City Cemetery that Friday, November 16.



The last of the disinterred pioneers reburied.

Franklin and Ransom tested the reburial area and selected a spot where the grave was dug for the caskets after the ceremony and prayers. The burial took place in a park set aside by the builder of Village Carver to preserve the remainder of the historic cemetery and honor the Miami pioneers buried there. The set-aside is said to have cost an additional \$1 million. The story is told in more detail in the spring 2011 issue of the AHC newsletter.

Dr. Enid Pinkney, descendant of pioneers and Miami historian, presided over the ceremony. She and a coalition of local residents led the long struggle to identify and preserve the nearly erased landmark. About 75 people were present at the event.

Among dignitaries attending were Miami Mayor Thomas Regalado and Rhoda Jackson, Bahamian Consul-general. Said Jackson, as quoted in the South Florida Times (11/22), “There’s a very close tie between Bahamas and Miami so when I was asked to make remarks today, I thought of the words love and legacy. Being here today is a demonstration of the love and legacy (our ancestors) left behind for us and it should make us think of the legacy we want to leave behind.”



Ceremony in the cemetery remnant preserved at Village Carver.

## Lemon City continued:

Ben Pumo, a local realtor, also attended. Mr. Pumo had once, long ago, declined an opportunity to build on the lot: in researching the property's land history, he found an archival plat of the cemetery on the lot. His lone voice of dissent was drowned out in the chorus cheerleading development of a low-income housing project there in 2008. Although he was pleased with the happy ending, he saw it tinged with a certain ironic justice.

The disappearance of the cemetery was related to the dislocation of the community of Lemon City itself in the late 1930s to mid-1940s. Even a learned descendant like Dr. Pinkney was surprised to find her ancestors listed on documents identifying the deceased and naming the cemetery, located during the archaeological investigation by genealogist Larry Wiggins. In an interview with the South Florida Times she said, "Seeing my grandfather's name and my grandmother's name in print as his spouse, I was just flabbergasted. Before that, I didn't know where he was buried. I think this was divine intervention and so I'm very happy that we've been able to do this."

In comparison to the dedication of the green space and memorial in February, 2011, the reburial was a smaller event, more focused on meaning and closure, and almost everyone who attended shared that focus. The long time it took to reach this point was due more than any other factor to the difficulty in funding it.



Enid Pinkney and Ben Pumo at the historical marker.

Because as more information came out, more people became aware of the rediscovery of the cemetery and the burial of family members there, it could be said that it was worth the wait.

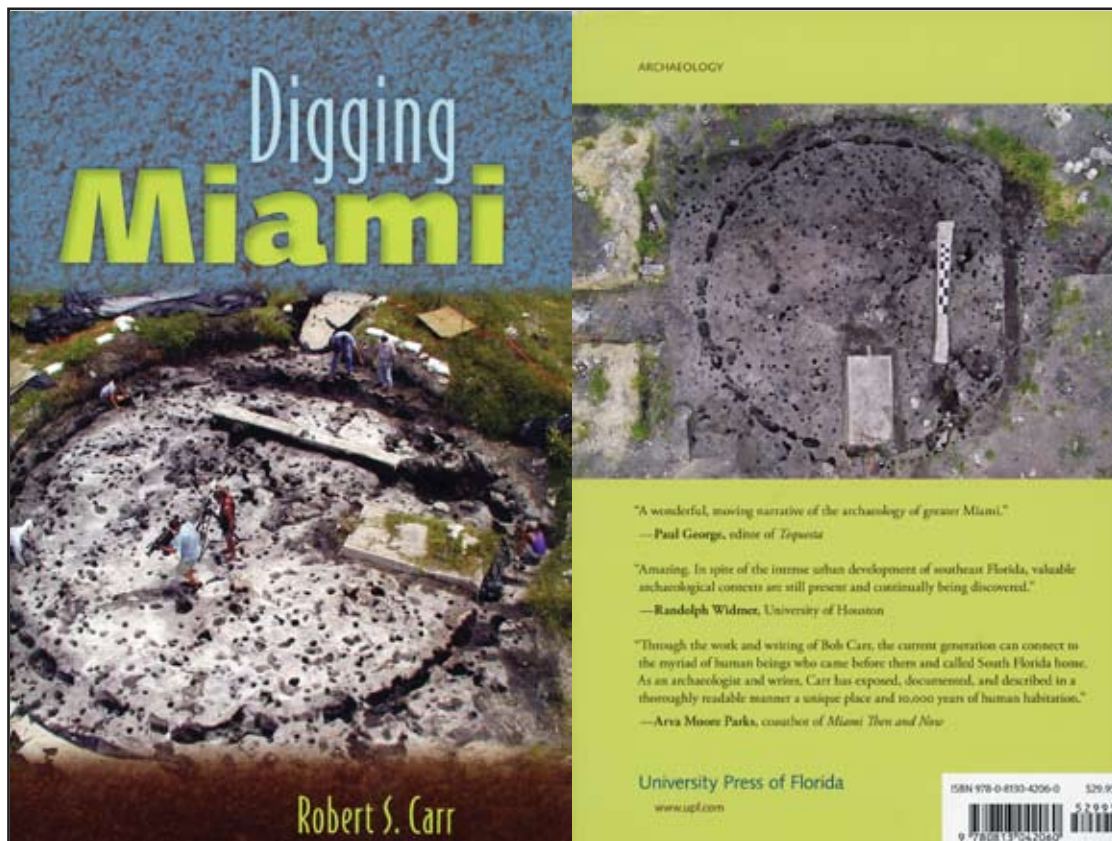


Left: historical marker dedicated 11/16/12. Right: memorial listing names of the buried, examined by Bodhi Franklin.



## JUST OUT: DIGGING MIAMI

Twenty five years in the making, Bob Carr's definitive chronicle of the prehistory and historical archaeology of Miami and environs is hot off the University of Florida presses. The manuscript was accepted by the publisher in 2010. Carr conceived the book as *Miami Underground*, primarily a textbook adhering to university standards but written to be accessible to the layman. During the process of preparing the book for publication the amount of text was reduced by one quarter and the number of illustrations cut in half, so that it would conform to the publisher's template.



The front and back covers of *Digging Miami*, released by University Press of Florida in September, 2012.

Nevertheless, Carr has parlayed his composition into a scholarly but highly readable tour de force of regional and urban archaeology, in which several startling discoveries and theories are made public for the first time. Foremost of these may be the conclusions of analyses of the excavations at the Cutler Fossil site in south Miami-Dade County. There, the presence of Paleo-Indians and signs of a great inundation are deciphered from the archaeological record. As the story ranges forward it touches not only on the finds but on the finders, both the academics and the amateurs who have stocked our store of knowledge. The book ends with a cogent theory of trade influence on the Tequesta at the time of the Miami Circle. Copies can be purchased from the University Press of Florida or from Amazon.com in hardcover or ebook. Autographed copies are still available from the author at a cost of \$30 plus shipping.

## CRYSTAL SKULLS MEET MIAMI CIRCLE

The Miami Circle's journey into modern consciousness since it was uncovered in 1998 has been an interesting odyssey. The site and its waterfront lot, footprint of an unrealized highrise, opened as a park in 2011. In the downsized design it is realized as a green space with the circle planted in pampas grass and surrounded by exotic stepping stones. Amenities include a historical marker, a couple of interpretive signs, and a lighted walkway leading along the inlet shore to Brickell Park. There is a driveway but no parking until the City of Miami completes its plans for a space under the Brickell Bridge. Somewhat inappropriately the first notable event held at the park (October 5-7, 2012) was the local Brickell Oktoberfest, billed as "3 days of *Beer, Food, and Live Music* in lederhosen on the Water!" HistoryMiami vice-president Jorge Zamanillo concedes that renting out the archaeological park is one of the few sources of income available to offset the \$150,000 a year cost of upkeep. HistoryMiami maintains the park under a 100 year lease from the State of Florida.



Array of crystal skulls at the center of the Miami Circle on 12/12.

of the skulls claim they are ritual objects of preColumbian, Mesoamerican origin. Some ascribe paranormal powers to them. A number of the crystal skulls that are exhibited in museums have been tested and proved to be of historical or modern origin—some of the earliest examples of the these were carved of Brazilian quartz imported to German lapidary workshops in the late 1800s. However, mysteries remain, and not all scholars dismiss them as complete skullduggery.

A more seemly invitation came in early December when AHC director Bob Carr was asked to speak at an event entitled: "12.12.12 Extravaganza." Carr was in the field that day but a staff member attended. Three food trucks were parked at the site, and nearby was a tent containing various vendors and exhibits and a small area with seating and a podium for speakers. The main event was a sacred ceremony open to the public and held on the Circle at precisely 12:12 pm, led by Mayan Grandmother Flordemayo. As the hour approached, several crystal skulls were arranged at the center and people spontaneously began walking around the Circle, on and off the stepping stones.

The crystal skulls are sculptures of human crania carved in quartz which began coming to light in the mid 19th century. Proponents of the authenticity



Crystal skulls continued:



Mayan Grandmother Flordemayo leads a prayer at the Miami Circle at 12:12 pm on December 12, 2012.

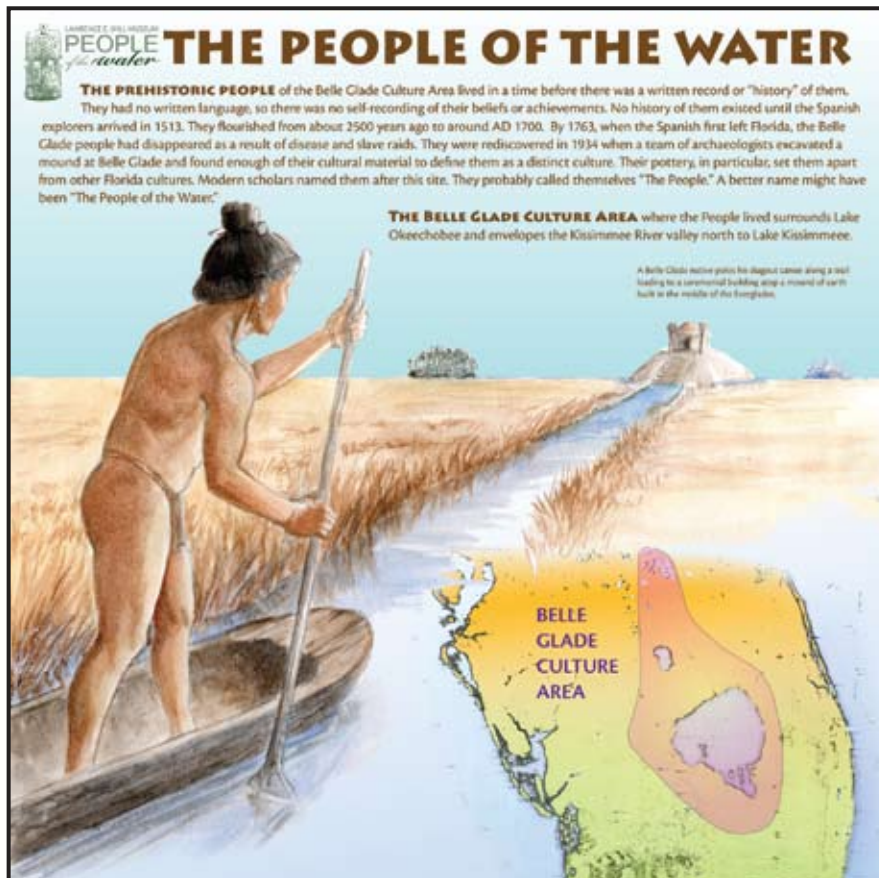


Flordemayo blesses all within her view.

At high noon the gathering was called to order. Everyone moved back in a ring just outside the Circle. At 12:12 Flordemayo began a long prayer. After honoring the site, she prayed for love and acceptance among humans and peace in the world. Walking in a circle, holding her crystal skull wand outward, she blessed in turn all the encircling crowd. Finally, attendees were invited to bring their personal crystals to the center and participate in further prayers, accompanied by chants and drumming. An estimated 200 people of all sorts gathered at the Miami Circle that day. They might have been teleported there from a 1960s Saturday in Golden Gate Park. They came with the best of intentions, embracing the Miami circle as a New Age sacred site.



## EXHIBIT ON BELLE GLADE CULTURE OPENS IN JANUARY



The first museum exhibit to be dedicated to the archaeology of Belle Glade Culture is scheduled to open in January, 2013. Designed by AHC for the Lawrence E. Will Museum of the Glades in Belle Glade, the exhibit is partly funded by the Florida Department of State and the Florida Humanities Council. Venues and dates are listed below.

## We Were Here Traveling Exhibition Schedule

2013

January	February	March
<div>Glades County Historical Society Westergaard House Moore Haven January 3 - 18</div>	<div>Lake Placid Historical Society Depot Museum January 24 - February 16 Highlands County Fair</div>	<div>Dolly Hand Ctr Belle Glade Feb 18-Mar 1</div> <div>Stuart County Library Robert Morgade Library IRSC March 4 - 23</div>
Opening event Closing event	Opening event Closing event Feb 16 at Library 10 am	Opening event Closing event
April	May	June
<div>Okeechobee County Historical Society and Okeechobee County Library April 9 - May 4 Okeechobee</div>	<div>Osceola County Historical Society Kissimmee May 9 - June 14</div>	
Opening event Closing event	Opening event Closing event	

Historical Society of Palm Beach County, Old Courthouse, West Palm Beach: October 2013 - May 2014

*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
Family	\$50
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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