

# Eugenia Price Discovers St. Simons Island



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*.