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# ST. AUGUSTINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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A CHAPTER OF THE FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

August 2023

### Next Meetings

Be sure to hold the following dates for our meetings in the fall, the first Tuesday of the month:

**September 5<sup>th</sup>** -- TBA

**October 3<sup>rd</sup>** -- **Andrea White, City Archaeology:  
The Year in Review**

**November 7<sup>th</sup>** -- TBA

**December 12<sup>th</sup>** -- **Tentative date for the Holiday  
Party**

If you would like to be more involved in the association, I encourage you to reach out ([staugarch@gmail.com](mailto:staugarch@gmail.com)). We have several committees you can join including nomination and Eugene Lyon education fund (ELEF). The nomination committee helps put together a slate of officers for SAAA's annual elections, so members are usually active in the fall.

The ELEF committee solicits and reviews applications for education stipends to support the needs of students pursuing studies in anthropology and related fields. And if you really want to step up your game, we will be soliciting for several officer and board positions starting in 2024. We are a fun bunch and a little of your time can make a huge impact!

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### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greeting Fellow SAAA Members,

Hope you all had a fun and productive summer. The heat has been relentless, so trust you have been staying cool and hydrated. SAAA is coming off its summer hiatus after expending energy hosting the annual Florida Anthropological Society (FAS) meeting in May. Nevertheless, we are gearing up to kick start the fall with a new round of monthly lectures and will top the year off with our annual holiday party.



As a reminder, we meet the first Tuesday of the month in Ponce de Leon Hall on the Flagler College campus at 7 PM. We usually gather in the Flagler Room and will for the September 5th meeting. However, due to renovations, we will be meeting in the Tiffany Room for the rest of the fall. It is still in Ponce Hall—near the archaeology lab—and signs will help direct folks to the correct location. Thank you Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) for hosting and Robbie Boggs for coordinating our meeting space!

Finally, there are many changes happening at the federal, state, and local levels that can positively or adversely affect the discovery and protection of the community's cultural heritage. We encourage you to stay engaged by renewing your membership and staying up to date on with the latest news, events, and calls to action via our new website [www.staugarch.org](http://www.staugarch.org) and facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/staugarch>.

I look forward to seeing you all soon!

*Andrea White*



*Fish Island*

# Visit Fish Island Preserve: A Beacon of Hope

By Susan Hill

FEATURE  
ARTICLE



July 2023 was the five-year anniversary of the beginning our community's grassroots efforts to save historic Fish Island Preserve, the beautiful swath of "old Florida" landscape and wildlife habitat, which sits quietly along the eastern bank of the Matanzas River and just south of the SR 312 bridge.

Historic Fish Island and the surrounding areas represent a diverse cultural heritage and are rich in archaeological resources, some dating back 4000 years. Native American, Spanish, British, both free and enslaved African people and their mixed-race descendants inhabited these lands.

Fish Island Preserve is one of the very few remaining places in the oldest City in America linking the triangle of plantation life, Florida's emerging orange industry, and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in 17th, 18th, and 19th century St Augustine. Numerous artifacts have been recovered on Fish Island during previous archaeological surveys, including human remains.

In a 1975 Resolution, the St Augustine Historical Society calls Fish Island, "the site of Florida's First orange grove". By the 1770s thousands of oranges were exported as far away as London from *El Vergel*, Jess Fish's plantation.

Thanks to the persistent grassroots efforts that began in 2018 by ordinary citizens who became historical and environmental advocates, Fish Island was ultimately purchased by the State of Florida in 2019 with Florida

Forever funds. It will now remain permanently conserved for all future generations, as part of the Northeast Florida Blueway.

On so many levels its story is one of survival. Against all odds, Fish Island, the story of its many inhabitants, their contributions and their sacrifices, their archaeological footprint, its flora and its fauna will survive.

It is a beloved jewel, a wildlife refuge for many species of animals, a sanctuary, hallowed ground, and a place of human burials. Woven through its intricate historical tapestry are the threads of many cultures, languages, religions, sufferings and joy, acts of heroism and atrocities, wars, marriages and separation, death, and children. At its core, it is told through the story of a young British boy, Jesse Fish, who would become known as, "Florida's first Orange Baron", the many enslaved African people whom he would come to own, and the many mixed-race descendants who followed.

These metaphors are accurate and there are many, but few are as timeless and relevant, as that of Fish Island Preserve being a beacon of hope for what can be accomplished when we put our differences aside and come together for a common purpose. Saving Fish Island and telling its story is a bright ending to a long battle.

There is a sense of connection one feels while walking the tree-lined trails of Fish Island Preserve, whether for those seeking the peaceful quietude of nature, the unexpected joy of seeing wildlife, the relaxing smell of salt from the nearby intracoastal waterway, the excitement of discovering archaeological ruins left by those who came before us, or the unspoken and inexplicable bond one feels to the human inhabitants who once occupied this land. It is a place of human burials, and the untold stories of ancestors, some erased in life by the constraints of slavery or in death, by the passage of time.

Those of us who have worked to save Fish Island, experience it as a place of reflection, accomplishment, and hope for the future. As a native Floridian, historical advocate, and friend of Fish Island, allow me to encourage you to visit this remarkable place. The state historical marker and six information panels are now in place to help guide your visit.

# Updates from the City Archaeology Program Lab

-- Katherine Sims

Summer projects have kept the City lab quite busy for the last several months! Since March, field crews have been working on several large downtown projects, which means lots of material to process in the lab. Every day spent in the field downtown requires about a week in the lab to process the artifact and documentary records! Volunteers have been diligently washing, sorting, and identifying hundreds of thousands of artifacts. We were helped this summer by the addition of several new volunteers, so all the stations at both work tables are now filled.

Lab volunteers have also been very dedicated in learning about 4,000 years of St. Augustine material culture, wrapping up several months of once-a-week artifact ID classes. If you ever need a fragment of a 300 year old drum fish palate identified, the City Archaeology Lab volunteers have got you covered!



Outside the lab, excavations at 135 Blanco Street have been wrapped up a bit prematurely due to high water table issues (thanks, summer rain!), but we were able to gather a lot of great data from Mission Pocotalaca in the time we had. We will be starting two major downtown utility monitoring projects soon and will not be able to offer volunteer opportunities in the field. That being said...the lab will still be open! If the lab fills up and you'd still like to come, keep an eye on the sign-up sheet for last minute cancellations.

# Archaeology Conference in Cuba

## FIRST CUBAN CONGRESS OF HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

### Matanzas, November 21-23, 2023

AFTER SELECTION OF PAPERS SUBMITTED, LECTURERS FROM CUBA, ITALY, SPAIN, SWEDEN, MEXICO, UNITED STATES, BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, ARGENTINA AND PUERTO RICO HAVE BEEN REGISTERED.

THE FIELDS OF INTEREST COVER HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN URBAN CONTEXTS, UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND EDUCATION, INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AMONG OTHERS.

PARTICIPATION OF LECTURER Dr. THERESA ANN SINGLETON AND WORKING SESSIONS CORRESPONDING TO THE PROJECTS ARQUEO-CUBA AND CIPAMUR HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED.



For more information on the above and for help on visas, please contact Soledad Pagliuca, Project Director, Ediciones Nuevos Mundos, The Friendship Association; [aimisoledad@gmail.com](mailto:aimisoledad@gmail.com) 904 808 2030

## Name that Ceramic

How many of these ceramic can you name?

#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6

