

Voices in St. Augustine

By Jane R. Wood

Mystery Makes History Fun

Using excerpts from *Voices in St. Augustine*

Family History – Every family has a history

Remember last year when Aunt Mary was here and we cooked hot dogs on the beach? That was cool! Grandma and Grandpa were there, and we had a contest to see who could find the prettiest shell... We ought to do that again, Joey said. Make it an annual event. This year would be the Second Annual Johnson Family Picnic. We could create our own history. Pages 18-19

1. Discuss with your students some of their fun family events, like reunions, holidays, and vacations, demonstrating how they “create their own history”.
2. Give students an assignment of interviewing their parents, grandparents, another member of their family, or a guardian about their family history. Instruct them to take notes during the interview. Then have them write about some of their family history, using information from their notes as support.

Ghosts – Kids love ghost stories!

They say there are ghosts in St. Augustine. Maybe one of these days all of us can go on a ghost tour. That might be a lot of fun. Page 21

1. Find a book of ghost stories and read some of them to your class.
2. Have students write their own ghost stories, incorporating details and vivid language, and making sure it has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

The Old Gate – Picture this!

There was a huge wooden structure that went over the road. It was made of heavy beams supported by two large towers of coquina blocks with a sign that read ‘8 foot clearance.’ When they passed under it, it was like entering into another time and place. It looked like a movie set. Page 23

1. Bring in some photographs of picturesque places, and ask students to give vivid descriptions of them.
2. Ask students to write about a place, real or imagined, describing it in detail, using the senses of sight, smell, taste, sound and feel.

Buildings along Charlotte Street – Create, plan, design and develop

They walked along Charlotte Street, and Jennifer described some of the characteristics of the old buildings, most of which had once been homes. She pointed to the second-floor balconies that faced the east so they could catch the breezes from the bay. She talked about the entrances that opened from the sides of the homes, usually from a courtyard. With a sweeping gesture of her hands, she showed him the flags that hung on the balconies. Many of the buildings had tropical plants in their gardens and vines crawling up the tabby walls. Pages 23-24

1. Ask students to develop their own designs for a functional building, writing vivid details of what it would look like, defining its purpose, and explaining why they designed it the way they did.