

[Narrator] You've tuned in to another  
edition of The Breakroom, a

weekly conversation about how  
the City of Saint Augustine

works from those who do the  
work every day. Hosted by the

City of Saint Augustine's  
communications director,

Melissa Wissel. The Breakroom  
offers a closer look at the

different city departments and  
provides updates on current and

upcoming projects and events  
and now your host Melissa

Wissel. [Melissa] Welcome to The  
Breakroom. Thanks for tuning

in. I'm Melissa Wissel,  
Communications Director for the

City of St. Augustine. March is  
not only Women's History Month

but it's also Archaeology  
Month. So, who better to

represent both of those  
categories than City of St.

Augustine's very own  
archaeologist Doctor Andrea

White. Andrea welcome back.

[Andrea] Thanks Melissa. I always enjoy

getting a chance to chat catch  
up and chat. [Melissa] It's our one year

anniversary of the last time. I  
feel like. [Andrea] By how time flies.

[Melissa] Um I hate to say it but I this  
is literally like the only time

that you and I catch up. [Andrea] It's  
sad isn't it? [Melissa] You're busy. I'm

busy. [Andrea] Yeah. [Melissa] So in let's see in  
like twelve and a half minutes

or less. Ready, set, go. [Andrea] Yeah.

We're going to catch up on the

whole last entire year. [Melissa] Let's  
start with Spanish Street. [Andrea] Oh,

everyone loves to talk about  
Spanish Street. Yes. Um so,

just for those listeners who  
may not be as familiar with how

awesome Saint Augustine is and  
how seriously we take historic

preservation, we do have an  
archaeological preservation

ordinance in the city that's  
one of the oldest in the

country and it really allows us  
to do the work that we do, us

being archaeologist, the team  
of archaeologists that we have

but Spanish Street because it's  
a city project and of course,

it's in downtown where we know  
people have been living for a

long time even predating the  
street grid the Spanish street

grid we had a chance to review  
that project and work with the

engineering department and  
other contractors when we got

to go out and do basically  
archaeological monitorings what

we did with the street because  
[Melissa] and that's digging? [Andrea] it is

digging it is digging it's a  
lot of digging but it is also

working with the contractors  
that are out there while

they're doing a lot of the  
digging they. So [Melissa] you're not

there by yourself? [Andrea] No. [Melissa] which is  
what you prefer? [Andrea] Well, I think

it's ideally, we'd like to go

in, do our testing and

investigation before the

contractors start because it's

easier for them, it's easier on

us. We don't have to be like,

whoa, can you stop for just a

minute during your lunch break

and let us hop in this trench?

[Melissa] Too many cooks in the kitchen.

[Andrea] Yeah and it's also just in

terms of scheduling. It's a lot

easier for them to be able to

schedule their work when we're

not there and don't have

unanticipated discoveries but

with street work, a lot of the

times we would have to stop

stop [Melissa] Right. [Andrea] Excuse me. Stop

close the street down to do our

investigation which means the  
streets going to be closed for

even longer. [Melissa] Longer. [Andrea] And that  
is not fair to residents or

businesses in the area. So. [Melissa] And  
Spanish Street was a tough one

because there is it's not a  
large it's not largely

populated with residents but it  
does have residents. [Andrea] Mm hmm. [Melissa] So

it's not just a matter of  
businesses that maybe have

normal hours. [Andrea] Right. [Melissa] People  
living their daily lives. [Andrea] Yeah

and there was even night work  
that happening. [Melissa] Ugh. [Andrea] Yeah.

Yeah. Which we got to be a part  
of too so. [Melissa] And we're I believe

it's finished. [Andrea] I certainly hope  
so. That's what I hear. [Melissa] Yeah. [Andrea] I

have not gotten a chance to  
take a stroll down the street.

Looking [Melissa] It's beautiful. [Andrea] Ooh  
exciting. [Melissa] I it is the brick you

know it's the continuation of  
the other part of Spanish

Street. So it's the end that  
didn't get the brick work.

[Andrea] Yeah. [Melissa] And it's it's really  
lovely. So the burning question

what did you find? Did you find  
anything? [Andrea] We of course found

lots of things We knew we  
would. Um there's sort of a

myth that when you're doing  
work in the street, there's

nothing archaeologically that's  
going to be there anymore. So

many utility lines have come  
through and destroyed whatever

might be there but that is  
never the case especially here

in Saint Augustine and also  
with the construction work,

plans have to change. A lot of  
times you find new surprises or

things that need to be amended  
in construction documents and

so in this instance, there  
actually had to be not just

work in the street but also  
stuff that into what we know is

the Talamato parking lot. So we  
not only monitored the

archaeological work in the  
street where we found several

early 1700s colonial wells and



brick and not brick, Coquina

Foundations that there were  
buildings that extended much

further into the street because  
the street grid hasn't always

been there and the street  
itself was probably a lot

smaller during colonial times.

[Melissa] So if you're digging up Spanish

Street and you're seeing you're  
going into Talamato you

actually have to redirect  
something that you're replacing

and then put it back. [Andrea] Right.

Okay. [Melissa] Well and. And not you but

the. [Andrea] Right. So in this instance  
there was so many other

utilities within the street. Um  
some which were not well

documented. So it was a  
surprise to everyone. [Melissa] Oh! Look!

[Andrea] Yes. So in order to get what  
we're all very concerned with

here is flooding right? So part  
of the street improvements

includes storm water management  
and so being able to increase

the flow. There was no  
stormwater lines in that

street. So, stormwater is  
important and it's also very

important that you have the  
right slope so that everything

flows away. [Melissa] Yes. [Andrea] So, they had  
to cut across Caddy Corner

across the parking lot and so  
that was an area that we know

was occupied by historic  
properties and buildings and we

knew we were going to find  
things. So, we pretty much hand

dug in a very slow and  
scientific manner where the new

storm drain was going to go and  
so we found evidence of both

colonial occupation starting in  
the early seventeen hundreds.

That area was often a area that  
there was Spanish soldiers that

were marrying native women that  
were living in that area. So we

found evidence of both the  
foundations of their houses but

trash pits and a lot of  
colonial wells as well. But

also later on in the colonial  
period during the British

period the area became known as

the Menorcan Quarter. So when

many Menorcan residents  
migrated up to Saint Augustine

from New Smyrna and other areas.

That was where they were able

to settle. So, we have found  
trash pits and other things

associated with their  
occupation as well extending

well into the late late 19th  
and to into the earliest 20th

century. [Melissa] Okay, so I have to ask  
because I'm going to I'm

going to make you tell our  
audience because it was kind of

funny. Um so, one of you,  
you've told me in the past that

one of your favorite  
discoveries or funny things was

all the straws. [Andrea] Yes. [Melissa] At the deck at Scarlett OHaras. [Andrea] Yes.

[Melissa] What did you find? [Andrea] So, Part of the archaeology process is not

just documenting what we might think as old things but also

the recent history because eventually that will become old

too and we had a running joke among our staff that you're

never a true urban archaeologist until you have

documented a pair of underpants in your profile wall. [Melissa] Okay. [Andrea] So,

we did have a nice pair of cotton boxers that was sticking

out of our profile. Um we're guessing maybe Circa 1990s or

early 2 thousands. [Melissa] Oh, modern.

[Andrea] So, yeah. Um it was in a

plastic disposable bag that we  
used today and there was also [Melissa] I

thought it was a pair of like  
breaches you know like colonial

breaches [Andrea] oh no no this was very  
modern oh and there was also a

pair of rusty scissors with it  
so I'm not sure what was going

on there we didn't investigate  
further [Melissa] we don't know that we just know what is we don't  
speculate [Andrea] right and [Melissa] it just

the facts [Andrea] we felt that we had  
documented it well enough and

there was no need for further  
investigation yeah [Melissa] well if

you're just now tuning in you  
are listening to the break

room. I'm Melissa Wissel and  
this week I have Andrea White

in studio. She is the City  
Archaeologist. It's Women's

History Month. It's Archaeology  
Month and we have a few minutes

left. I'm going to switch gears  
a little bit. I know that

you've got a lot of projects  
always going on. I do want to

ask you to share with us. You  
got a new staff member. [Andrea] Mm hmm.

[Melissa] And I haven't seen or heard a  
whole lot about your your

volunteers. I used to see them  
out with their sifters and

their shovels and their  
trowels. Are you guys still

active? [Andrea] Oh, yeah. We still have  
35 wonderful volunteers. We

have a waiting list for  
volunteers. Um we have a lot of

folks that are doing field work  
but now we've really started

bringing volunteers first into  
the lab and the lab has become

immensely popular and I think  
it's really a great way to

introduce people to what we're  
really finding in the

archaeological record like what  
it's going to look like when

it's coming out of the ground.  
I think people have these

grandiose ideas of maybe whole  
plates or stuff you know that are

I don't know yeah and it's it's  
little tiny bits of things but

once we clean them up and look  
at them we've really began to

stitch together a better



understanding of our past I

mean we're often finding  
straight pens we've been

working on two different black  
school sites where we've been

finding pencil ferrets which are  
the ends of the pencils between

the wood and that what holds  
the eraser. [Melissa] Okay. [Andrea] So all sorts

of small things that you just  
wouldn't think that much about

or you may be like oh this is  
just garbage. But yes it's very

important garbage that tells us  
a lot about past human occupation here in

the city. [Melissa] So I'm going to ask  
you right now. Uh can we get

you for some archaeology lab  
tours maybe during City

Government Week? [Andrea] Yes we'd love to. We did that several years

ago. It always creeps up on us.

[Andrea] It does. So let's try to [Melissa] you

heard it here first. Uh City

Government Week is in October.

[Andrea] It is. [Melissa] So we'll that means we have a date in October to talk

about that. Okay. Okay. [Andrea] We'll do our best. We are very busy

in the field We had two great part-time staff archaeologists

this summer to help us with Spanish Street. Um we also have

a brand-new staff archaeologist, Kate Gaines,

who's with us and so we are have all of our archaeologists

not by design but just by experience and talent have been

females. So, we are an  
all-female archaeology team

which is great especially for  
Women's History Month. [Melissa] Yeah.

So. What where does now so  
that's you've got Katie and

Catherine. [Andrea] Mm hmm. [Melissa] And are they  
pairing up together. They both

doing different things. [Andrea] They're  
doing different things. Um

Catherine was originally hired  
Catherine Sims to really

sort of handle the lab because  
the lab work is almost 75% of

the archaeological process. So,  
we really need somebody in the

lab. We can't have volunteers  
in there unless we have a staff

member. Same thing for the

field. So, the idea is to sort

of put Kate in the field a  
little bit more and then keep

Catherine back in the lab  
handling all of the things that

are coming in in the lab.

[Melissa] Documenting, cleaning, [Andrea] all the

process of the of the  
artifacts. They come in. They

need to be cleaned. They need  
to be sorted. They need to be

analyzed. There's also  
documentation. There's curation

that happens. Every single  
piece of paperwork we have has

to be gone through. It has to  
be scanned, filed. We have tons

of electronic documents.

There's GIS. There's a whole

process that happens in the lab  
for us to really be able to

tease out and understand what's  
happening. We can dig something

in the field and have a rough  
idea of maybe our

interpretation but it's not til  
we get back to the lab clean

everything up, really analyze  
it, and then start even doing

analysis like, when was this  
manufactured? Oh, okay. That

tells us when this foundation.[Melissa] You research?

[Andrea] Yeah. [Melissa] I mean, you're on the

internet a lot. Research. [Andrea] I  
shouldn't say this but I'm

kind of surprised that  
sometimes the Google searches

that IT hasn't asked a lot.

We've been doing a lot of

research on beer manufacturing  
dates based off bottles that

we've been finding. [Melissa] Okay. [Andrea] So,  
yeah. It's all part of the

process. [Melissa] And they haven't  
blocked you? [Andrea] Not yet. I hope

that doesn't mean they're  
going to start looking at my

search history. [Melissa] Well, that's  
really fascinating. I imagine

that there's such a an  
intriguing story. Um I know the

lab on the one hand, it's not  
very sexy but it's really a

cool space but you guys were  
hoping not quite yet where

we're going to get a new lab.  
[Andrea] That's still up in the air.

Yeah. We did have a generous

donation that will definitely

help put us on track but we've  
done a vast improvement with

the space that we have with new  
fixtures and we've also been

investing in tech which is  
technology is a big part of it So,

we're working on an artifact  
database which will be very

great and very important for us  
to do all sorts of queries and

things like that to figure out  
what exactly do we have in the

lab. [Melissa] How about 3D printers? [Andrea] We  
have partnered with the Florida

Public Archaeology Network here  
that's based at Flagler College

for some 3D printing. They have  
scanned some of the artifacts

we have and have printed those  
for us. So, they're great for

show and tell and. [Melissa] Right. [Andrea] You  
don't have to worry about

breaking things when they're.  
Right. 3D printed. [Melissa] And your lab

is located? [Andrea] At 30 Pellicer Lane.  
[Melissa] And I'm I'm going to also tell

folks it's right near the glass  
recycling. [Andrea] It is. The glass

recycling is very startling  
when when people dump things in

there every first time it  
happened. We thought somebody

had crashed into the building.  
Um but you know we definitely

support recycling as well. [Melissa] Yes.  
So. So if you do if you use the

recycling that's on Pellicer and  
you see that it's a [Andrea] it's a



metal brown metal building.

[Melissa] Yeah but what's the word I'm

looking for? The the trailer.

What do they call them for the

schools? The anyway, it's it's

a double wide. Isn't it? It's

kind of. [Andrea] Oh no. It's it's much

bigger. [Melissa] It's much bigger. [Andrea] Yeah.

But it's [Melissa] It's a modular. [Andrea] No,

it's actually not a modular.

It's over 50 years old, the

building. [Melissa] Well, I take all that

back. Sorry. It has a funny

look to it though the way it

sits on that property. [Andrea] Yeah. It

was the old actual the old

warehouse for the city. [Melissa] Well,

there you have it. [Andrea] Yeah. [Melissa] Well,

so old the old oldest

archaeology building in City.

The Doctor Zoo Middleton. [Andrea] Yes.

[Melissa] Archaeology Center next to the

Glass Recycling. [Andrea] Mm hmm. [Melissa] On

Pellicer. [Andrea] Yes. That's where

we're at. [Melissa] I know you've got

other stuff but we ran out of

time. [Andrea] Uh we always run out of

time. [Melissa] But we're going to have

you back to talk about City

Government Week and we're

going to get those lab tours on

the calendar. [Andrea] Okay. Oh we put

it down. Pencil it in. It all

depends on how many projects we

have come in. Often we don't

have a chance to we don't

control the projects that come

in so. [Melissa] We're going to hope for

it but we can't make any  
promises. [Andrea] That sounds good.

[Melissa] Okay. Thanks for coming. [Andrea] Thanks  
Melissa. [Melissa] If you missed part of

this broadcast and want to go  
back and listen from the

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conversations with the people

who make our town work to meet  
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another edition of The

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