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FLORIDA.

SITUATION, BOUNDARIES, AND EXTENT.

Florida is situated between 25° and 31° north latitude, and 3° and 10° 20′ west longitude. It is bounded north by Alabama and Georgia, from the last of which it is separated in part by the river St. Mary's; east by the Atlantic ocean; south and west by the Gulf of Mexico. Formerly the name of Florida was applied to the whole country east of the Mississippi, and bounded on the north as follows: by the river St. Mary's from the sea to its source; thence west to the junction of Flint river with the Appalachicola; then up the Appalachicola to the parallel of 31° north latitude; then due west along that parallel to the Mississippi. The river Appalachicola divided this country into East and West Florida. The part lying between the Mississippi and Pearl river is now included in the state of Louisiana; the part between Pearl river and the Perdido, belongs to the states of Mississippi and Alabama; and the part east of the Perdido is the country that is now properly called Florida. Its mean length from south to north is 385 miles, and the mean breadth 150; the area being 57,750 square miles, or 36,960,000 acres.

FACE OF THE COUNTRY, SOIL, AND PRODUCTIONS.

Florida is generally low and sandy; the sea-coast is uniformly level and marshy; but the ground rises gradually towards the interior, where a ridge of low hills extends from north to south nearly the whole length of the peninsula.

The soil is very various; in some parts, especially on the banks of the rivers, it is very good; in other parts, indifferent; and there are large tracts which are represented to be of little value. The country, however, has been but imperfectly explored, and few agricultural experiments have been made. Much of the land, which, on a superficial view, has been supposed to be not worth cultivating, it is believed may be turned to very profitable account. The productions are corn, rice, potatoes, cotton, hemp, olives, oranges, and other tropical fruits; and it is supposed that coffee and the sugar cane will flourish here. The pine barrens produce a kind of grass, which supports an immense number of cattle. The forests yield fine live oak, pitch, tar, and turpentine, and lumber has been exported for nearly a century. Vast quantities of fish are cured on the coast.

RIVERS.

St. John's is the principal river of Florida. Its sources have not been exactly ascertained, but are supposed to be between latitude 26° and 27° north. It runs in a northerly direction, parallel with the Atlantic coast, and expands into several lakes, particularly Lake George, which is 20 miles long and 15 wide, and embosoms several islands. Within 20 miles of its mouth the river turns to the east, and falls into the Atlantic ocean, near latitude 30° north, 36 miles south of St. Mary's. Its whole length is about 300 miles, and it is navigable for vessels which can pass the bar at its mouth, for 150 miles, to Lake George. The bar has nine feet of water at low tide, and there is good anchorage outside of the bar for large vessels. The lands on this river are very fertile, and numerous settlements extend along its banks.

Appalachicola is a large river, formed by the Chatahouchee and Flint rivers, which unite at the south-west extremity of Georgia. It flows south, and discharges itself into St. George's Sound, the western part of Appalachee Bay.

The *Okelockonne* rises in the southern part of Georgia; and, running south, falls into Appalachee bay, in latitude 29° 40′ north, and longitude 8° west.

Hillsborough river runs into Espiritu Santo bay, in latitude 27° 40′ north.

Perdido river, which separates Florida from Alabama, runs south, and forms a considerable bay, which communicates with the Gulf of Mexico, in longitude 10° 15′ west.

Conecuh river rises in Georgia; and, after receiving the Escambia from the west, falls into an arm of Pensacola bay, a little east of the Perdido.

St. Mark's river rises in Georgia, and falls into Appalachee bay, at 7° west longitude.

BAYS.

Pensacola bay, which sets up from the Gulf of Mexico, near the western boundary of Florida, is 15 miles long, and from 3 to 7 broad. It is completely land-locked, so that vessels are perfectly safe from every wind. The water is said to be sufficiently deep for vessels of the largest class, the bar at the mouth having four fathoms of water over it. A fortification on Rose island, and another on the main, opposite to it, would effectually defend the entrance. On the banks of the Conecuh and Almirante rivers, which fall into the bay, there are said to be large quantities of live oak. This bay is of great importance to the United States, as it is the only commodious and safe harbour for large ships, in the Gulf of Mexico.

Appalachee bay is an extensive body of water, embracing the mouth of the river St. Mark's.

Espiritu Santo, or *Hillsborough* bay, is on the west coast of the peninsula, at the mouth of Hillsborough river.

CLIMATE.

The climate, from October to June, is generally very mild and pleasant; but the months of July, August, and September, are extremely hot and sultry; and during this season fevers are prevalent in many places. St. Augustine, however, enjoys generally a good climate, and is often the resort of invalids.

CIVIL DIVISIONS AND POPULATION.

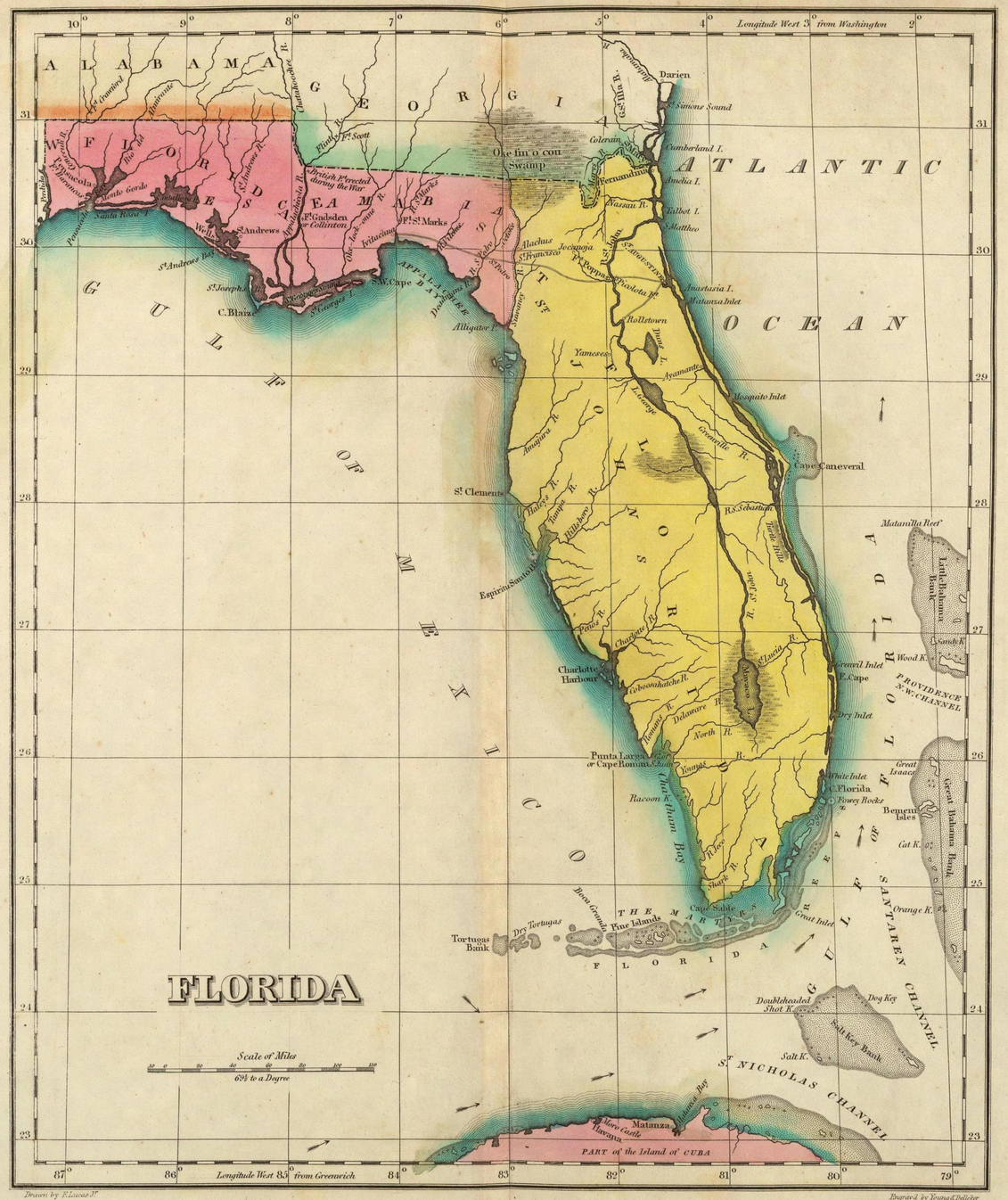
Florida being annexed to the United States after the census of the United States was taken, no enumeration was made of the inhabitants, nor has the country been subdivided into counties. It is constituted into a territory of the United States, and a governor has been appointed.

For judicial purposes it has been divided into east and west districts, the one having the capital of St. Augustine, and the other that of Pensacola. The country is very thinly settled, the whole population probably not exceeding 10,000; but as there are considerable emigrations to St. Augustine and Pensacola, it is supposed there will soon be a material increase.

CHIEF TOWNS.

St. Augustine is a sea-port on the eastern coast, opposite the inlet at the north point of St. Anastatia island. It is regularly laid out in the form of a parallelogram, the streets intersecting each other at right angles. The houses are generally two stories high, and built of a species of stone peculiar to the country. The situation is pleasant; the supply of fresh water abundant; the atmosphere dry and healthful, and well adapted to northern constitutions. Invalids frequently resort hither for the benefit of the climate. The soil in the neighbourhood is generally sandy, yet produces corn, garden vegetables, oranges and lemons in great perfection. The harbour is good; but there is a bar at its mouth, which, at the lowest tides, will not admit vessels drawing more than six feet water; there is, however, a roadstead outside of the bar which affords anchorage for larger vessels. The town and the entrance of the harbour are well defended by a strong fort, built entirely of hewn stone, and mounting 60 cannon. In the rear of the city, and nearly encircling it, but at too great a distance to affect the climate, is an impenetrable morass, on the margin of which are erected six redoubts. The population is estimated at 5000.

GEOGRAPHICAL, STATISTICAL, AND HISTORICAL MAP OF FLORIDA.



CHIEF TOWNS, *(continued.)*

Pensacola is a sea-port on the west side of Pensacola bay, nine miles above the fort at its entrance. It stands on a dry, sandy plain, elevated eighteen or twenty feet above the level of the water, and is represented to be perfectly healthy at all seasons of the year. The population in 1819, was about 2000, principally Spaniards. Many of the houses and public structures are spacious and elegant, but wear the appearance of decay. Since the cession of Florida to the United States, emigrants from various parts of the union have resorted to this place in great numbers, with the expectation that its fine bay, and other natural advantages, will render it a place of great trade. Latitude 30° 25′ north. Longitude 9° 50′ west.

ISLANDS.

There are numerous long narrow islands on the eastern coast. The principal is *Amelia* island, thirteen miles long and two broad, lying seven leagues north of St. Augustine, and near the mouth of St. Mary's river.

GOVERNMENT.

The territorial government of Florida was established by an act of congress, passed on the 31st of March, 1822. The executive power is vested in a governor appointed by the president and senate, and holding his office for three years, unless sooner removed. He is *ex officio* commander in chief of the militia, and superintendant of Indian affairs, and has power to grant pardons for offences against the territory, and reprieves for offences against the United States, until the decision of the president is made known; and appoints and commissions all officers whose appointments are not otherwise provided for; a secretary of the territory is also appointed by the president and senate, and holds his office for four years, unless sooner removed. The legislative power is vested in the governor, and in thirteen other citizens of the United States, to be called the legislative council, and appointed annually by the president and senate. The legislative council may alter or repeal the laws in force at the commencement of their powers, and may make new laws; but no laws can be made inconsistent with the constitution and laws of the United States, or which may lay any person under restraint or disability on account of his religious opinions or mode of worship. The judicial power is vested in two superior courts, and in such inferior courts and justices of the peace, as the legislative council of the territory may from time to time establish. Writs of error and appeals from the superior courts, may be made to the supreme court of the United States. The judges are appointed by the president and senate, and hold their offices for five years. The privilege of the habeas corpus is extended to the inhabitants of the territory.

FLORIDA.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The name of Florida was originally not confined to the small tract of country at present known by that appellation, but extended over an immense region, which was discovered by Cabot, in 1496. The first visitant in the actual territory of Florida, appears to have been Ponce de Leon, who landed on Easter day, 1512, from which circumstance the country is said to have derived its name of Pascha Florida. The flattering picture which he drew of this region, excited a disposition among the European sovereigns to appropriate it to themselves. Hence arose conflicting claims, founded, in the first instance, upon discovery, and afterwards upon conquest and possession. In 1520, Vasquez sailed from St. Domingo, and visited Florida; in 1523, De Verrazini, a Florentine; and, in 1524, De Geray, a Spaniard, also made some progress in discovery. Two years afterwards, Pamphilo de Narvaez obtained a grant from Charles the Fifth, of all the lands from Cape Florida to the river Palmos, in the Gulf of Mexico. He set sail in April 1528, with a considerable force, and landed at Apalachee; but met with a formidable opposition from the Indians, and at last perished on the coast, near the river Palmos, by shipwreck, only ten of his crew returning to Spain. In 1539, Ferdinand de Soto explored Florida; and, after visiting many remote regions, and having passed through a series of romantic adventures, appears to have died near the banks of the Mississippi, in 1542. About the middle of the 16th century, many of the Protestants of France, persecuted by the government, sought refuge in Florida only to experience greater evils. The Spanish monarch who claimed the title to the country, sent out in 1564, a considerable force to dislodge them. The greatest barbarities were inflicted upon the unfortunate emigrants, many of whom were hung on the trees, with an inscription purporting that they were destroyed "not as Frenchmen, but as heretics." An ample and appropriate vengeance was taken not long afterwards by the French. Dominic de Gourgues, a Gascon of adventurous and determined spirit, collected a party of his countrymen, and being joined by the Indians, attacked the fort in which the Spaniards were collected; and, having carried it by storm, hung up the garrison on the same trees that sustained the mouldering bodies of his countrymen, inscribing over them that they were executed "not as Spaniards, but as cut-throats and murderers." Nine hundred widows are said to have petitioned Charles the Ninth, for aid and vengeance on this occasion.

The Spaniards, however, persevering in their attempts to obtain a footing in Florida, established the town and fort of St. Augustine, in 1565, which they held until 1586, when the former was taken and pillaged by sir Francis Drake. Two years previously, captains Barlow and Armidon had taken nominal possession in right of the queen of England, of the country on the northern coast of Florida. Little more is known of Florida, for a period of nearly a century. In 1682, M. de la Salle visited West Florida or Louisiana, and proceeded as far as the Illinois country. Pensacola was settled about 1696, by the French, who met with so many discouraging adventures, that, according to M. de Raynal, they would have abandoned it but for the sassafras tree, the fragrance and medicinal virtues of which animated them to continue their exertions. The Spanish settlements in Florida suffered greatly from the buccaneering inroads of the English naval officers, as well as from the neighbouring colonies. In 1702, colonel More, then governor of Carolina, made an unsuccessful attack on St. Augustine with a force of 500 regular troops, and 700 Indians, but was obliged, after a siege of three months, to abandon his ships and stores to the garrison. In 1704, Fort St. Marks was taken by the Carolinians. For some years Florida remained undisturbed by hostile invasion, and increased in population and prosperity. The advantages which the country offered for a settlement, drew the attention of general Oglethorpe, who had established a colony in Georgia. With 400 regular soldiers, 300 Indians, and 200 seamen, besides volunteers from Carolina, he made an attack upon St. Augustine, in 1740; but was received by the Spaniards with so much coolness and intrepidity, that he was forced to retire with loss. In the preceding year, general Oglethorpe had effected a treaty with the Indians, by which it was declared that all the lands between Savannah and St. John's rivers, with the adjacent islands, and from the latter river to Appalachicola bay, should belong to the Creek nation; and, about the same time, he constructed a chain of forts from Frederica to St. John's, some of which are considered effective at this day.

In 1742, the Spaniards in their turn, attempted the conquest of the English possessions in the vicinity. A large force proceeded from the Havanna to St. Augustine, where, meeting with reinforcements, the whole landed at Amelia island. Oglethorpe, however, contrived to deceive them as to his force; and finally, by a series of artifice and stratagems, induced them to retreat. Few events occurred from this period until 1763, when a treaty of peace settled the conflicting pretensions of France, Spain, and England. By this treaty the whole province of Florida was ceded by Spain to Great Britain, in exchange for the island of Cuba, which the English had then recently taken. Soon after the cession the British divided the territory into two provinces, called East and West Florida, the river Appalachicola being the boundary between them; and by a proclamation, invited settlers to the country, holding forth liberal inducements. Many respectable persons emigrated in consequence thereof from Carolina, and, among other colonists, a body of 1500 Greeks, Italians, and Minorcans were brought from the Mediterranean, and settled at a spot about sixty miles south of St. Augustine, where they began the cultivation of indigo and the sugar cane.

When the war of the American revolution broke out, a small part of the population of Florida was found favourable to the cause of the colonies; but the greater proportion, composed principally of natives of Great Britain by birth, and the Spaniards, adhered to the royal side. Privateers were fitted out at the ports of Florida, by which the trade of the southern provinces was severely harassed, and the Indians were encouraged with presents by the British officers to let loose their barbarous hostility upon the Americans. The latter, on the other hand, were not backward in making reprisals upon British vessels. In August, 1775, a vessel with a large quantity of gunpowder was captured off the bar of St. Augustine, by some privateersmen from Carolina. In retaliation for this a party of rangers and Indians was sent into Georgia, where they committed great ravages. Until 1779, the frontiers of Florida were the theatre of a predatory war. In that year general Prevost left Florida, and marching into Georgia with a considerable force of regulars and others, took possession of Sunbury, and subsequently of Savannah and Augusta, thus securing East Florida from encroachments on the side of Georgia. While engaged in this expedition, however, he left the province open to incursions from Louisiana, which the Spaniards were not slow in taking advantage of. In September, 1779, Don B. de Galvez, a young and enterprising general in the Spanish service, and governor of Louisiana, invested the garrison and settlement of Baton Rouge, then commanded by lieutenant colonel Dickson, and compelled them to surrender. In May, 1781, Don Galvez captured Pensacola, and soon afterwards completed the conquest of the whole of West Florida, which remained in possession of Spain until the treaty of peace of 1783, when Great Britain relinquished both provinces of Florida.

When Louisiana was ceded to the United States by France, in 1803, it was declared by the treaty to be ceded with the same extent that it had in the hands of Spain, and as it had been ceded by Spain to France. The terms of this cession gave rise to a claim on the part of the United States to the country west of the Perdido river; and to prevent the occupation of this territory by any other power, the government of the union took possession in 1811 of the principal posts, except the town and fort of Mobile, which was surrendered to their forces in the following year. East Florida, however, remained in the undisturbed possession of the Spanish authorities, with the exception of some revolutionary movements of no long continuance, until the second war between the United States and Great Britain. In 1814, a British expedition having been fitted out from Pensacola against the American territories, general Jackson resolved to take possession of the place. Accordingly, with a small body of regulars and some mounted volunteers, he marched from Mobile, and after a show of resistance from the Spaniards and British, carried the town. The fort of Barrancas was soon afterwards destroyed by the British, and general Jackson, having no authority to rebuild it, evacuated the place and returned to Mobile. A similar disregard of the duties of neutrality on the part of the Spanish government, drew upon this province another invasion in 1818. The Seminole Indians, with whom the United States were at war, residing within the limits of Florida, and making their incursions thence without restraint from the Spaniards, it became necessary, for the purpose of chastising them, to cross the territorial line, and subsequently possession was taken by general Jackson of Fort St. Marks and Pensacola. The American troops remained in these posts until November 1818, when they were restored by the government of the United States to Spain. A negociation, which had been for a long time pending, for the transfer of the whole province to the United States, was consummated by treaty, in 1819; and after many vexatious delays, the treaty was ratified by Spain, in October, 1820, and finally by the United States in the month of February, 1821. Possession was delivered to general Jackson, the commissioner of the United States, in July, 1821, and the province now forms one of the territories of the United States.

LIST OF GOVERNORS.

1821 Andrew Jackson.
1822 William P. Duvall.

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