
REPORT
OF THE
COMMISSIONER OF LANDS AND IMMIGRATION
FOR THE YEARS 1879 AND 1880.

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TALLAHASSEE, FLA., January 1, 1881.

To HIS EXCELLENCY, GEORGE F. DREW,

Governor of Florida:

SIR: I have the honor to submit my report as Commissioner of Lands and Immigration for the years 1879 and 1880:

LAND SALES.

During the past two years the quantity of State land disposed of has been as follows: School Lands, 3,312.59 acres for \$4,300.95; Seminary Lands, 589.82 acres for \$1,439.53; Swamp Lands, 159,737.25 acres for \$112,538.55; Internal Improvement Lands, 9,211.87 acres for \$13,177.56, making an aggregate of 172,851.53 acres disposed of for the amount of \$5,131,455.59.

Of the foregoing the following quantities of land have been disposed of as follows:

To Sidney I. Wailes the State agent, at Washington, for the adjustment of land claims in payment for services rendered in procuring the confirmation and patenting of Swamp Lands, 38,841.47 acres of the Swamp Lands. To Williams & Swann for selecting lands under their contract of March 4, 1871, 3,270.19 acres of Swamp Lands and 4,837.98 acres of Internal Improvement Lands, amounting in value to \$9,425.92. To Williams, Swann & Corley for selecting lands under their contract of May 10, 1873, 2,048.56 acres of Swamp Lands and 40.18 acres of Internal Improvement Lands, amounting to \$1,741.45, and in addition to the foregoing the trustees have certified to the St. Johns and Lake Eustis Railway Company the lands granted by the 4th section of chapter 3169 of the Laws of Florida, approved February 20, 1879, entitled An act to incorporate the St. Johns and Lake Eustis Railway Company, 14,605.62 acres of Swamp Lands, making the total quantity of State land disposed of during the two years, 187,457.15 acres.

STATE SELECTIONS.

Since the 1st day of January, 1879, the following patents for Swamp Lands have been received from the United States:

Patent No. 19, former Tallahassee, now Gainesville, Dist.	4,689.80 acres
Patent No. 12, former St. Augustine, now Gainesville Dist.	29,509.75 acres
Patent No. 1, Gainesville District.....	15,761.86 acres
Patent No. 17, former Tampa, now Gainesville, District....	582,360.34 acres
Patent No. 18, former Tampa, now Gainesville, District....	313,514.68 acres
Patent No. 19, former Tampa, now Gainesville, District....	536,995.15 acres
Patent No. 20, former Tampa, now Gainesville, District....	2,282,667.07 acres
Total.....	3,765,448.65 acres
The quantity previously patented was.....	10,677,016.15 acres
Making total patents received.....	14,442,464.80 acres
The quantity disposed of prior to January 1, 1877, was.....	1,497,272.27 acres
Disposed of since.....	187,457.15 acres—
	1,684,729.42 acres
Balance on hand.....	13,757,735.38 acres

The amount of debt for which these lands are pledged is the *interest* upon the bonds issued by the railroad companies under the Internal Improvement Act of 1855. As well as can be ascertained, the outstanding bonds of said companies are as follows:

Bonds of Pensacola & Georgia R. R. Co.....	\$387,700
Bonds of Tallahassee R. R. Co.....	52,900
Bonds of Florida.....	225,000
Bonds of F. A. & G. C. R. R. Co.....	31,000
Total.....	\$699,600

The annually accruing interest is about \$48,980. If the present railroad litigation shall result in the payment of the bonds of the Pensacola and Georgia and Tallahassee Railroads, with the accrued interest, from the sales of the roads, the outstanding bonds for the payment of the interest on which these lands are pledged will amount only to \$259,000, with an annually accruing interest of \$18,130. The whole amount of indebtedness which has already accrued against the Internal Improvement Fund for interest as aforesaid is not less than \$600,000.

Land claims against the General Government are under investigation, particularly the claim of the State for indemnity for Swamp Lands sold by the United States after the date of the Swamp Land grant, September 28, 1850, and before the passage of the act of March 3, 1857, confirming all sales and locations of such lands made in the United States Land Offices, and allowing the State to receive the amount of purchase-money for the lands sold for cash, and to locate other lands in lieu of those located with warrants. Since August, 1879, agents of the United States, appointed by the General Land Office, and agents of the State, have been examining the lands for which indemnity is claimed, and taking testimony with reference to the

character of the lands. There is reason to hope that a final adjustment of this claim will be made in a few months.

The claim for the Swamp Lands selected within the limits of the former Palatka Military Reserve has been allowed, and a part of the selections have been patented. It had been held that these selections were invalid by reason of the reservation, and that the lands were subject to entry in the United States Land Office, in consequence of which many of the lands claimed by the State had been taken up under the homestead act or entered at private entry in the United States Land Office.

The confirmation of the State's title to these lands necessarily invalidates the titles of those purchasing from the United States, unless some remedy is provided by legislation. The Congress of the United States has passed an act confirming these entries, and authorizing the State to select in lieu thereof an equal quantity of land from any of the vacant and unappropriated public lands of the United States in Florida, upon the State filing its relinquishment of all claim to the lands so entered. I suppose there will be no question as to the justice and propriety of the passage of an act by the Legislature of Florida relinquishing the title of the State to said lands and accepting the indemnity offered in said act of Congress.

REDEMPTION OF LANDS SOLD FOR TAXES AND BOUGHT IN BY THE STATE.

Under the act of February 27, 1872, 1,094.01 acres of land and three town lots have been sold for \$294.77, and the money has been paid into the School Fund.

Under Chapter 3111 of the Laws of Florida, entitled "An act to repeal an act to provide for the redemption of lands sold for taxes, approved March 7, 1877, and to dispose of lands sold for taxes and bought in by the State or any county," approved March 11, 1879, the following amounts have been received since the passage of the act:

State tax proper, including expenses of sale.....	\$4,658 20
General Sinking Fund.....	1,410 50
Special Sinking Fund.....	664 89
State School Tax.....	509 59
County School Tax.....	2,152 43
County Tax.....	3,667 34
Total.....	\$13,062 95

The amounts received for State tax and the sinking funds, with the exception of those received for the half year ending yesterday, have been paid into the State Treasury. The school taxes have been sent to the Treasurers of the County School Boards, and the county tax has been sent to the County Treas-

urers. The following is the amount of county and school taxes received for each county:

County.	County Tax.	School Tax
Alachua.....	\$391 00	\$319 80
Bradford.....	41 32	14 16
Clay.....	95 21	70 75
Columbia.....	81 48	54 05
Duval.....	1,019 26	742 02
Escambia.....	353 61	348 78
Franklin.....	146 47	149 11
Gadsden.....	98 13	93 22
Hillsborough.....	23 55	29 13
Jackson.....	4 10	3 72
Jefferson.....	150 22	48 55
Lafayette.....	6 90	8 64
Leon.....	417 43	217 79
Liberty.....	3 00	2 40
Madison.....	268 49	112 57
Manatee.....	13 86	8 31
Marion.....	52 27	48 01
Monroe.....	82 34	87 45
Nassau.....	1 54	59
Orange.....	8 45	8 78
Polk.....	8 40	6 30
Putnam.....	115 75	103 85
St. Johns.....	12 40	11 59
Sumter.....	8 40	5 60
Suwannee.....	96 48	72 14
Volusia.....	128 80	64 05
Washington.....	98	66 00
Wakulla.....	37 50	30

Chapter 3111 needs amendment. When the law was passed, it is evident that a very low estimate was made of the quantity of land which would remain unredeemed on the first day of January, 1881. The sixth section provides that immediately after the 1st of January, 1881, a full list of the lands unredeemed shall be advertised for four weeks, and "the lands so advertised as aforesaid, and not redeemed, shall, on and after the first day of March, 1881, be subject to private entry." To comply with this requirement, the list must be prepared and published by the last day of January. The number of tracts not redeemed is not less than nine thousand, and the advertisement must not only contain a description of each tract, but also the amount of taxes due on each. To prepare the list would require the labor of two clerks for several months. A compliance with the law is therefore simply impossible. I suggest the propriety of amending the law so as not to require an advertisement of the full list at one time, but authorizing the advertisement of a part, from time to time, as the lists are prepared. A full list would about fill three sheets of the paper upon which the *Floridian* is published. The right of redemption might properly be extended to the day when the lands are subject to sale.

As further legislation respecting these lands is necessary, I

recommend that certain defects in the law be remedied and other provisions added, to which attention has been drawn in executing the law.

Chapter 3111 does not point out how the State's title shall pass to the purchaser. In the *redemption* of lands, I have followed the practice of the Comptroller's office in transferring the Revenue Collector's certificate with an endorsement thereon of the fact of redemption; but when the lands are *sold* a formal assignment authorized by law will be required.

I wish also to call attention to the fact that many of the sales were wrongly made of lands upon which the taxes had been paid. The Commissioner is not authorized to purge the list in such cases, even when the Collector's receipt is shown. Such sales confer no title on the State, but cloud that of the owner. A remedy should be provided similar to that enacted by the last Legislature in reference to lands offered under the act of February 27, 1872.

In a large number of cases the description is too vague and indefinite to convey title to any particular lands. A full and clear description is indispensably necessary to make the sale valid. But the Commissioner cannot strike these cases from his list, and will have to include them in the advertisement, unless authorized by law to leave them out. By way of illustration, I name a few of these descriptions, taken at random: "196 acres on Julington creek;" "One lot east Sweetwater branch;" "1,500 acre on the Arredondo grant;" "House and lot in Hansonton;" "One-half lot 3, block 74, Jacksonville," &c., &c. I think that the Attorney-General and Comptroller should constitute a commission to decide what descriptions are so uncertain as to invalidate the tax sale, and that the Commissioner should be authorized to strike all such cases from his list. There are also cases where lands lying in one county have been sold for taxes in another, and where the same property has been assessed to two different persons and sold twice for taxes at the same sale.

I will call attention also to another fact that appears upon the tax lists, and that is the inequality and want of uniformity in the tax. Some of the lands bought in by the State, as long ago as 1873, when the valuation and rate of taxation were high, cannot be redeemed without the payment of more than the full value of the property. It is certain that in such cases the lands will not be redeemed or purchased, and the State will profit nothing.

I am at a loss what remedy to suggest here. To make an arbitrary assessment of all lands and town lots at the same valuation would not remove the inequality. To have another assessment made would involve considerable expense. It would,

perhaps, be better to adhere to the last valuation of the property, and fix the annual tax at a reasonable rate for State, county and school purposes.

IMMIGRATION.

Under Chapter 3151 of the Laws of the State of Florida, passed at the last session of the Legislature, the Bureau of Immigration appointed Hon. Seth French Commissioner of the Bureau, which appointment was confirmed by the Senate. Dr. French entered at once upon the discharge of his duties, and I refer to his report as to his actings and doings under the law, which is hereto annexed.

All are interested in the settlement of our State, and the question how best to promote immigration engages the attention of all who are interested in the development of our manifold resources. If a system of internal improvements could be carried out which would bring all sections of the State within reach of transportation, the question could easily be answered. But to accomplish this we must first relieve the lands of the State from the liens imposed upon them by the act of a former Legislature. Without the means of building railroads and canals, or materially aiding in their construction, the mode of inducing immigration must depend mainly upon the amount which the Legislature can appropriate for the purpose. If it is only desired to reach the people of the other States in the Union, the most important aid is the publication and distribution of reliable information concerning the State, setting fairly forth its advantages, and correcting all errors and misrepresentations. If, however, it is desired to bring settlers from Europe, a larger appropriation will be required than has heretofore been made. Agencies must be established there to secure their emigration, and provision must be made here for their reception and location. If such a plan be adopted, properly managed and successfully carried out, the result will justify the cost.

Respectfully submitted,
HUGH A. CORLEY,
Commissioner.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONER OF THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION.

Hon. George F. Drew, Hugh A. Corley, Columbus Drew,
Bureau of Immigration:

I have the honor to submit the following report, recapitulating my former report, of a period from March, 1879, to October, 1879.

Early in March I opened an office in Jacksonville, with Mr. A. T. Williams as secretary, and Mr. Samuel Fairbanks to aid in preparing a pamphlet, on the completion of which Mr. Williams was succeeded by Mr. Fairbanks. I went North and West in June, arranged for reduced fare for immigrants from New York to Jacksonville. The pamphlet was issued in August, 32,000 copies, with maps. I opened an office in Chicago, arranged for distribution of pamphlets over the main lines of travel, and personally distributed some 10,000 copies, including copies to newspapers in the United States and Canada. I also opened up from there a large correspondence, and visited several of the Western States. Mr. Fairbanks was in charge of the office at Jacksonville, from which were distributed pamphlets to all parts of the country, and applications and letters answered. Mr. Fairbanks advised me daily of work at the Jacksonville office.

On invitation of the National Line of steamers, I visited England, sailing August 9, arriving there the 20th. I went to Lancashire and vicinity, and found all classes, especially farmers, desirous of information about the United States, and especially Florida. Returning to Liverpool, I went to London, where I met some gentlemen interested in immigration, who accompanied me on a visit to the southwestern counties, where great depression exists of the farming interest. While in England I addressed many in town and country, and personally and by mail distributed a large number of pamphlets.

I left England the 24th of September; arrived in New York and proceeded at once to Florida; found the work of the office had been promptly and correctly attended to. I now endeavored to obtain statistics for the new edition of pamphlet to be issued January 7, 1880. I can only say briefly that I failed to get them in response to private letters, public letters and circulars sent to prominent gentlemen, private and official, in each and every county; and the blanks suggested by Governor Drew and placed in the assessors' hands for collecting statistics were so imperfectly filled as to be unavailable. I then visited the eastern and southern counties personally, most of them, and Mr. Fairbanks visited the counties from Nassau to Gadsden, and though assured of full returns, except Putnam, not one was

sufficiently full to be useful. Under the circumstances it was the opinion of prominent citizens and your Board that the new edition be delayed until the census of the United States for 1880 was taken, which would be official. Permission being obtained, I had the services of three competent persons, and assisted myself in copying and making abstracts of the census, which occupied some three weeks, and on account of a delay of returns from enumerators could not be completed until the last of October. As soon as completed I left for Chicago, October 29, and the pamphlet went to press November 26. I mailed from Chicago some 6,000 copies to persons who had made application up to December 1. I should have mentioned that the old edition being exhausted, 2,000 additional copies of the pamphlet were ordered to be printed and distributed.

I returned to Jacksonville December 11, and find a daily increasing demand for pamphlets, letters of inquiry and personal calls, all seeking information of and about Florida.

I annex a statement of receipts and disbursements on account of Bureau to date.

No charge has been made for travelling expenses to New York, Chicago, the West and England and return in 1879, to Chicago and return in 1880, or for trips in the State. I have paid these myself from my private funds.

Yours respectfully,

SETH FRENCH, *Commissioner.*

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT.

Permit me to add some observations and suggestions. With some reluctance I accepted the office you honored me with, for business and domestic reasons alone made me hesitate, as also it was a new and untried office, and any one holding it would be subject to adverse criticism and opposition.

Believing that the Bureau would benefit the State, I have given my time and such talents as I had to the work; and now having, as I believe, fairly inaugurated the work for increased immigration, I shall ask to be relieved as Commissioner, retiring with the present Bureau. I believe the establishment of the Bureau was wise, and has already advanced the interests of the State.

The census of 1880, manifestly too low, shows an increase of inhabitants over the census of 1870 of nearly 50,000 over the natural increase, being an average of 5,000 a year of immigrants; but as the various lines of travel, the sales and homesteads of United States lands, the sales of State, railroad and private lands, show the greatest increase in the last two years,

the largest increase of immigrants has been of recent date. That the Bureau of Immigration has been the great and direct agency in inducing this increased number, the records and correspondence of the office shows, and indirectly a larger correspondence of land agents and land owners has been had.

The widespread distribution of the pamphlet of 1879, the increased number of applicants for the edition of 1880, just issued, shows that in every State, the Canadas, England, and some European countries, there is an interest awakened about our State, and I believe we are only beginning to see the first fruits to be followed by a large continued immigration.

At no period, since the establishment of the Bureau, has there been so many applications for pamphlets, so many letters of general and specific inquiry, as now. From every State, Territory, Canada and England, individuals, single families, colonies of six, eight, ten and more announce their coming, and day by day are arriving. Certainly, considering the amount of the appropriation, the results have been even greater than could be expected.

In regard to the future, I think the present act is comprehensive enough to continue the work begun, whether with the present or increased appropriation. With a larger appropriation the field of operations could be enlarged with larger results.

The annual collection of statistics, I believe, to be important, and would add to the value of future publications. A law passed, making it the duty of each assessor to collect the statistics of their respective counties, and making their returns, as now, to the Comptroller, I believe would effect this. The Bureau could then avail itself of them.

In our sister State, Georgia, there are laws of compulsory inspection of commercial fertilizers, the fees appropriated to the support of the Bureau of Agriculture, any surplus to be turned into the general treasury. This surplus, in 1879, was nearly \$50,000. The law is approved by both dealers and consumers, as it assures protection from fraud. A similar law in this State would, no doubt, produce same results, not so large but increasing in future.

In conclusion, I would suggest that an annual appropriation of \$10,000 be asked for under the present organization; the additional \$5,000 could be devoted to increasing the number of publications, to be distributed in new fields, especially in foreign countries.

Our present immigration has been of the very best, mostly from the United States, from Great Britain, a few from France, Germany, Sweden, &c. Generally they have come with more or less capital, are industrious, intelligent, moral people, who have quickly assimilated themselves with the people here, and

almost without exception pleased with their new homes, and will be active agents inducing others in their old homes to come and join them.

Accept my thanks for your uniform interest, valuable suggestions and advice, which have assisted me in my work.

Yours respectfully,
SETH FRENCH, *Commissioner.*

Statement of Receipts and Expenditures on Account of Bureau.

1879-80. Received on requisitions for account Commissioner's salary	\$3,000 00
Received on requisitions for account contingent expenses	1,500 00
1879.	
July 31. Received for Rand, McNally & Co., for bills pamphlets 1879, draft drawn on Bureau and paid by Bureau....	2,000 00
1880.	
M'ch 31. Bill pamphlets R. McNally, for 2,000 additional pamphlets of 1879, draft drawn on Bureau and paid by Bureau	110 20
<i>Expended—</i>	
1879-80. For account Commissioner's salary	\$3,000 00
1879. For account contingent expenses	1,500 00
July 31. For account R. McNally (pamphlet)	2,000 00
1880.	
M'ch 31. For account R. McNally (2,000 pamphlets)	110 20

NOTE.—No requisition made or received for third quarter of 1880 for Commissioner's salary. No requisition made or received for third quarter of 1880 for contingent expenses, or for R. McNally & Co. Account pamphlet edition 1880 amounted to \$1,250—amount due.

REPORT OF S. I. WAILES, STATE AGENT.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 23, 1880.

His Excellency George F. Drew, Tallahassee, Fla.:

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report in connection with my services to the State of Florida as State Agent at Washington:

In 1877 you appointed me as State Agent, without compensation, to examine into the condition of the claims of the State in the various Departments at Washington, and report upon the same.

Upon the receipt of my report "the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida" made with me the following contract for the recovery of any lands that I might be able to have patented to the State under the acts of Congress of 1850, 1855 and 1857 known as "the swamp land and overflowed acts."

CONTRACT NO. 1.

"Be it resolved by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida, That in compensation for the services of Sidney I. Wailes, Esq., agent and attorney of the State of Florida before the Department of the Interior at Washington in procuring an adjustment of the claims of the State for lands granted by Congress under the act of September 28, 1850, this Board will pay to the said S. I. Wailes, twenty per cent. of all moneys paid over to the State on account of swamp lands purchased from the United States prior to the third day of March, 1857, under the acts of Congress of March 2, 1855, and March 3, 1857; and also twenty per cent. of all warrants or certificates issued to the State under said acts on account of lands located by warrants or scrip prior to the said third day of March, 1857. And upon the receipt of patents for any lands selected by the State as swamp lands prior to 1861, which have not yet been patented to the State for any reason, this Board will convey to the said S. I. Wailes eight per cent. thereof in consideration of his services in procuring said patents. And for procuring the approval and confirmation of the lands selected for the State as swamp lands since 1861, the Board will pay such reasonable compensation as may hereafter be agreed upon."

Then again, on the 11th of October, 1878, thinking that I could get a decision from the Secretary of the Interior that

would again open the door and allow selections to be made, and patenting those already claimed by the State, but not patented, I asked the Board if the contract of April 13, 1878, would, in the case of recovery by me of such lands, be the basis on which I would be paid. In reply the Commissioner of Lands on the 21st of October wrote, by order of the Board, as follows:

CONTRACT NO. 2.

"If there were no other lands selected since 1861, except the approved 800,000 acres, it perhaps might not be so extravagant to allow thereon the same commissions as upon the old selections, but in addition to the approved list there are several millions more selected. To pay 250,000 acres or more to an agent would not be approved by the Legislature or the people. The figures are too large. The Trustees have agreed that they will allow you, as compensation for procuring the confirmation of swamp lands selected for the State since 1861, two cents per acre for every acre patented, to be paid in lands at the prices current at the time of payment."

Under the above described contracts I have turned over to the State, patents as follows:

No. of Patent.	Date.	District.	Amount.		
			Acres.	Hund.	
.....12	1878 Dec. 30	Gainesville	29,50975	Under Contract No. 1, Dated April 13, 1878.
.....1	1879 July 15	Gainesville	15,44172	
.....19	Do.	Gainesville	1,39216	
		Total.....	46,34363	@ 8 per cent 3,707.49 acres.

No. of Patent.	Date.	District.	Amount.		
			Acres.	Hund.	
.....17	1879 Sept. 15	Gainesville.	582,36034	Under Contract No. 2, Dated October 21, 1880.
.....18	1879 Sept. 15	Gainesville.	313,51468	
.....19	1879 Dec. 17	Gainesville.	536,99515	
.....20	1880 Feb. 14	Gainesville.	2,282,66707	
		Total.....	3,715,53724	@ 2 cents per acre, in lands.

I have also turned over indemnity lands embraced in contract No. 1 as follows: Patent No. 1 for 9,999.20 acres, Patents No. 2 and 3 for 13,284.35 acres. Total, 23,283.55 acres.

Contract No. 1 also covers money indemnity of which I make no returns. There has been an allowance by the Department of Interior, and others will follow, but at my request it has been suspended and not sent to the United States Treasury Department. Under section 3481 of Revised Statutes, "whenever any State is in default, etc., the Secretary of the Treasury shall retain the whole or so much as may be necessary of any money that may be due on any account from the United States and apply the same to the payment of any such default," etc. If I had permitted this to go forward it would have added that much more complication to the settlement of the Indian War Claim and I thought it best, as far as possible, to prevent that. I hope, therefore, and believe that by the time said Indian War Claim shall have been settled, that several instalments of this indemnity will be ready to go forward for payment.

Sincerely thanking you and your efficient Cabinet for the aid so kindly rendered me at all times, I am,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. I. WAILLES,

State Agent for the State of Florida.