

REPORT OF MR. D.B. DUNN, ASSISTANT ENGINEER.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
St. Augustine, Fla.,
January 8, 1889

Sir: I have the honor to report that, in fulfillment of instructions, I left Palma Sola by sail-boat on January 9 and proceeded to the Alafia River to make the required preliminary examination. The channel at the mouth of the river is gradually lost in an extended sand flat, having a uniform depth of about 5 feet at ordinary low tides, any improvement of which would have to be of a permanent and costly nature. From this point up the river to the town of Peru, a distance of about 6 miles, shoals occur at Cut-off Bayou, Gibson's Bayou, and Platt's Island, on which only 3 1/2 feet of water is had at the same low stages. These shoals are of sand and are mainly induced by cross-currents from the bayous; about half a mile above the town of Peru another formidable shoal occurs, with rock bottom, after which there is deep water to Belle Shoals, about 10 miles from Peru, which is practically the head of navigation. All the intermediate points have 7 to 16 feet with a channel width of 100 feet and over. The steamer, Alafia, drawing 4 1/2 feet of water loaded, is now running between Peru and Tampa, being guided as to time by favorable stages of the tide in which to clear the shoals, while the mails are carried overland. The water on the bar seems to be sufficient for all the present purposes of trade, and if the same depth could be carried uniformly up the river to the town of Peru, with a channel 60 feet in width on the worked on portions, it would afford the measure of relief at present needed by the fruit shipper, to whom the elements of uncertainty and delay are never-failing factors of loss.

The present trade of the river is confined principally to the town of Peru and points below. The combined merchandise trade of the town is estimated at \$76,000 yearly, and the shipment of orange and vegetables is reckoned at 15,000 crates of the former and 5,000 crates of the latter, both of which would probably show large increases under the influence of proper shipping facilities. The timber business on the river is at present confined to the rafting of logs, and the result is placed at a valuation of \$50,000 annually. The back country is reported to be well settled up, and the acreage of non-bearing orange trees that will come into bearing at intervals in the next three years is computed at 2,500 acres.

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D. B. Dunn,
Assistant Engineer