

VISIT HISTORIC ST. AUGUSTINE

with The Historic New Orleans Collection
October 11–13, 2019



You are cordially invited to join The Historic New Orleans Collection for a trip to St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest city in the United States. Designed as a prelude to THNOC's 2020 exhibition *New Orleans and the Spanish Caribbean*, the weekend getaway will offer insight into the glories of Spanish colonial architecture and the legacy of the Gilded Age.

This exclusive opportunity will be available only to members of THNOC's Laussat Society and Bienville Circle through August 12, 2019. Participants will enjoy lodging at the Casa Monica, a luxury accommodation in the heart of the city's historic district. Please see inside for itinerary highlights and registration information.

ITINERARY

Travel to and from St. Augustine is independent of the tour—and participants are encouraged to extend their stay, the better to take advantage of the region’s many cultural and natural attractions.

Friday, October 11

Our adventure begins with an evening reception at the Lightner Museum, an architectural jewel constructed in 1887 as the Alcazar Hotel. Commissioned by industrialist and impresario Henry Morrison Flagler (1830–1913), the Alcazar in its heyday featured the world’s largest indoor swimming pool, a grand ballroom, sulfur baths, a steam room and massage parlor, a gymnasium, a bowling alley, archery ranges, tennis courts, and a bicycle academy. Today, “the castle of happy returns” houses an extensive collection of 19th-century fine and decorative arts, assembled by publisher Otto Lightner (1886–1950).

Best remembered today as the publisher of *Hobbies, The Magazine for Collectors*—a publication dedicated to autographs, antique furniture, china, silver, stamps, coins and paper money, buttons, dolls, and other collectibles—Lightner purchased the Alcazar in the 1940s. His passion for antiques had been sparked by a visit to the first annual Chicago Antiques Exposition and Hobby Fair, in 1930. This experience inspired him to incorporate antiques more prominently in *Hobbies*—and, during the Depression years, he selectively acquired antiques and fine art from financially struggling Chicago estates. The grand old Hotel Alcazar provided a stellar showcase for his collections and first opened to the public in 1948 as the Lightner Museum of Hobbies.

Saturday, October 12

Our first stop on Saturday, Flagler College, epitomizes the splendors of Gilded Age St. Augustine. Built in the 1880s as the Hotel Ponce de León, and designed to remind visitors of Europe, it incarnated Flagler’s dream of creating an American Riviera in Florida. One of the first electrified buildings in the US, the hotel boasted 79 Louis Comfort Tiffany stained glass windows in its spectacular dining hall. Our “feast for the eye” will include murals painted by George W. Maynard (known for his work in the Library of Congress) and, in the grand parlor, a Tiffany Austrian crystal chandelier.

After departing Flagler College, we will stroll past the Villa Zorayda. Built in 1883 as the winter residence of Franklin Webster Smith, the villa was inspired by the Alhambra and introduced the Moorish Spanish Revival style to St. Augustine. Villa Zorayda was eventually sold to Abraham Mussallem, whose family has cared for the residence for more than a century and has operated it as a museum since the 1930s.

Our next stop will be the Flagler Memorial Presbyterian Church, built in 1889 and illustrative of Flagler’s taste and generosity. We will also visit two nearby churches—Trinity Episcopal Church, the oldest Protestant church in Florida, known for its exceptional stained glass windows; and Grace United Methodist Church, built by Flagler in 1886–87 in the Spanish Renaissance style.

After lunch (*included*), our focus shifts to St. Augustine’s Spanish colonial heritage. We will visit the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine, home to the oldest Christian congregation (established 1565) in the contiguous United States. The cornerstone for the current cathedral was laid in 1793 and the structure was rebuilt, with funds drawn from a national appeal, following a devastating fire in 1887.

The nearby Ximenez-Fatio House was built in 1798 by Andres Ximénez, a Spanish merchant, and designed to accommodate his family upstairs and his commercial enterprises downstairs. In 1855 the property was purchased by Louisa Fatio for use as a boarding house, and in 1939 it was acquired by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Under their leadership—and with guidance from such authorities as the architect Charles E. Peterson, the archaeologist Charles Fairbanks, and the historian William Seale—the property has been restored and expertly interpreted.

After visiting the Ximenez-Fatio House, participants will be free to enjoy St. Augustine on their own for the rest of the afternoon, before reconvening for dinner (*included*).

Sunday, October 13

On Sunday morning we will visit the Castillo de San Marcos, the only surviving 17th-century military installation in the US. Begun in 1672 and completed in 1696, the structure was built in response to fears of British incursion in the region. An example of the bastion system of fortification, it is one of only two structures in the world to be built of *coquina*, a semi-rare form of limestone. The Castillo testifies to the complex political forces that shaped Florida as well as the craftsmanship of the engineers and countless workmen who designed and constructed it.

Following the tour of the Castillo, our trip will end with brunch (*included*) at the Casa Monica.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Participants will stay in the Casa Monica Resort and Spa. Dating to 1888, the Casa Monica was designed in the Moorish Revival/Spanish Baroque style and acquired shortly after its opening by Henry Flagler, who dubbed it the Cordova. Falling victim to the Depression, the Cordova closed in 1932. After a variety of municipal uses, the structure reopened as a hotel in 1999 and is currently part of the Marriott Autograph Collection.

TRAVEL TO ST. AUGUSTINE

Jacksonville, the closest major airport to St. Augustine, is served by American, Delta, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit, and United. A variety of car services provide transportation from Jacksonville to St. Augustine, including Airport Express (904-824-9400), Airport Shuttle of St. Augustine (904-825-0004), and East Coast Transportation (904-525-8600). Depending upon traffic, it is advisable to allow between 90 minutes and two hours from landing to arrival at the hotel.

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CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations made on or before September 2, 2019, will forfeit the full \$500 deposit. Cancellations made after September 2 will forfeit the full amount. All cancellations must be made in writing and addressed to St. Augustine Study Tour, The Historic New Orleans Collection, 410 Chartres Street, New Orleans, LA 70130, or faxed to (504) 598-7168. Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

Please return the registration form by mail, fax, or email to The Historic New Orleans Collection.

MAIL

St. Augustine Study Tour
The Historic New Orleans Collection
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FAX

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For further information, please call (504) 523-4662.