U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

A. M. Thorne, Superintendent.

State: Florida.

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Topographic Sheets Nos. 1698, 1699, 1700.

Locality:

West Coast of Florida, from Clearwater to Bayport.

1888.

Chief of Party:

W. Irving Vinal.
U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,

Woods Hall, Mass.

July 18th, 1888.

Mr. B. N. Coleman,
Assistant in Charge of Office and Topography,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Your letter dated June 28th, although
 plainly directed, has been traveling about the
country and reached me only a day or two ago.

The topographical surveys made by me on the
west-coast of Florida, during the seasons of
1884 and 1886, extending from Clearwater on
the south to Bayport on the north, included
Hog Island, the Anclote Keys and the Straits
of Cedar Keys.

The characteristic features of the country
traversed and shown on the field sheets, in-
dicate recent geological formations, yet in-
places rock of an apparently earlier age was
found. The general relief of the country is simple
and embossed near the coast, rising and undulat-
ing.
ing in the interior. Particularly as we pro-
cceed northward.

The line dividing Hillsboro County from Florida County runs eastward from the mouth of the Ac-
clot River. South of this line the past land is
immediately adjacent to the coast and the shore-
line is comparatively bold. North of the line
the past land generally recedes from the coast,
the intervening salt marsh varying greatly in
width from a few yards to several miles. Here
the high water line is sharply defined, by the gray
and muddy edges of the marsh or an occasional spot
of sandy beach, but the location of the low water
line is uncertain. The sea shore is extremely shel-
low, the bottom very and nearly level; "northerns" frequent-
ly blow the water far from shore. Save on the Gulf
side of Hog Island and the Acclote Keys there
are no breakers and these owing to the shallowness
of the water and the gentle incline of the bottom are
never dangerous. The entire coast is free from
signs of wrecks or drift. Recently a lighthouse
has been established near the north end of the
Acclote Keys, inside of which is safe and con-
venient anchorage for vessels trading for 8 or 9 ft.
feet of water. This harbor is the rendezvous for the sponge fishermen who have their "grounds" for curing and storing sponges on the mouths. This is the only harbor, between Tampa Bay and Cedar Keys, for vessels drawing more than 3 feet of water. Shelter for small vessels can be found back of Hog Island, at the entrance of the Littlechasscootie, Weihiwachica and other streams, but the channels are narrow, intricate and poorly defined. The eastern sides of the islands are fringed with sawgrass, but on the main shore the sawgrass trees have in most instances been killed by frosts. Palmetto and Pine also grow on the islands where there is very little arable land. On the main land the forest growth consists of Palmetto, Pine, Cypress, Cedar and several varieties of Oak, including live Oak. There is a great deal of scrub both Oak and Palmetto.

The extensive salt marshes of Hernando County are interspersed with islands of solid ground, often showing outcropping rocks, on which grow Palmetto, Pine and Cedar trees of large size. The trees having been cut from some of these islands, they are now entirely cleared of
vegetation. The marshes are covered with a
rank growth of "Saw" grass and are intersected
by numerous creeks, some of which are of con-
siderable size and most of which have their orig-
ins in the woods on the fast land. Many small,
singular and often detached marshes run up
into the fast land. Some of these have been
reclaimed by ditches and dykes; the land
thus gained is very rich and supports cultivation
in several years in succession at small ex-
 pense. A Company of English Capitalists, headed
by Sir Edward J. Reid, has acquired title to a
large tract of marsh land in Hernando County
and was engaged in reclaiming it at the time
this survey was made. Many small muddy de-
pressions are found, particularly in Hillsboro Co-
unty, which in 1884 was dry (said to be an
occasional occurrence) but which in 1886 contain-
ed from 3 to 4 feet of water. Springs of fresh wa-
ter, always found with limestone rock, are present
at varying intervals along the most tumbled roads.
A deep and powerful spring of fresh water was
found in the Gulf between Yellow Bluff and Bay
View.
There is a much larger proportion of arable land near the coast in Hillsborough County than in Hernando County, but the land in the latter county, while it lies further back, is in several of a better quality.

In Hillsborough County the settlements of Clearwater, Dunedin, Yellow Bluff, Bay View, Lucette, and Tarpon Springs are made up largely of northern people who cultivate Oranges, Lemons and Vegetables. They have direct steamboat connection with each other and with Tarpon and Cedar Keys twice a week. The Steamer "Gomnor Sadoff" was built expressly for the route. A smaller light steam steamer, the "Mary Kistin", runs from Clearwater to Tarpon Springs. During low water, or when the water near shore is shoal, the larger boat is obliged to land passengers and freight on pier heads built off shore.

The settlements along the coast of Hernando County, as Port Ritchie, Hudson and Bay Port, are made on islands surrounded by salt marsh, but are connected by good roads to the interior. Sailing vessels of very light draught are the only means of communication by water between these
Places and Cedar Keys.
Survey for a railroad from Tampa to Brooksville were made in 1886 and it was understood that the rails would at once be laid. This road as surveyed is within easy access of all the places named above. Said rails are located at Seminole, Bay View, Arcola and Tarpon Springs but a great deal of lumber used on this coast is furnished by the Tuscaloosa Mills (Fairchild) at Cedar Keys. The sawmills of the Tatey and Eagle Pencel Companies are located at Cedar Keys.
Tarpon Springs was projected by Ex-Governor Safford of Arizona, Mr. Sinton of Philadelphia and others as a resort for health and pleasure. It is regularly laid out with wide avenues and streets, pleasant drives have been arranged to best continue with the topography of the country and a fine hotel erected. A number of people have established their winter homes at this place.
Bayport for many years has been a place for shipping cedar logs. This traffic is not so interminably carried on as formerly owing to the growing scarcity of trees of large size. Mr. John Parson, who for many years has controlled the interests of this
place and vicinity maintains, mostly at his personal expense, a road and a tele-
phone line to Brooksville, distance 17
miles.
There are no settlements directly on the
coast between Bayport and Cedar Keys;
the most important, Crystal River and Homas-
creek, are from six to eight miles inland.
Homasassa, formerly a noted estate belonging

to Senator Yulee of Florida, is now owned by
ex-Governor Chamberlain of Maine and others.
Throughout this entire section real estate
agents and land speculators are using every
effort to induce settlers to take up lands and
are apparently quite successful.
The unclaimed and unoccupied land cov-
ered by this survey is of little value as much
of it is liable to overflow or, where it is elevated
above flooding, the soil is light and barren.
Submitting the above Find

Yours very respectfully,
W. Irving Vinson,
Assistant U.S. Land C. Survey.