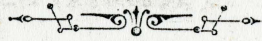


DESCRIPTIVE PAMPHLET OF



HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY,



FLORIDA,

WITH NUMEROUS MAPS, ENGRAVINGS, ETC.

1885.

PUBLISHED BY THE
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY REAL ESTATE AGENCY,
TAMPA, FLORIDA.

WATERS.

The principal bodies of water may be summed up in Tampa Bay, Old Tampa Bay, Hillsborough Bay and Hillsborough river.

The industries are as diversified as the character of its inhabitants is varied.

FISH AND OYSTERS.

The waters which we mentioned above and the many beautiful lakes which are dotted all over its surface afford admirable fishing grounds, where the amateur can find sport with his rod, and the regular fisherman fish for the market, and wages for his labor, while in the bays oysters and clams are found in plenty and abundance.

FRUIT.

The fruit grower has no occasion to lament over the profits which he reaps from his groves of oranges and other fruitage, even under the present greedy grab system of the middle-men.

CROPS.

The farmer finds a remunerative employment in tilling a soil which readily brings good crops of sea island cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, rice, potatoes and all truck stuff and which always finds a ready market.

PASTURAGE FOR CATTLE.

It is hardly necessary to say that some portions of our land furnish excellent natural pasturage for cattle, and that so profitable has it proved that there are many in this county whose wealth, acquired solely by raising and shipping cattle, is astonishing.

TURPENTINE.

The "Queen of the Forest," as some one has called our large, tall pine tree, invites the attention of the turpentine farmer, and opens to the saw-mill men employment in which there has already been found, by some in our midst, independence and wealth.

TRUCK GARDENING.

Truck gardening is also extensively engaged in, and during the entire year vegetables of various descriptions and variety constitute in part wholesome food for the tables; and in the early spring time fine large strawberries, whose luscious appearance would bring water to the mouth of the most fastidious epicure, are served at home as ambrosial delicacies, while in large quantities the juicy berries are shipped to the frozen homes of our Northern friends.

PURSUIITS.

Of course, as a matter of natural and necessary consequence, we have among us those who follow the ordinary pursuits of life, and do mercantile and other business; some being engaged in the retail, others in the wholesale trade, while frequently the two are combined. But the further consideration of the many and various ways (for only a few have been mentioned, and those in only a cursory manner) in which a livelihood and, quite often, independence can be attained, we must defer for the present, trusting that the patient reader will follow us on to that part of this pamphlet which will treat more in detail the different pursuits and avocations of the inhabitants.

TIMBER INTERESTS.

Strange, indeed, would it be did not this county, whose fine timber, both of pine and cypress is so plentiful and abundant, engage to a considerable extent in the lumber trade, in which, as we have before remarked, there has been found independence and wealth. With a land surface of about 542,928 acres (rough estimate), which is continually being cleared of its timber for purposes of agriculture and improvements in many other ways, our saw-mills are constantly supplied with the most desirable material, the sale of which, after it has undergone the process of sawing and general dressing, is accomplished without any effort whatever on the part of the seller. Until recently, on account of our limited and poor communication with the outside world, the immigration to this section was not nearly so great nor were improvements so general, and as a consequence no small per cent. of the timber which was cut by the natives in the clearing of land for agricultural and horticultural purposes was not utilized, but was on the contrary suffered to remain in heaps of logs, which of course would in a reasonable time decay. Only that portion of it was used which the then limited home consumption demanded; and now, when our facilities for transportation are improving and broadening both in respect to quantity and time, our people would indeed be dead to the times and their interest did they not follow the example of Pensacola and other ports along the Florida coast and establish lumber yards for the shipment of lumber to all parts of our great country. But the excuse which they now have for not so doing, and it is a most legitimate one, is that this section, on account of the immense number of buildings which have been, are being and will be erected, demands more than can be supplied. We clearly see, however, that not far in the future a foreign lumber yard will be established in this county, which, on account of its advantages in the way of water communication, will be one of the best patronized of any in the State, there being but two harbors on the Florida coast which carry on any extensive trade in this line of commerce, and over either of which Tampa Bay can boast—over one because of its not so convenient accessibility to timber, and over the other because of its greater distance by several hundred miles from those points on the Atlantic coast where are found the great lumber markets of the North and East. As we have already endeavored to impress on you, Tampa is quite a commercial center, around which in the radius of many miles there is an extensive scope of country depending upon her for supplies; and since it has been found, by those who have

experimented sufficiently to judge, that goods of an imperishable nature can be brought to this point by water with less cost than by rail, we can see no good reason why a foreign lumber yard cannot be established, and instead of allowing the vessels which bring such goods here to return to the Northern ports empty, fill their holds with our sawed yellow pine, which, on account of its quality, and also the sparseness of good building material in other regions, will always enjoy a ready and quick sale in the Northern ports. Both Mexico and Central America depend upon Florida for the cross-ties to be used on their railroads, and points on Tampa Bay are certainly as convenient for their shipment, and in some respects more so, than any of the other harbors; so notwithstanding the insufficient appropriations of Congress up to date, we predict that Tampa within a comparatively short space of time will be the center of a very considerable lumber trade with foreign places, and by foreign we mean such as are not within the limits of the State of Florida, for already from some stations on the South Florida Railroad, and points on the Bay and Manatee river, orders are continually received for fine building material from the mills in this vicinity. As to the quality of Florida timber in general, we can do no better than to make use of a quotation from the New York *Mercantile Journal*, which is also to be found in ex-Commissioner Adams' pamphlet of 1873:

"Yellow pine flooring and step planks from Florida are in fair demand at \$30 per thousand feet, while inferior lumber made in North and South Carolina moves slowly at from \$23 to \$25 per thousand. The yellow pine, so-called, growing in the Carolinas, is objectionable for many reasons. In the first place, the tree is of a different and less enduring species, and has a greater proportion of sap wood and black knots; and in the second place, it is from those trees from which the manufacturers of turpentine and pitch get their material, thus depriving them of the ingredient upon which the durability and peculiar excellence of this kind of wood depends. Owners should always require in their specifications that the yellow pine to be used in first-class buildings should be of the growth of Florida." So we can clearly perceive that which explicates the peculiar and constant demand for the Florida pine is its excellent quality. As to the extent and vastness of the growth of the pine in this and other sections of the State, some idea may be gathered from General Andrew Jackson's celebrated observation, "that the forests were so overgrown with trees of large spreading branches, it was with difficulty that a man even on foot was able to travel through them." Estimating that on a general average each acre of land now contains 5,000 feet of timber, which, however, is an exceedingly low calculation, this county would have in its limits 426,204,000 feet of available lumber, and as the pine is ordinarily generative, the supply of timber in this county, according to the rate of its present consumption, is, we may say, almost inexhaustible, especially as it is positively asserted by parties competent to judge that in the country adjoining Pensacola, notwithstanding her immense mill capacity, the timber grows faster than it can be cut down.

The Bay, the Hillsborough and Alafia rivers, as well as the many smaller streams, afford ample water for the drifting of the many rafts of logs which are continually floated to the mills. The trees having been cut down and cut into convenient lengths, are hauled by the large log-carts to the nearest stream and there connected together into a raft, which, as soon as the tides are favorable, is allowed to drift to the mill, where long ago they have been bargained for. But the pine, we wish you to understand, is not the only tree used in our lumber-making and lumber commerce. Our swamps contain large bodies of the finest cypress, from which can be sawed the most desirable shingles; it is also well adapted to nearly all the purposes for which pine is used, besides it is considerably used in boat and ship-building, and the transportation and sale of this wood to the North and East will in the course of time form no insignificant branch of business.

Cedar is also found in large quantities in our swamps and low hammock lands, and it is principally from the Florida mills that all the Northern factories are supplied with their wood material for making pencils and various other articles, and notable among these are Faber's and Dixon's factories. Upon our high hammock lands the live oak, so durable and lasting, is also of very considerable growth, and it is from this tree, which is frequently enormous in size, that most of the ship knees are made, it being the most suitable wood for this and other purposes in ship-building. There are now in this county, by actual count, over thirty mills, some of them not only doing the usual common mill work, but in addition to sawing and general dressing of lumber, some convert it into doors, sashes, blinds and window-sills of various kinds and designs.

Black walnut is also grown in this section, though to a limited extent, but since the cheapness and fertility of the lands will admit of it, and as it is a most vigorous grower, it is proposed to plant a forest of this timber, and from the experimental tests already made nothing short of success is predicted and expected. All along the banks of the streams both large and small, and along the coast, the large and elegant magnolia, with its beautiful and fragrant flowers, is found in its native soil, and also in many places the red bay, which, however, is only a different species of the same family. From these trees is obtained a most desirable wood for cabinet work, on account of its dark color and beautiful veins. It is commonly known as the "Florida mahogany," and as it is of considerable worth and grown without any culture whatever, it will command careful attention and consideration. We are not disposed to praise the Florida pine and other timbers beyond their true worth and just merit, yet we would impress upon those who have been so patient as to read the simply stated and unvarnished facts, not to let Florida be undervalued and misunderstood in this respect, since timber constitutes one of the important industries of the world. And since in our county grow well nearly all the various kinds of woods—woods from which we can make houses, ships, furniture, barrel-staves and hoops, in fact, articles of nearly any and every description—we would indeed be blind to our own interests, as we remarked in the beginning, did we not vigorously grasp the many natural advantages and not allow them to pass untouched and unnoticed.

