

GREEN SPRINGS PARK

The river route to Enterprise—from a promotional brochure issued in the 1890s.



After the Civil War, as people eagerly explored America, Florida saw a travel boom that continued for decades. One guidebook writer in 1885 called tiny Enterprise “the Mecca of tourists.” Well into the 1920s, visitors bound for Lake Monroe could still book steamboats for their trips.

Tropical Florida

Enterprise was a natural destination for U.S. and foreign travelers. It marked the end of navigation for large boats ascending the St. Johns River from Jacksonville. It had a well-known tourist hotel, Brock House. And it offered access to fishing, hunting, and dark “tropical” scenery—the very image of Florida most visitors already held.

Stereoviews of Green Springs and the Enterprise shell mound.

Spring image by A.F. Styles, about 1870; mound photo by J.C. Mangold, early 1880s.



Their impressions came from newspapers, magazines, guidebooks, and popular photos—including 3-D stereoviews that helped people see Green Springs and the Enterprise shell mound from their own homes. Some tourists, like one Brock House guest who stepped on a dead water moccasin, found the actual spring visit scarier than its pictures. Others liked being in a place that stirred their imaginations.



A 1920s postcard from Benson Springs Inn, formerly Brock House. Long after nineteenth-century writers had tried describing the spring, one observer in this period called it “a bowl of green jade.”

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