STEPS THROUGH TIME:
A Walking Tour of Sixteenth Century St. Augustine

Florida Archaeology Week
March 2 - 10, 1996

Stanley C. Bond, Jr., PhD
Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board
Sixteenth Century Walking Tour Map

LEGEND

1) de Leon Site
2) Puente Site
3) 16th Century Church
4) Plaza Public Well
5) Government House Courtyard
6) Trinity Parish Site
7) Palm Row Site
8) Solidad Site
9) Ximenez-Fatio Site
10) Segui-Kirby Smith Site
11) Cofradia Site
The Boazio Map (1586), Close-up of St. Augustine.
The Puente Map (1763).
Wattle and Daub Construction (from Boyd et al. 1951:Plate VII).
Wood Construction (Mestas Map, 1595).
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DESCRIPTION OF THE TOUR

A) As we walk down Marine Street we will pass several buildings of colonial origin. The first two on the east side of Marine Street are the Rovira-Dewhurst and Rovira-Hernandez houses. The lower levels of these buildings are constructed of coquina, while the second stories are wood. These buildings have been heavily altered over the years, however the colonial cores of these two houses still exist. Further north on the west side of the street is the Gonzalez-Jones House. Three more colonial structures are located on the east side of Marine Street. The Puello House contains a few standing colonial walls and has been rehabilitated into a Mediterranean Revival style residence. The Marin House, a two story coquina block structure, had a set of wooden apartments attached. The Long-Sanchez House is also a two story coquina block building.

B) The Sixteenth Century Town Plan

Sixteenth century St. Augustine was laid out under the precepts of the Spanish Ordinance of the Indies. In 1573 the Ordinance of the Indies brought together all of the royal decrees on town planning for the Americas into a single document. Spanish towns were to be laid out on a grid pattern with a central plaza. Important governmental buildings, such as the Governors House and Cabildo were to be located on the plaza. The sixteenth century plan of St. Augustine was established through an archaeological auger survey. This project was conducted by Dr. Kathleen Deagan in 1976. The early plan of St. Augustine is still embedded in the town today and can be seen in the smaller blocks bounded by the plaza and Bridge Street and from the bayfront to St. George Street.

1) The de Leon Site (SA-26-1)

The de Leon site represented one of the first excavations of a sixteenth century site in the downtown area. Work on this site was carried out from 1976 to 1981 under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Deagan. The de Leon site had a sixteenth century occupation date range of 1565-1611. Significant features included a sixteenth century structure and sixteenth century wells. Artifacts included a variety of Spanish and Native American types, kitchen items, and two copper maravedi coins (the only sixteenth century coins found in St. Augustine).
2) The Puente Site (SA-24)

This site was named for the eighteenth century First Spanish Period owner, Don Juan Elixio de la Puente. Excavations were conducted here in 1986 by Preservation Board archaeologists Stanley Bond, Valerie Bell, and Kate Hoffman with the assistance of the SAAA and in 1991 by City Archaeologist Carl Halbirt. Puente was a Florida born criollo and royal treasury official. He produced the Puente Map at the end of the First Spanish period as a real estate assessment for the departing citizens. He had one of the largest houses in town, and his courtyard held a decorative coquina block well which we will see during this tour. This site also contain numerous sixteenth century features. These include evidence of a two room wattle and daub house, several wells, and trash pits. Material from this site indicates a wealthy person lived here during the sixteenth century and for most of the First Spanish period. The site was occupied in the British period by William Drayton, a member of the elite Drayton family of Lowcountry South Carolina. A small spoon with the Drayton crest was recovered on this site.

3) The Sixteenth Century Catholic Church

The Boazio Map (1586) shows the Catholic Church near the northeast corner of the sixteenth century town and on the southeast corner of the plaza. Archaeological excavations and street construction have revealed sixteenth century burial associated with the cemetery under the Florida Heritage House (1971), in front of the Spanish Military Hospital (SA 28-1) (1979), in the former parking lot of the Fiesta Building (SA-23) (1986), and under Charlotte Street (1924, 1995).

4) Public Well in the Plaza (SA-P-I)

Excavations of the Public Well were carried out in 1980 by John Bostwick under the direction of the Preservation Board. Funds were obtained through the Florida Bicentennial Commission. While all households has wells in their back yard, this permanent coquina block well served public needs. Note the octagon shape; most barrel wells probably had similar collars.
5) Government House Courtyard

The Governors House was one of the most significant buildings in town. From it he controlled the economic, social, and religious pulse of the town through his watchful access to the plaza. Archaeological examination of the Governor's courtyard took place in 1993. The Boazio Map (1586) indicates that the Town Council House (Cabildo) was located in this general area. Evidence of sixteenth century occupation on the site was recovered in the form of a trash pit. One of the seventeenth century Spanish governors paved the courtyard with flint gravel from Europe and constructed an elaborate board and barrel well. By the eighteenth century a guard house stood at the entry to the courtyard.

C) Present here is the last remanent of a standing colonial tabby wall in St. Augustine. These garden or property wall were common elements in colonial St. Augustine. The Horruytiner-Lindsley House on this property contains at its core a First Spanish period structure.

6) Trinity Parish Sites (SA-34-1A, SA-34-1B)

The two sites located on this property were part of the five major sites excavated by Dr. Kathleen Deagan from 1978 to 1981 as part of her research into the sixteenth century. These two sites yielded important architectural and subsistence data on the emerging creole culture of St. Augustine. One significant artifact recovered was a sixteenth century matchlock mechanism.

7) Palm Row Site (SA-36-4)

The Palm Row site, excavated by Dr. Kathleen Deagan in 1978 and 1979, allowed archaeologists to determine the west edge of the sixteenth century town and the marsh boundary of Maria Sanchez Creek. Significant organic materials were recovered from a well on this site. These waterlogged deposits added greatly to our understanding of subsistence patters in sixteenth century St. Augustine.
8) Solidad Site (SA-36-7)

The present parking lot was the site of Nuestra Senora de la Solidad cofradia and the site of the Catholic Parish Church and cemetery beginning in the late sixteenth century. During the British period it became the Anglican Church and cemetery. The site is presently owned by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Archaeological excavations were directed by Dr. Kathleen Deagan in 1978 and results were reported by Joan Koch in her masters thesis. The church occupied the northeast corner of the lot with human burials located under the church and across the eastern two thirds of the property. Analysis of skeletal remains indicated that the residents of St. Augustine were not particularly short, even by today's standards. The western side of this lot contains the Rosario Line and portions of the Solidad Redoubt.

D) As we pass this coquina wall note within it the remanents of an earlier coquina block house. This demonstrates and interesting reuse of construction fabric within St. Augustine.

9) The Ximenez-Fatio Site (SA-34-2)

The Ximenez-Fatio site was the fifth of the major sixteenth century sites examined by Dr. Kathleen Deagan. Excavations on this lot between 1976 and 1989 have covered most of the property. These projects were sponsored in part by the Colonial Dames. The Fatio site has yielded important data on lot organization by the sixteenth century residents of town and added significantly to our overall understanding of sixteenth century lifeways. These patterns were to set the direction for St. Augustine's development over the entire First Spanish Period. The Fatio House is a standing colonial structure of the Second Spanish period which is owned and maintained by the Colonial Dames.

10) The Segui-Kirby Smith Site (SA-34-3)

Two phases of archaeological excavations were carried out at the Segui-Kirby Smith site by Dr. James Cusick as part of the overall site renovation. These projects were sponsored by the St. Augustine Historical Society through a grant from the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. Excavations uncovered footings and floors from a First Spanish period residence, Segui's Second Spanish period bakery, and other important site features. A large quantity of eighteenth century creamware was found in a deep trash pit between the main building and the detached kitchen. The Segui-Kirby Smith House is a standing structure of the Second Spanish period. It is maintained by the St. Augustine Historical Society and houses its research library.
11) The Cofradia Site

During the First Spanish period this property and the adjoining lot to the north were owned by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament. These brotherhoods, or cofradías, were lay Catholic organizations with specific duties. This particular group went with the priest to administer last rites and maintained the altar materials. A three room coquina block house stood on the east end of this property through the eighteenth century. Archaeological excavations carried out in 1989 by Dr. Kathleen Deagan and the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board uncovered this structure. Also found was a circular coquina block well at the west end of the lot. This well dates from the seventeenth century and was destroyed during the Robert Searles pirate raid in 1668. Significant material from this well included a wooden powder flask and parts of a chair.

E) Two standing colonial structures located in the area are the O'Reilly and Toledo Houses, owned by the Sisters of St. Joseph.
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