**Form 504**

**U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**DESCRIPTIVE REPORT**

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**LOCALITY**  
State: Florida  
General locality: Blackwater  
Locality: Bay  
1892  
494

**CHIEF OF PARTY**  
P. A. Walker

**LIBRARY & ARCHIVES**

**DATE**
U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,
J.C. Mendenhall, Superintendent,

State: Florida.

Descriptive Report,
Topographic Sheets Numbers 2093 and 2094.

Locality
Blackwater Bay and Tributaries, Florida.

1892,

Chief of Party: F. A. Welker.
Dr. J. C. Mendenhall,

Superintendent, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,

Washington, D.C.,

Dear Sir:

In obedience to instructions and memoranda for Descriptive Reports, 1897, I beg leave to submit the following report of Topographic Sheets Nos. 209.3 and 209.4:

The two sheets consist of a Topographic Survey on a scale of 1,000,000 of Blackwater Bay and Inlet, Florida. As sheet 209.4 only contains a small portion of the work, which was necessary to make the survey of the head of the bay complete, but one report is made.

The base of the work was established from a triangulation carried up Pensacola and Escambia Bays from the line "Mary Jane Wharf - Fort Pickens." The plane table was used for the execution of
the topography.

On the west shore of the bay from the tri-
angulation station, Eagle Point to Bay Point the
land is low with patches of swamps bordering all
of the streams entering the bay. The beach
is a clean white sand. Near it the swamps
have a growth of grass from two to four feet
high, but a short distance back they are
covered with dense timber and brush. Beyond
Bay Point the land is somewhat higher with a
low bluff extending a little beyond Shields Point,
where it turns away from the bay, forming a
gradual slope in the land around all of the
swamps as far as the head of the bay. The
land in no place is over 15 feet above mean
low water.

At Bay Point there is a collection of houses
occupied almost entirely by people employed at
the saw mill located there. There is no post-
office, telegraph office or telephone office nearer
than Milton, which is distant by wagon road
or water about six miles. There is but one
small general supply store. The wagon road
to Milton is fair, but all of the other roads... leading into the interior are poorly defined and very heavy for travel on account of the depth of the sand. There is one large sawmill at this point, which does an extensive business in cutting rough logs into timbers. The logs are mostly floated down the Yellow River, which enters Blackwater Bay just opposite. As the water in the bay is not deep enough to allow the large ocean vessels to come up from Pensacola Bay, the lumber is taken down to deep water in flat boats and small schooners. The distance to the anchorage for ocean vessels is about 12 miles.

On the east shore, beginning at the triangulation station Grassy Point, as far as the north entrance to the Yellow River is one vast swamp cut up by numerous small logpens and four large branches of the Yellow River. The most southern of these branches is known as the Weems River; the next to the north as Broad Moon, and the other two are known as the Yellow River. The swamp...
Catfish Lagoon to an extent of from two to six hundred yards from the shore line is covered with a tall grass; much of the grass is dense and heavy timber. Most of the swamp from the western to the most northern month of the Yellow River is covered with dense bush and timber. This swamp is entirely under water during an ordinary flood or a very high tide. None of these streams are navigable on account of the shallow water near their mouths. After entering the streams for a few hundred yards there is good deep water. The banks are steep and consist of timber and dense brush; much cutting was necessary for the execution of the topography. The Yellow River drains an vast extent of country, and an immense amount of timber is floated down annually.

The remaining part of the east shore of the bay as far as the entrance to the Blackwater River is low, but it is dry land with the exception of a few patches of swamps bordering Ward's Basin, and all of the streams
entering the bay. There are a few poorly defined roads, one leading to Milton and others into the interior.

The Blackwater River enters the bay at its head. Only the entrance to the rain is shown.

The soil of the country surrounding the bay is a mixture of clay and sand; very little of it is fit for agricultural purposes. The timber is dense, consisting mostly of sycamore, pitch and yellow pines from 10 to 70 feet in height, but very few of these are of any value at present. There are also scattered live oak, water oak, scrub oak, magnolia, palmetto, red bay and sweet bay. In the swamps there is a thick growth of briars and underbrush; a little juniper and cypress are also found. The country is thinly settled.

Mullet, trout and other salt water fish are found; also oysters. Alligators are numerous in the swamps.

Only the high water line and marsh limits are shown on the plan.

Very respectfully yours,

P. A. Welker,
Artist, C.T. & E. Survey.
U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,
T. C. Mendenhall, Superintendent.

State of Florida

Descriptive Report

of

Topographic Sheet No. 2094.

Lee A.D. 2093

1893.

Chief of party: Assistant H. A. Weikert
Taku Arm, St. A., Alaska

August 24th, 1893.

Dr. T. C. Mendenhall,
Superintendent U. S. C. G. Survey,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

In obedience to instructions and memoranda for Descriptive Reports, 1887, I beg leave to submit the following report of Topographic Sketch No. 2094, made by the party of Assistant P. A. Helmer during the months of February and March, 1893.

The work consists of a survey of Blackwater Arm, its tributary bays and sounds, and the adjacent country, from the mouth of the river to a point about three and one half (3 1/2) miles above the town of Milton. It was made entirely with the planimeter, a planimetal traverse made entirely with the planimeter, a planimetal traverse
this rack way, checking rack this as often as practicable.

The work was begun at the triangulation station Pottin, established in 1892, and the table consisted on the stations from in and around Blackwater Bay, also established in 1892. It was made on a scale of one in ten thousand (10,000) and included Langley, Pelican, Sturman, Marquis, Quinn, and Kibro Bayou; Marquis and Night Basin; Pond Creek; and the towns of Milton and Bagdad. Most of these bayous and basins are merely short arms or small channels of the river extending back into the swamp, the only exception being Pond Creek, which is a small stream flowing from the rock and running the river at, or just above, the town of Bagdad.

Across the river, toward the rock from Bagdad, is the mouth of Sturman Bayou and just below it, the entrance to Langley Bayou, both of which are channels of the river flowing nearly parallel with it, the latter being found just before it enters the river, about three-quarters of a mile below Bagdad, by Pelican Bayou, a small
shuggish stream flowing from the east Wargnis Basin, situated just below and across the river from Milton, is an arm of Stonewow Bayou, joining it just after it separates from the river. Wargnis Bayou enters the river opposite Milton and just above the railroad bridge. The two arms of Quinn Bayou, formerly connected but now separated by a dam and sand bar, are just above Milton and on the west side of the river. Harbor Bayou extends northward from the river at a point about one mile above Milton, and at its head is connected with the river by a shallow ditch cut through the narrow strip of land separating the two. Bright Basin, the largest body of water shown, joins the river at a point about one and one-half miles above Milton, is irregular in shape, and bounded on the south and west by a sandy beach and solid ground that rise rapidly to a height of from 50 to 90 feet, forming a bluff as seen from the entrance.

The river, with its several tributary arms and channels, meanders down through a densely wooded swamp, which is about a half a mile wide
on the average although occasionally almost diaper-y. Away from the swamp on either side the
land slopes up, at various angles, to an elevation of 50 to 90 feet, and is more or less rolling
and rolling, owing to the numerous small streams flowing through, or from, it.

All the land at an elevation of more than 20 feet above the river is thinly covered with small
pine trees, and occasionally a few live oaks, with an underbrush of small oak, more or less
dense. The lowland, outside of the swamps, is mostly
covered with some, pitch, and yellow, pine of
usually small size, varying from 10 to 20 feet in
height, and is of but little value, all the trees being
now cut out for lumber. The swamps are densely
covered with pine, cypress, oak, cedar, red and
white oak, and a mass of brown and much,
and is often so thick as to be almost impassable.

The soil is sandy with more or less clay giving
it a yellowish or reddish color, and is of but little
use for agricultural purposes, although some of the
low land around the towns is partly well tilled.

Two small towns, Wilton, with a population
of about 1800, and Bagdad, population about 400, are shown on the chart on the right or west bank of the river. Both owe their existence mostly to the lumber business of the country, which is still the only industry of any importance. There are two large sawmills at Bagdad and one at Milton, all in full operation, and situated on the banks of the river so as to get the logs from the water when they are held by means of booms both floating and stationary, the latter being made by driving piles in the bottom of the river. These logs are cut back in the country wherever the timber is large enough, and hauled to the nearest stream large enough to float them, into which they are rolled and allowed to float down with the current to the river and thence to a large floating boom plant across the river just above the entrance to Knight's Basin. Here they are allowed to collect and when the number is sufficient, gathered into a floating boom and rafted to the mills, where they are sawed into lumber, which is conveyed by means of lighters, to the shipping in the river.
Our railroad is shown on the chart, the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad, which crosses in a northwesterly and southwesterly direction, passing through the southern edge of Milton and crossing the river on a low bridge with an iron draw (or swing) near the center. This is the only bridge across the river, the only other means of crossing being by boat or by a ferry located just above the bridge and operated by means of a winch, or board. The ferry float is wound around, which is wound a rope with an end made fast on each bank of the river. All the other bridges shown were made by driving piles into the mud, spiking longitudinal girders to them, upon which to lay the planks and building a low railing to prevent running off into the mud and water.

The roads represented are not much more than wagon tracks through the woods and not very good owing to the softness of the sand. They lead out from Milton in various directions toward the small towns and villages scattered

below.
around in the woods.

All the fences represented are composed of wood, excepting only a few made of iron in Milton, and on the ordinary picket and board fences, with a few rail or wove fences in the woods away from the town.

Milton and Bagdad have telegraphic communication with both the east and west and are also connected with Pensacola by telephone. Milton receives mail and express matter daily from both the east and west, via the Pensacola and Atlantic R.R.

Yours respectfully,

O.B. Truch.