

lina it is often hilly, forming the sandhill district, the streams here frequently cutting through the softer Coastal Plain deposits to the harder rocks of the Piedmont Plateau below. The sandhills often appear as outliers on the Piedmont Plateau, where they attain elevations of from 400 to 500 feet.

To the eastward the country declines in altitude, passing from one broad plain or terrace to another until it approaches tide-level, when it embraces swamps, marshes, bays, and sounds over wide areas—the whole surface for more than 50 miles inland from Hatteras and the Eastern Shore being less than 20 feet above sea-level. The ocean is walled off from this low region by a long linear chain of sand islands or dunes, ranging from 75 to 100 feet and upwards in height and separated in half a score of places by inlets which connect the sounds with the ocean. The total width of the plain reaches 125 miles. Its area is about two-fifths that of the State, exceeding 20,000 square miles and embracing wholly or in part 42 counties.

Beyond the outer shore line the surface slopes gradually beneath the sea to the continental shelf, this belt off the North Carolina coast having a width of about 50 miles, thus constituting a submarine district of nearly 15,000 square miles.

THE COASTAL PLAIN.

The Coastal Plain is the name applied to the low and partially submerged area of varying width that is confined between the Piedmont Plateau on the west and the continental shelf on the east. Its western boundary passes through Northampton, Warren, Halifax, Franklin, Wake, Johnston, Chatham, Moore, Richmond, and Anson counties. It naturally falls into two divisions—a submerged or *submarine division* and an emerged or *subaërial division*, the seashore forming the boundary line between them. This line of demarcation, although apparently fixed, is in reality very changeable, for during the geologic ages which are past it has migrated back and forth across the Coastal Plain, at one time occupying a position well over on the Piedmont Plateau, and at another far out at sea. At the present time there is reason to believe that the sea is encroaching on the land by the slow subsidence of the latter, but the period embraced by a few generations of men is too short in which to measure this change.

The Coastal Plain of North Carolina is part of the great district which borders the ocean front from New England to the Gulf, and for the most part has been subjected to the same great physiographic changes here as elsewhere. At the same time, some marked differences are found which have left their record in the region.