



# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## ST. JOHNS RIVER MISSIONARIES FOUNDED CHURCH

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GREEN COVE SPRINGS --- In the early years of development in Northeast Florida, Episcopal missionaries sailed up and down St. Johns River and ministered to small flocks in communities along the way.

As the congregations grew, churches were founded. And do it was St. Mary's Episcopal Church in this lovely Clay County town came about. Dr. Joseph D. Cushman, Jr., wrote a history of the denomination in Florida a number of years ago, and had this to say about St. Mary's:

"The years of nurture given the tiny group of Churchmen by the river missionaries at Green Cove Springs came to fruition in January, 1881. The congregation of St. Mary's moved into their new church in the middle of a particularly cold winter. On one Sunday they were forced to quit the church and adjourn to the lobby of 'the Riverside Cottage' which was more comfortably heated. Since Green Cove Springs was one of the most popular winter resorts in Florida, the congregations were very good during the season. Regular services were conducted by the local lay reader, Mr. J. T. Adams, and supplemented by the visits of mission priests who celebrated Holy Communion."

According to the name plate on the oak-shaded grounds of St. Mary's, the church construction took place in 1878-79, under the episcopate of The Rt. Rev. John Freeman Young, beloved second Bishop of Florida. Funds were raised by subscription and a fair at the home at 105 St. Johns Avenue. The lumber came from nearby Middleburg, the bell was shipped by boat from Jacksonville. The spire was finished in 1884 and the first services were March 10, 1879. The attractive fire doors and memorial windows are of special interest.

