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greatest jigsaw puzzle of them all

Hampton Dunn

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



“THE GREATEST JIGSAW PUZZLE OF THEM ALL”

By HAMPTON DUNN

NORTH MIAMI – Noted publisher William Randolph Hearst searched the world over in his prowl for art treasures. In 1925, he discovered and purchased a long forgotten Spanish Monastery which in 1835 had been confiscated by the Spanish Government and sold to a farmer to store grain.

Today the Monastery is erected in North Miami just off U.S. 1 and attracts people of all faiths. It is the oldest structure in the Western Hemisphere, predating Columbus' discovery of the New World by 351 years.

In the 12th Century, Alphonso VII, King of Leon, Castile and Galicia drove away the Moors from his kingdom. In gratitude to God, he founded in 1141 the Monasterio de San Bernardo de Sacramenia. It was operated by the Cistercian Order for 694 years.

Heart had intended to transport the architectural gem to his estate in San Simeon, Calif. The more than 36,000 heavy pieces were packed in some 10,751 crates and shipped to New York. There they were stored and not moved because of the depression. Finally, two Ohio businessmen bought the Monastery and re-assembled it in sunny Florida. To put together the enormous jigsaw took 19 months and cost \$1.5 million.

It is situated in a quiet, formal Spanish garden and the Monastery contains priceless treasures from the art, warfare and religious life of long-dead Middle Ages. The Monastery is now owned by the St. Bernard Foundation, a non-profit corporation. It is used for Episcopal services on Sunday.

