

## TOPOGRAPHY

## NATURAL DIVISIONS

Florida has been described (Cooke, 1939c, p. 14) as consisting of five natural topographic divisions, namely, the Central Highlands, the Tallahassee Hills, the Marianna Lowlands, the Western Highlands, and the Coastal Lowlands. The generalized outlines of these divisions are shown in figure 3.

*Central Highlands*—The Central Highlands extend along the Peninsula from the Georgia State line between St. Marys and Withlacoochee Rivers southward nearly to Glades County. This large area is highly diversified. It includes high swampy plains; hills, the highest in the State; and thousands of lakes, big and little. Its soils are prevailingly sandy. Much of the sand was derived from Pleistocene marine terraces, a good deal from the Miocene Hawthorn formation, and the Pliocene Citronelle formation. The altitude ranges from less than 40 feet above sea level in some of the valleys to 325 feet on the summit of Iron Mountain near Lake Wales, where rises the beautiful "Singing Tower."

The lakes of the Central Highlands indicate the occurrence of soluble limestone not far below the surface. The Ocala limestone, where not too deeply buried, yields a lacy pattern of innumerable shallow lakes such as Tsala Apopka Lake and the smaller lakes of Lake County, and it also is marked by larger, deeper, open lakes like Lake Apopka and Lake Harris. The Suwannee limestone and limestone of the Hawthorn formation also give rise to lakes, but these do not commonly compare in intricacy and abundance with those underlain by the Ocala. Many of the lakes have extensive flats or "prairies" surrounding them.

The most extensive plain in the Central Highlands is the Sunderland terrace, which occupies several counties in the northern part of the State and an even larger adjacent area in Georgia, where it includes the great Okefenokee Swamp. The terrace is well developed also in Manatee, Hillsborough, and Polk Counties, and there are smaller remnants of it scattered throughout the Highlands. The Sunderland terrace was covered by the sea during part of the Pleistocene epoch