

## Eugenia Price Discovers St. Simons Island

As the Island's busy season begins and many tourists arrive to discover the magic of the Golden Isles for the first time, we look back on one of our favorite author's accounts of her memorable first visit. Eugenia Price was already a best-selling non-fiction writer and novelist when she "accidentally" happened on St. Simons during a book tour in 1961.

She wrote in her *St. Simons Memoir* that she had spent Thanksgiving with her mother in her hometown of Charleston, West Virginia, and had miscalculated the resulting driving time to their next destination of Jacksonville, Florida. Price and her companion, author and best friend Joyce Blackburn, thus had two days to spare to explore the Southeast.

Price suggested they visit the coast of Georgia. She had never done a book signing or spoken there and figured "No one will recognize me. I can just ... be me." The two discarded the idea of visiting Sea Island as too posh for their current purposes ("I want a place where I don't have to dress up for a change.") and thus settled on St. Simons Island.

Their AAA guidebook led them to Craft's Ocean Court, where the Coast Cottages are currently located. Their first night was filled with an eerie "early winter darkness" as



they drove "along between arching trees, their ghostly strands of gray Spanish moss waving visibly and then invisibly in the low clouds. The next morning they took the long drive along Frederica Road, stopping to admire "the wild tangles and wonder" of the island. It was then that Price found

the inspiration for her famous St. Simons trilogy of novels: *Christ Church*. She wrote, "No trouble believing in Eternity here."

Price eventually made the island her permanent home and became an ardent supporter of Coastal Georgia Historical Society

and the St. Simons Lighthouse Museum. This month's image from the Society's collection shows Eugenia Price admiring the foundations of the original St. Simons Lighthouse, uncovered during an archaeological excavation in 1972, which served as the inspiration for her novel *Lighthouse*.

Our monthly images on this page are from the vast archives of the Coastal Georgia Historical Society. The Society's mission includes the "administration, restoration and maintenance of historic facilities and resources ... preserved as a living part of the historical and cultural foundations of our coastal community." Society facilities include the St. Simons Lighthouse and Museum, the A.W. Jones Heritage Center, and the World War II Home Front Museum at the Historic Coast Guard Station. To learn more about the Society, its diverse programs, and the benefits of Society membership, please call 912.638.4666, or visit [coastalgeorgiahistory.org](http://coastalgeorgiahistory.org).