

# FLORIDA ANTIQUITY

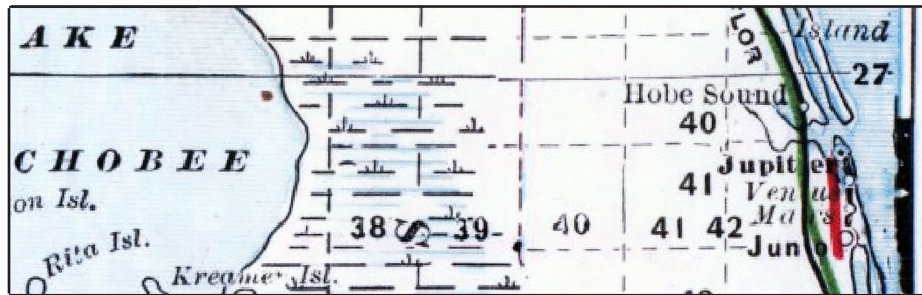
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## THE CELESTIAL RAILROAD REDISCOVERED

The Celestial Railroad left so little trace that it might have been as ethereal as its name suggests. It ran from the south bank of the Jupiter inlet past Venus and Mars down to Juno at the northern tip of Lake Worth, a distance of 7 1/2 miles, beginning in 1889. (Juno was a town, but Venus and Mars were loading platforms.) A narrow-gauge short line, it was a toy compared to the Florida East Coast Railroad that only seven years later would make obsolete both the Celestial Railroad and the steamboat lines it served. It was the stuff of legend when in May 2009 AHC archaeologist Joe Mankowski uncovered railroad ties and an iron spike used to hold the ties to the railroad bed while monitoring the demolition of a seawall for the Town of Jupiter.



1890s map showing the Celestial Railroad in red and the FEC Railroad route in green.

A writer for Harper's Monthly coined the nickname "Celestial" for the railroad, and it outlived the official "Jupiter and Lake Worth." The Indian River Steamship Company built the J&LW over an existing hack line to carry supplies overland between the Indian River and Lake Worth. It returned to Jupiter, backwards for lack of a turnaround, loaded with coconuts, pineapples, dates, citrus, vegetables, fish, and turtles. It carried mail and passengers both ways. Anyone could stop the train anywhere to get on or off, or at a whim.



J&LW Engine No. 2 - note the exposed shell midden.

As the years passed, the land was developed and the Celestial Railroad bed gradually disappeared. The first sign of it re-surfaced in 2008 when the Town of Jupiter hired AHC to survey a parcel of land on a tributary of the Jupiter Inlet just south of the historical location of the railroad terminal, which had also long since vanished. The terminal consisted of a wharf, offices, passenger and freight stations, and a hotel in a docked paddle-wheeler across the inlet from the Jupiter Lighthouse.

## Celestial Railroad, continued:

During the first phase of the survey, in August 2008, AHC staff discovered a segment of a railroad bed. Examining historical aerial photos, a path could still be discerned across the region that matched the original plat of the Celestial Railroad—a sketch in the collection of the Loxahatchee Historical Society. Then, in May 2009, revisiting the site to monitor construction, Mankowski found the intact railroad ties, confirming the discovery. As a result, the Town of Jupiter is making plans to include an interpretive element in the development of public spaces associated with the history of the Celestial Railroad.



1968 aerial photo showing the still discernable bed of the northern segment of the Celestial Railroad (PB0233 in the Florida Master Site File)



Joseph Mankowski and the railroad ties uncovered at the Jupiter Marina



## EXCAVATIONS REVEAL SECRETS OF HISTORIC MIAMI HOME

AHC is nearing the end of a two-phase archaeological study on the grounds of the Florida home of 3-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925). The house is being restored by RJ Heisenbottle, Architects. The City of Miami required the survey as part of the project because the property lies within an archaeological zone. Landscaping and the installation of new utilities have disturbed the land to an extraordinary degree.

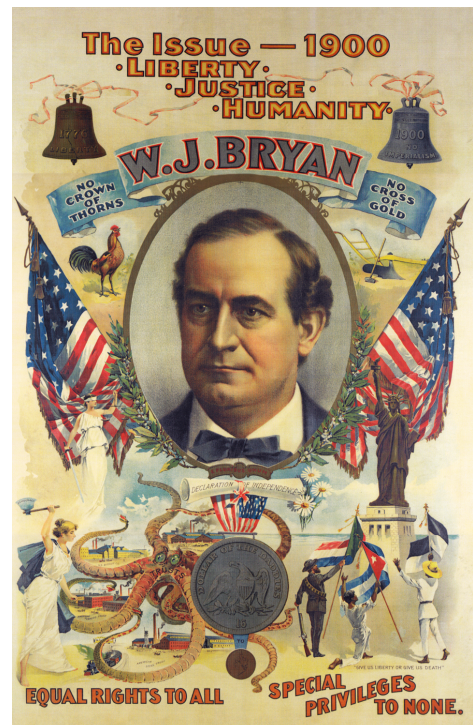


View of the silver bluff—the home of William Jennings Bryan atop—from the shore of Biscayne Bay, April 2008

Phase I began in March 2008. The survey revealed a black earth midden (8DA2099) beneath the historical landscape, composed of marine shell refuse, faunal bone, and pottery sherds. Tequesta Indians used the site as early as A.D. 1000 for habitation and a few isolated burials. The parcel was resettled by pioneers in the early 19th century, and decades later it was acquired by the Bryans.

William Jennings Bryan was born in Illinois but moved to Nebraska to practice law in 1887. He served two terms as US Senator, then ran as a liberal Democratic candidate for president. He lost to McKinley in 1896 and 1900 and to Taft in 1908. As Secretary of State under Wilson he negotiated 28 international treaties up until 1915 when he resigned in protest of the decision to go to war. He moved to Florida in 1912. Bryan's spouse Mary Baird selected the site, a densely forested bluff of the Atlantic coastal ridge overlooking Biscayne Bay, and guided the design of their new home. Villa Serena, completed in 1913, was designated a historic site by the City of Miami in 2007. The current owner is restoring it to use as a private guest house. William Jennings Bryan's historical memorabilia are displayed in his boyhood home in Salem, Illinois.

The most spectacular find within the black earth midden was a group of conch shells. AHC archaeologists also





William Jennings Bryan home, continued:



Monitoring construction at Villa Serena

discovered a huge trash pit containing some of the less glamorous memorabilia of the Bryan household. A large number of bottles, fragments of kitchen utensils, and sherds of porcelain were found there and elsewhere throughout the site.



The remains of a Tequesta meal



*Top: doorknob; above: porcelain fragment; right: the Bryan family photographed at the villa in 1922.*





## VAST TEQUESTA SETTLEMENT FOUND AT TARPON BEND

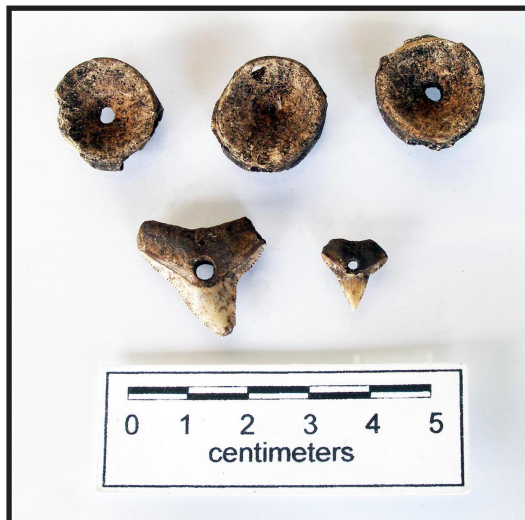
A quiet, historical, riverfront neighborhood of Fort Lauderdale has deeper roots than once thought. During a two-phase survey conducted of a parcel slated to become a city park AHC documented a black earth Tequesta midden (BD4547) that is one of the largest prehistoric sites known along the New River. A phase I survey was conducted for the City of Fort Lauderdale in September 2008 and a Phase II assessment from February through April 2009.

Historically the site was a hardwood hammock populated with riverine oak. A few of these stately trees still stand on the manicured lawn as reminders of the distant past. Although the site was highly disturbed by construction of a house in the 1940s and of a swimming pool more recently, the excavations revealed a wealth of cultural material.



View of the property looking south from the New River bank

Archaeologists found such large quantities of oyster shell that they weighed the shell with a scale in the field rather than collect it. Faunal bone (deer, turtle, and shark) was the second most common material at the site. Seventeen modified bone objects were recovered including perforated shark teeth and bone points. More than 300 pottery sherds were collected. Analysis of the pottery dates the site to the Glades II Period (A.D. 800-1200).



Perforated shark vertebrae and teeth



Bone points



Tarpon Bend, continued:



Celts from the cache found in March 2009

While digging a test unit in March 2009 the AHC crew made the project's signature discovery: a cache of six Strombus celts miraculously preserved in place, just as they had been stored or hidden by Native Americans eight to twelve centuries ago. This is the first discovery of a shell celt cache on the New River and one of only a half dozen discoveries of caches from southern Florida in the last fifty years.



View east into the test unit in which the celt cache was found



## SCOTT LEWIS (1955-2009)



Scott Lewis from an article in the New Times  
Photo by Sherri Cohen

On February 25, 2009, archaeologist Scott Lewis passed away at his home in Pompano Beach. Scott leaves a legacy of work in southeast Florida and the Treasure Coast. Born in Minneapolis, Scott's youth was highlighted by his success as an Eagle Scout and as a baseball player. He excelled academically and was a member of the National Honor Society. He attended Miami University of Ohio and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in anthropology from the University of South Florida. Scott went to field school in Pensacola where he developed a strong interest in historical archaeology. He completed his Master's Degree at Boston University, where he worked at the "Big Dig" project.

Scott returned to Florida and worked for two years as Broward County Archaeologist. He also headed his own CRM consulting firm, Historic Preservation, Inc. Under a Florida Department of Transportation district contract Scott coordinated a broad range of mitigation work throughout south Florida. He also directed work at Long Key Hammock, Indian Springs on Brickell in Miami-Dade County, and the first wave of monitoring at the Miami Circle.

Scott's work was covered as the feature story for the March 23, 2000 issue of New Times, Broward/Palm Beach edition. Writer Roger Williams also interviewed AHC director Bob Carr and Weston developer Roy Rogers for the article. In it, he points out that Scott was instrumental in the drawing up and passage of Broward County's preservation ordinance 92-38, using Miami-Dade's law as a model. Under the ordinance, in the year 2000 alone he designated 130 sites in the county, according to Williams. The bane of Broward developers at first, Scott gradually brought about a change in attitude that supported archaeological reviews as part of the development process.

A meticulous researcher and writer, Scott left his extensive library and notes to the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy.

*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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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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