

**REPORT, UPON THE NATURAL
RESOURCES OF THE ARKANSAS VALLEY
FROM LITTLE ROCK,
ARK., TO FORT GIBSON, C. N., MADE TO
THE LITTLE ROCK AND FORT SMITH,
RAILROAD COMPANY**

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Report, Upon the Natural Resources of the Arkansas Valley from Little Rock, Ark., to Fort Gibson, C. N., made to the Little Rock and Fort Smith, Railroad Company by J. W. Washburn & W. P. Denckla

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J. W. WASHBURN & W. P. DENCKLA

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J. Branner *cat*

REPORT

OF

J. W. WASHBURN

AND

W. P. DENCKLA,

UPON THE

Natural Resources of the Arkansas Valley,

FROM

LITTLE ROCK, ARK., TO FORT GIBSON, C. N.,

MADE TO THE

LITTLE ROCK AND FORT SMITH

RAILROAD COMPANY.

NEW YORK:

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting this Report, the reader will bear in mind that it was written in great haste, and that it only pretends to give, in an imperfect manner, the results of a very hasty and superficial examination of the belt of country occupied by the lands of the **LITTLE ROCK AND FORT SMITH RAILROAD COMPANY**. It was found impossible to do more than to go over the ground and collect such specimens as might be picked up on the surface or found in the hands of citizens, many of whom promised to send forward more perfect specimens, but not one of whom, so far as known, has paid any further attention to the matter. Such universal apathy as pervades the people of the region of country here attempted to be brought into notice is extremely unfortunate, and, it must be confessed, is not calculated to attract the sympathy of the wide-awake spirits of the present day, nor to encourage those who are endeavoring to foster and build up works of internal improvement in their midst. But it is, nevertheless, hoped that the merits of the country will prove sufficient of themselves to attract that attention which they so justly deserve; and although the specimens obtained are but meagre in number and variety, and do not at all do justice as representing the value of the mineral resources of the Valley of the Arkansas, yet it is hoped that they will suffice to direct the attention of the miner and capitalist to this almost unknown, yet most inviting field, far superior, it is believed, to the more widely celebrated but less populous and less accessible regions of Nevada, Montana, Colorado, and other distant Territories.

The object of this Report is to bring prominently before the public the merits and claims of this long neglected, yet most attractive region; but, more especially, to turn in that direction the inquiries and the footsteps of that large and valuable class of persons who are seeking in this New World, and in the Far West, **CHEAP HOMES AND REWARD FOR THEIR LABOR.** To those who are seeking these desirable comforts and rewards, Arkansas holds out inducements far superior to any other State or Territory now open to immigration. She possesses, in an eminent degree, all the elements of wealth and prosperity. Her broad and fertile valleys embrace thousands of acres of lands yet unsold, while her numerous streams and forests and mountains, and her productions of cotton, grain, and other raw material, furnish the power and the means to enable her one day to assume a place in the front rank of manufacturing States. The temper and disposition of her people, which was, in her early settlement, hostile to the introduction of immigrants, has been for many years clearly shown in her rapid advance in population and wealth, in the erection of colleges and other institutions of learning, and, lately, in the efforts she has made to induce immigration, to aid her railroads, and in the remodeling and adoption of a new system of public schools—the three great levers of modern progress. At present there is a considerable tide of Northern emigration turned in that direction, and it is well known that they, with the few Germans and Irish who have made Arkansas their home, are among the leading citizens of the State, as their habits of industry and economy are sure to bring them wealth and position in a very few years.

The LITTLE ROCK AND FORT SMITH RAILROAD COMPANY have undertaken to publish this Report solely with a view to induce immigration, knowing that it must look to the future for any return to the necessary outlay. The Company hope to complete their great enterprise in a few years, when they will have ready for sale to actual settlers *One Million Acres* of the most valuable agricultural and mineral lands in the Arkansas Valley. These lands were selected and reserved from entry many years ago, and lie within twenty miles on either side of the line of road. A map is herewith published, which will show the road as projected and located, on the north side of the Arkansas River, from Little Rock to the western boundary of the State, where it will connect with other roads projected and now in process of construction. At Little Rock it will connect with other roads north, south, and east, and will form in itself an indispensable connecting link between the Southern system, from Norfolk and Charleston, and the Great Pacific Road that must eventually be built upon the 35th Parallel Route, which will prove, in fact, to be the only practicable route across the continent at all seasons of the year. A large and prosperous community will, within a very few years, occupy the fertile valleys of the Arkansas and Canadian, which, to the very doors of New Mexico, are beyond comparison, the richest and finest region of country on the continent.

It is to this inviting field that the attention of those who desire new and cheap homes, where labor will meet its due reward, is now respectfully directed.

J. H. HANEY.

Secretary and Special Agent.

New York, November 1st, 1867.

LITTLE ROCK AND FORT SMITH RAILROAD COMPANY, }
SECRETARY'S OFFICE, LITTLE ROCK, ARK., }

June 25th, 1867.

MR. J. W. WASHBOURN:

DEAR SIR:—After consultation with Mr. SCOTT, who is one of our directors, I have taken the responsibility of adopting, to a limited extent, your recommendations; and I now make you the following proposition:

* * * * *

Mr. WM. P. DENCKLA, late of California, a miner of extensive experience, and possessing a thorough knowledge of the value of mineralogical indications, will leave here in the course of two or three days, and will visit you at Norristown, where, if you conclude to accept this proposition, you will join him and make with him a rapid reconnoissance of the country along and adjacent to the line of the Road. Mr. DENCKLA, being fully acquainted with the objects to be attained, will instruct you as to the duties to be performed. I will say, generally, that the extent of country to be examined will be on both sides of the Arkansas River, from Little Rock to Webber's Falls, in the Cherokee Nation; and while your reconnoissance will be general in its character, it will be desirable that you should visit some of the lands of this Company, which are known, or reputed, to be rich in minerals.

Upon the termination of your field work, I desire a full report of your operations, and a *full and fair statement* of your conclusions upon the mineralogical resources of the field explored.

(Signed)

J. H. HANEY,
Secretary and Special Agent.

LITTLE ROCK, ARK., August 20th, 1867.

J. H. HANEY, Esq.,

Secretary Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Co.

SIR:—In accordance with your request, by letter to me, and instructions thereupon, an extract from which letter I give

above, I, in conjunction with Mr. Wm. P. DENCKLA, accepted the proposition thus made me, and I have the honor to submit the following as our report:

We have personally viewed the lands of the Arkansas Valley, from Little Rock to Fort Smith, on both sides of the river, for, say, on the north side, from four, six, and twenty miles; on the south side, to four to ten miles therefrom. Where we have been unable, for want of time, to go further into the hill country from the valley, we have taken great pains to secure accurate information from reliable parties knowing such regions, and, in general, based upon specimens shown us. We have been met by the citizens with courtesy all along the Valley; they have given us valuable information, shown us to spots possessing mineralogical interest, and presented us with geological specimens.

We have thus been able to collect a very interesting cabinet of minerals, ores, coals, rocks, and fossils. These last are extraordinarily scarce in Arkansas, save in the Northwestern counties. Our limited time prevented us from doing full justice to this cabinet, for in these Arkansas hills and valleys as rich treasures of ores, metals, fossils and earths exist as in any State in the Mississippi Valley.

Our report will be plain and truthful. We trust it will be so compiled as to be read not only by scientific men and by the men of capital, but also by the emigrant; we desire that this latter class should be able to read what we have here undertaken to report to you for them. We do not pretend to be scientific explorers, and can, therefore, present you with no learned report. In as simple language as we can command, and as plain, succinct, and direct as possible, we present to you, and through you to the world interested, what we saw, heard and gathered; and upon this, our report, we trust you will be able to induce competent geologists and mineralogists and chemists to come and give this interesting Valley, and its hills, a systematic, patient, and thorough exploration.

The great heat of the sun, and the dense undergrowth of

bush, briar and bramble, proved a serious drawback to our research. At the fall of the leaf, and before it is too cold, is the better time for such reconnoissance.

We commence from Point Remove Bayou, in Pope County. Although we visited the east half of this county on our return from Fort Smith, yet, in order to embrace our description of Pope County in one chapter, we introduce our report with observations made in the after part of our reconnoissance; and our report will be, in some sort, in a diurnal form.

POPE COUNTY.

ON Point Remove Hills, lead has been found, and iron darkens the rocks. Mr. EPHRAIM LEMLEY, near Glass village, on this stream, section 34, township 9, range 18, ploughed up sulphuret of lead in his wheat field, which lies a few hundred yards from the Point Remove foot-hills. This lead has also been gathered by others in these hills. The specimen we send you is a part of that Mr. L. ploughed up.

From Point Remove to Illinois Bayou, Pope County, the land and timber are superior. Large forests of red, black, white, post, over-cup, chincapin and other oaks, interspersed with tall pines, hickory, and other valuable trees, cover the tract. Cypress brakes, some of which are on or near the railroad lands, also, are growing here. These brakes extend down the valley to and below Little Rock, and average from two to five miles wide. The country is broken, yet large tracts of level upland intervene. The water is good, and occasional springs break out. Water is easily reached by digging from fifteen to forty-five feet. A great part of these uplands, known throughout the southwest as "barrens," are rich in soil, and adapted to pasturing and planting use. Stock of all kinds thrive here, little food being required for them in winter, which, here be it said, is the case throughout the entire valley. The undergrowth is almost tropical in its exuberance. Fine, luscious wild grapes, muscadines, plums, and all the berries, abound. Peaches, pears, and apples grow as