

GREEN SPRINGS PARK

Cornelius Taylor—a Seminole Wars veteran who came to Lake Monroe by way of other American frontiers—began the first settlement of Enterprise on this general site in 1842. Tall, loud, and hot-tempered, he became known as “the Thunder of Enterprise.” One guest at Taylor’s inn called his host “a bold and enterprising pioneer in a new country.” But Taylor’s rough manner also fueled conflicts, including a deadly shooting at the shell mound.

Cornelius Taylor came here from Mayport, near Jacksonville, with his wife and children, several dozen settlers, and a number of slaves. On a land grant of 160 acres, he built a cotton and sugarcane plantation that largely was Enterprise.

Cornelius Taylor—founder of the original Enterprise settlement.

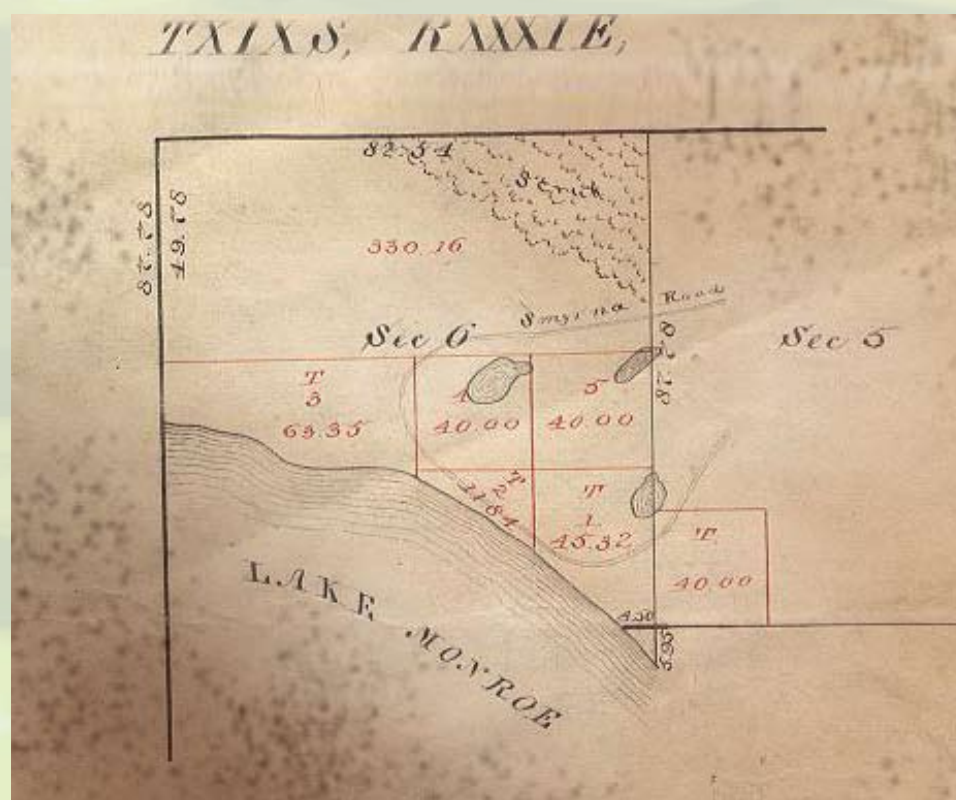
Portrait courtesy of Edgar Rives Taylor, Jr., Cornelius Taylor’s great-great-grandson.



The Thunder of Enterprise

It centered on the shell mound (topped by a “commodious” hotel) and on three nearby springs that offered travelers a kind of health spa. Soon Enterprise became the seat of Mosquito County, with Taylor as its territorial representative.

Taylor eventually left for Texas, and his settlement declined. Yet the story of Old Enterprise involved more than one cantankerous man. His wife Catherine (a cultured woman of Minorcan ancestry) ran the hotel, raised three children, and showed a sweet disposition in a trying place. Taylor’s African-American slaves battled the land, working constantly to make him a living. Lovely as the spot seemed, it could exact a heartbreaking price. Nine slaves died of disease—and so did the Taylors’ own young daughter.



Taylor’s land grant in the 1840s. Most of the property he called Enterprise came from a U.S. settlement plan meant to displace the Seminoles.

Government Land Office plat, courtesy of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

The dining area in an early nineteenth-century Florida house.

Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection/State Archives.

