U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

F. 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.
Your letter dated June 28th, although
slightly delayed, has been received 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 Stilts
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 indistinct.
ing in the interior. Particularly as we proceed northward.

The line dividing Hillsboro County from Fernandina County runs eastward from the mouth of the Acclote River. South of this line the fast land is immediately adjacent to the coast and the shore line is comparatively bold. North of the line the fast 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 grass and muddy edges of the marsh or an occasional strip of sandy beach, but the location of the low water line is uncertain. The sea shore is extremely shallow, the bottom coral and nearly level; "norther" frequently blow the water far from shore. Save on the Gulf side of Hog Island and the Acclote Keys there are no breakers and these giving to the shallowness of the water and the gentle incline of the bottom are more 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 commodious anchorage for vessels trading for or getting.
feet of water. This harbor is the rendezvous for
the sponge fishermen who have their "founds" for
airing and storing sponges on the north key. 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 Littlechass-
cootic, Wekiwaunch and other streams, but the
channels are narrow, intricate and poorly defined.
The eastern sides of the islands are figured
with sawgrass, but on the main shore the saw-
gass trees have in most instances been killed
by frosts. Palmetto and Ruie also grow on the is-
lands where there is very little arable land.
On the main lands the forest growth consists of
Palmetto, Ruie, 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 out cropping rocks, on
which grow Palmetto, Ruie and Cedar trees of
large size. The trees having been cut from some
of these islands, they are now entirely devoid 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-
in in the woods on the fast land. Many small,
singular and often detached marshes run up
into the fast land. Some of them have been
reclaimed by ditches and dykes; the land
thus gained is very rich and repay cultiva-
tion several years in succession at small ex-
 pense. A Company of English Capitalists, headed
by Sir Edward P. 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 foot of water. Springs of fresh wat-
er, always found with limestone rock, are present
at varying intervals along the most traveled roads.
A deep and powerful spring of fresh water was
found in the Gulf between Yellow Bluff and Bay
Viejo.
There is a much larger proportion of arable land near the coast in Hillsboro County than in Hernando County, but the land in the latter county, while it lies further back, is in general of a better quality.

In Hillsboro County the settlements of Clearwater, Dunedin, Yellow Bluff, Bay View, Ladesa, 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 "Grosvenor Safford" was built expressly for this route. A smaller light-steam Steamer, the "Mary Kinston," runs from Clearwater to Tarpon Springs. During "croppers," or when the water near shore is shoal, the larger boat is obliged to land passengers and freight on shore levees built off shore.

The settlements along the Coast of Hernando County, as Port Richey, Hudson and Bayport, are made on islets surrounded by salt marshes 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.

Surveys for a railroad from Tampa to Brooksville were made in 1886 and it was understood that the rails would be soon be laid. This road as surveyed is within easy access of all the places named above. Said mills are located at Suemedie, Bay View, Ardsley, and Tarpon Springs but a great deal of lumber used in this coast is furnished by the Tarponore Mills (Fairchild) at Cedar Keys. The sawmills of the Tarpon and Eagle Pencil Companies are located at Cedar Keys.

Tarpon Springs was projected by ex-Governor Saford of Arizona, Mr. Kirton 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 suit contour with the topography of the country and a few hotel erected. A number of people have established their winter homes at this place.

Bay Port for many years has been a place for shipping Cedar logs. This traffic is not so immensely carried on as formerly owing to the growing scarcity of trees of large size. Mr. John Parsons, who for many years has controlled the interests of this
place and vicinity maintain, mostly at
his personal expense, a road and a tele-
phone line to Brooksville, distant 17
miles.
There are no settlements directly on the
coast between Bayport and Cedar Keys;
the most important, Crystal River and Homas-
sassa, are from six to eight miles inland.
Homasassa, formerly a noted estate belonging

to Senator Yulee of Florida, is now owned by

an Governor Chamberlain of Maine and others.
Throughout this entire section real estate
agents and land speculators were using every
effort to induce settlers to take up lands and
were 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, I am

Yours very respectfully,

W. Irving Under
Assistant U.S. Land G. Survey.