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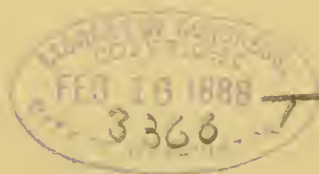


# ALABAMA.

*Long Street*  
*Wm. B. Smith*



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## A L A B A M A.

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Alabama, one of the United States of North America, extends northward from the Gulf of Mexico some 330 statute miles, the state of Tennessee being on the north, Georgia on the east, Florida and the Gulf of Mexico on the south, and Mississippi on the west;  $30^{\circ} 13'$  to  $35^{\circ}$  N. lat.,  $84^{\circ} 53'$  to  $88^{\circ} 35'$  W. long. The seaboard has an extent of about 50 miles, excluding the shores of Mobile Bay and the minor sinuosities. The maximum breadth of the state is 202 miles. The area, as officially estimated, is 52,250 sq. m., a little more than that of England, exclusive of Wales.

The state has four strongly marked natural divisions. The southernmost portion, known locally as the Pine Woods, having an average breadth from north to south of about 125 miles, is of tertiary and quaternary formation, with a surface-covering of sandy drift. In this region are extensive forests of the yellow pine (*Pinus australis*), extremely valuable for its timber, as well as for its yield of turpentine, rosin, tar, and turpentine-oil. Near the rivers are swamps densely timbered with valuable cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). The pine-region has for the most part a light soil. North of this coast-region comes the Cane-brake, or Black Belt, of extremely fertile cretaceous (rotten limestone) soils. A part of this

belt consists of open ('bald') prairie. Good water is only procurable in some sections of this belt by means of artesian wells. Cotton is the staple product of this tract. North of the Black Belt lies the great mineral region of the state. This district is in reality the south-west terminal portion of the great Appalachian range of mountains, here, for the most part, merely broken ridges and lines of hills, among and to westward of which are found vast bodies of good coal, side by side with beds of iron-ore and limestone of enormous extent. This fact renders it certain that middle and north-east Alabama must speedily become one of the world's great centres of the production of iron. The north part of Alabama comprises a portion of the fertile valley of the Tennessee River. In the north-east, especially to the east of the river, there is a mountainous tract, a continuation of the central iron district.

The large navigable rivers, Alabama (312 miles long by survey) and Tombigbee, unite in the south-west part of the state to form the short Mobile River, which flows into Mobile Bay, near the town of Mobile. The greater part (some 18,000 sq. m.) of the state is drained by this river-system. The Black Warrior is the largest affluent of the Tombigbee; and the Cahawba (115 miles long), Coosa (335 miles long), and Tallapoosa are important tributaries of the Alabama. These main streams, with some others, are in general either navigable or may be fitted for navigation, while their minor tributaries afford vast water-power, as yet very imperfectly utilized. In the north, the great river Tennessee traverses the state, but its importance for navigation is lessened by the 'Muscle Shoals,' an extensive series of rocks and rapids,



which can only be passed at very high water. Engineering works for surmounting these obstructions have been undertaken.

The mineral resources of the state are varied and important. Besides the valuable coal and iron deposits already noticed, Alabama has extensive beds of fine marble, statuary granite, and building stones in large variety. Some gold is mined in Cleburne and Talladega counties. Medicinal springs are found in nearly all parts of the state.

Among the leading productions of Alabama are cotton, maize, oats, wheat, and sweet potatoes. Rice and sugar-cane are grown in the southern counties. Apples, peaches, grapes, figs, pears, and oranges (the latter in the south) are among the fruits successfully grown. Tobacco is cultivated in the north. In general, the soils of this state are highly fertile; but in the pine barrens, and in the mountain region, there are large tracts not naturally productive.

The climate is warm but equable, the hill country and the pine forests (except near the swampy districts) are remarkably healthful; but the fertile Black Belt is not regarded as a safe place of summer or autumnal residence for unacclimatised persons. Remittent and bilious fevers are not unfrequent in this region. The rainfall is abundant, and is well distributed throughout the year; but some of the porous limestone soils are not retentive of water, and the crops often suffer from drought. The small rivers of the central region are remarkably liable to floods or freshets.

The only seaport of Alabama is Mobile; but the approach to that town is not practicable for large ships;

hence Pensacola in Florida has become the principal shipping-point for the lumber and forest products of Alabama ; while Savannah in Georgia, New Orleans in Louisiana, and Charleston in South Carolina, ship a large part of the cotton crop. The foreign trade in Alabama coal promises to become large.

The manufacturing interests of Alabama are rapidly developing. Pig-iron can be produced here, it is confidently asserted, more cheaply than in any other part of America. Cotton goods are largely manufactured. Much lumber is sawed in the forest region, which also affords considerable amounts of tar and naval stores. The railway system of Alabama is extensive.

Alabama was settled by the French, who established a fort on the Mobile River in 1702. The city of Mobile was founded in 1712. The French settlements were regarded as a part of the Louisiana colony until 1763, when the country was ceded to Great Britain by the Treaty of Paris. What is now Southern Alabama was ceded to Spain in 1783, and became a part of West Florida, while the rest of the country was given up to the United States, which, however, after 1803, claimed the Spanish part under the Louisiana purchase ; but Spain did not concede this claim until 1819. Alabama was made a state of the Union in 1819, and seceded, with most of the other slave states, in 1861. After the civil war of 1861-65, the state passed through a long season of social and business depression ; but since 1880 the outlook for Alabama is one of unusual promise.

The chief towns are Montgomery, the capital, pop. (1880) 16,714, since much increased ; Mobile, 29,132 ;

and Birmingham, the principal seat of the newly founded iron industry, pop. (1887) about 30,000.

The pop. of Alabama in 1800 was only 1250 ; (1830) 309,257 ; (1860) 964,201 ; (1880) 1,262,505 (about 25 persons to the square mile), of whom 662,185 were white, and 526,271 were of pure or mixed African descent.





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