

**FIRST BIENNIAL REPORT
ON THE GEOLOGY OF
ALABAMA**

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First Biennial Report on the Geology of Alabama by M. Tuomey

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M. TUOMEY

**FIRST BIENNIAL REPORT
ON THE GEOLOGY OF
ALABAMA**

*D. Hilgerson
Secretary of the
Ac.*

FIRST BIENNIAL REPORT

ON THE

GEOLOGY OF ALABAMA.

BY M. TUOMEY,

GEOLOGIST TO THE STATE; PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGY, ETC., IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF ALABAMA.

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TUSKALOOSA:
PRINTED BY M. D. J. SLADE.

1850.

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY,

HENRY W. COLLIER,

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA:

SIR,

I herewith submit a Report on the Geology of Alabama.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your ob't serv't,

M. TUOMEY,

Geologist to the State.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA,

Dec. 20, 1849.

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ORIGIN OF THE SURVEY.

At the appointment of a Professor of Geology in the University, it was made the duty of that officer "to spend such portions of his time, not exceeding *four months* in each year, in exploring the State in connection with his proper department, as the Trustees may consider for the advantage of the State."

These explorations commenced in 1847, and have been continued up to the present time; and such extracts, from the reports made to the Trustees, as were thought to be of general interest, have appeared in the newspapers of Tuscaloosa.

In January, 1848, the following resolutions were passed by the General Assembly of the State:

"Whereas, Michael Tuomey, Professor of Mineralogy, Geology, and Agricultural Chemistry, in the University of Alabama, is required by an ordinance of the Board of Trustees of the University, to devote a portion of his time and labor, in making geological explorations, and examining into the natural resources of the State: And whereas, it would be both interesting and useful to the General Assembly, and to the people, to examine the reports which he may make from time to time: Therefore,

*"Be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of Alabama, in General Assembly convened, That Michael Tuomey, Professor of Geology, &c. in the University of Alabama, be, and he is hereby appointed State Geologist.**

"Be it further Resolved, That said State Geologist be, and he is hereby required, to lay before the General Assembly of the State, at its biennial sessions, and as often as from time to

* It is proper to state, that the expenses of the survey have hitherto been defrayed by the University.

time may be thought expedient, a full report of his geological surveys and explorations, and his examinations into the mineral and other natural resources of this State."

JOHN A. WINSTON,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

L. P. WALKER,

President of the Senate.

APPROVED, January 4th, 1848.

R. CHAPMAN,

Governor.

PREFACE.

At the commencement of the survey, two modes of conducting it presented themselves, namely :

1. To make a general reconnoissance of the State, indicating, as far as possible, its great geological features, and pointing out the direction that future explorations should take, without stopping, except in special cases, to make minute examinations.

2. To divide the State into districts, and take up each consecutively, examine it minutely, and thus proceed until the whole was explored; thereby doing thoroughly, whatever was done.

This last would doubtless be the pleasanter mode of proceeding, and would in the end save time. But for the general interests of the State, I apprehend that the first is to be preferred, and I therefore adopted it. Its advantages appear to be these: It indicates, at once, the general geological character of the State, and enables other laborers to enter the field, and fill up the outline sketch, that is thus given. When the geological structure of a country is known, this knowledge has numerous practical applications independent of details, for it enables persons to pursue investigations intelligibly, that otherwise would scarcely know where or how to begin. I have had abundant evidence of this in the number of persons I found ready to assist in my explorations, when they understood their design, and the method of prosecuting them. This general view, too, enables persons to know what is to be looked for in various parts of the State, as well as what it would be folly to expect. I am persuaded, that all things taken into consideration, I could not, in studying the geology of the State, better employ the limited time at my disposal; yet no one feels, more sensibly than I do, how little I have accomplished, when compared with what remains undone, and I could easily show how badly even that little has been executed. Those who are acquainted with the difficulties that beset preliminary explorations in thinly settled countries, will understand this; and of the