

GREEN SPRINGS PARK

“If a man has at this place congenial society, I do not know of a sweeter spot on Earth to pass a winter.”

—Whitfield Brooks, visiting Cornelius Taylor’s Enterprise hotel in 1845.



Visiting Green Springs, about 1915.

Photo courtesy of the West Volusia Historical Society.

St. Johns River tourists in the late 1880s. Many traveled to new Enterprise and then made excursions to Green Springs.

Photo courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection/State Archives.

Settlers and Sightseers



Camp (or Fort) Kingsbury, a Second Seminole War post in the vicinity of Green Springs. Its soldiers built a small recreational lodge at the spring in the 1830s.

From Fanning/Ashby reconnaissance map, 1838-39, courtesy of the National Archives.

More than 6,000 years ago, native Floridians occupied the lands that make up Green Springs Park. Along with some of North America’s oldest pottery, these hunting and fishing people left a large shell mound stretching from Lake Monroe to what is now Braddock Road, at the north end of the park. Today, traces of the great midden can still be seen at ground level. But its top is long gone—carted off for fertilizer and road building.

The disappearance of this landmark would have surprised earlier visitors, including Seminole Wars soldiers stationed at Fort Kingsbury, an 1830s log stockade on the lake’s north shore. Its location made sense because key trails converged here, and the shell mound offered a lookout.



The Enterprise shell mound in the 1880s, with Taylor’s hotel no longer standing.

Stereoview image courtesy of Tom Baskett, Jr.

High ground and mineral springs also caught the eye of Cornelius Taylor—a tough, restless veteran and timber agent who obtained land grants, led a colonizing party in 1842, and built an inn on the shell mound. Called Enterprise, his small settlement drew tourists as well as “invalids” hoping for healing in Taylor’s springs.

When Cornelius Taylor moved away in 1847, “Old Enterprise” faded, but not the lure of special lands he had opened to travelers. After the Civil War, even more steamboat tourists flocked to interior Florida and Jacob Brock’s new Enterprise, a half mile west of here. One of their favorite outings (from the 1870s into the twentieth century) continued to be visiting a certain spring with “delicate green” waters in a mysterious setting. Green Springs Park may be new, but exploring is a local tradition.