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WALKING ST. AUGUSTINE
An Illustrated Guide and Pocket History to America’s Oldest City
ELSINETH “BUFF” GORDON

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240 pp. | 5 ½ x 8 ½ | 126 color and 65 b/w illus., walking tour maps
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ELSBETH “BUFF” GORDON is an architectural historian living in St. Augustine. She is the author of *Florida’s Colonial Architectural Heritage* and *Heart and Soul of Florida: Sacred Sites and Historic Architecture.*

Photo Credit: Michael Gordon

ELSBETH “BUFF” GORDON is available for interviews and appearances.

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Q & A with

ELSBETH “BUFF” GORDON

author of

Walking St. Augustine

An Illustrated Guide and Pocket History to America’s Oldest City

“When the age of St. Augustine is wrapped in many layers of historical mysteries...I get excited thinking about what inspires people from different cultures and backgrounds to build what they do.”

When did you choose to write about St. Augustine? What makes it special?

Fifteen years ago in London at the British Library I saw drawings made in the 1700s of Spanish St. Augustine. Some showed the British attacking the city, and some depicted Spanish buildings being converted for British colonists. I was hooked! St. Augustine became an adventure for me!

What do you hope readers will enjoy the most about your book?

Discovering the book’s easy-to-read accurate history and the sad, funny, quirky personal stories of the people who lived and made history in America’s oldest city. With these stories in Walking St. Augustine readers can enjoy their own exciting discoveries about today’s city as they walk along the 16th century streets and see the historic houses of the people in the stories.

St. Augustine is celebrating its 450th birthday this year. Do you have any exciting plans for this milestone?

I will be at every celebration possible! From the street festivals September 4–6 to the re-enactment of the 1565 Spanish Landing September 8, and many other performances, art and history exhibits, archaeological excavations, and ribbon and birthday cake cuttings planned by the Ancient City and private businesses.
How does your talent for photography and art shape your books?

Trained as a visual artist and architectural historian, I see buildings and people three-dimensionally. In an historic place like St. Augustine I get excited thinking about what inspires people from different cultures and backgrounds to build what they do. Making drawings and taking many photographs at different times and angles is like looking through a magnifying glass and discovering details and secrets about places and people.

You include a lot of historical information in this tour book. How does a knowledge of the history of a city enrich your experience as a visitor?

A city the age of St. Augustine is wrapped in many layers of historical mysteries. Too many details in a guidebook can ruin the romance and mystery of the Ancient City. I try to make learning easy and enjoyable by taking you on a brief journey—from the city’s founding in 1565 to today’s city, house-by-historic-house, with just enough history and cultural eye-poppers to make your visit to the city of centuries more exciting and meaningful.

What local eats in St. Augustine would you recommend when readers need to take a break during your tour?

There are many different very delicious places to eat, drink, or grab a snack in this city that is so near to fresh seafood and so connected to historical cultures. I love a good Minorcan clam chowder and views of the water.

What is your favorite destination that you’ve traveled to?

I went to school in Italy and Portugal and have traveled through Spain, Cuba, Mexico, and England and each and all have become a favorite destination.

What are you working on next?

I am writing scripts that expand upon the wonderful but unknown stories of St. Augustine in the current book. They will be recorded with music and sounds for mobile apps on your telephones, tablets and laptops. Also, I am working on another book—it is a secret!

What is one of your favorite personal memories about St. Augustine?

I will never forget the afternoon when the Bridge of Lions opened to let our sailboat pass underneath and into the city’s historic harbor and marina. Seeing the bridge open and our friends standing on it waving with balloons and horns was a special ending to a long sail down the intra-coastal waterway in an historic ketch that we restored and varnished. It had five sails, two masts and a long bowsprit and I felt like I had sailed through the centuries to come home to the Ancient City.