

# Riverton Visit 1916

by John W. Davis from the *Alabamian Dispatch*

On last Friday morning, June 9, 1916, the editor left on the westbound Southern "Newsboy" train for Riverton, Ala.; changing cars at Riverton Junction we met with that prince of railway agents, Mr. L. T. Hardcastle, who greeted us with his usual cordial smile. The next to greet us was that veteran conductor of the Riverton Branch, J. R. (Bob) Blankenship, who has had charge of this eleven and a fourth miles of track connecting the main line with Riverton for the past quarter of a century. The shortness of this line and the smallness of the train does not lessen the importance of the position held by friend Blankenship who has filled it so effectually during the past 25 years. He collects the fares and punches the tickets with all the dignity of the main line men. The Branch road with its pleasant officials is one of the most accommodating of any in the entire United States. At a signal the train stops at any cross road to take on a passenger and at any farm house to let one off.

The trip was made in a fraction less than an hour. Two miles this side of Riverton we were met by Mr. George T. McWhorter Jr., and we alighted, spending about an hour with that popular and valuable Alabama citizen, Dr. Geo. T. McWhorter and his good wife. We found him with his usual happy smile, though on account of a stroke paralysis in his right side unable to walk or to rise and be seated in a chair with assistance. Dr. McWhorter's affliction is not only an affliction to him, but to the entire state of Alabama, for he ably represented this county as representative, and the district." in the State Senate, and was considered one of the most level headed men in the law making assembly of this great state for many years. He has not yet reached his three score and ten, and were it not for his affliction might have been of many more years usefulness to his county and state. His friends are hoping there may yet be an improvement in his condition and that he may live many more years of usefulness.

From the home of Dr. McWhorter we were taken in a buggy to Riverton by Master Moore, son of the late Dr. R. J. Moore, and whose widow resides with her family near the home of Dr. McWhorter.

At Riverton we were at home in the store of Messrs. Buchanan & Sloan, two of the finest men that ever conducted a mercantile business, and who have made a great success of their farming and mercantile interests. These men are noted for their Christian integrity and the intelligence of their families — their sons and daughters being graduates of the leading colleges of the state. They are held in high esteem throughout this entire section of the state.

We also had the pleasure of meeting our friend John L. Burton and wife while there, and many others of the good citizens of that favored section, nearly every home being supplied weekly with the news of the county by the "Old Reliable." We were by no means a stranger to any.

In the afternoon it was our pleasure to join Mr. T. R. Lovel, superintendent of the great Colbert Canal Lock, in a trip in his car to the lock, where a boat was taken through the lock. The lock was considered the largest in the United States previous to the recent building of the Hale Lock near Chattanooga. The lock at Riverton has a lift of about 25 feet. The government has erected a beautiful home for the lock

keeper, also one for his assistant, and an office on a large promontory covered with beautiful grass on an elevation of perhaps 50 feet above the lock. It was our pleasure to visit the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lovel. They have a happy home, with interesting children.

We also joined him and Master Ellis Harland in a short fishing trip, the editor landing one beautiful trout. We spent the night with Riverton's popular post master, Mr. O. B. Walker, who with his good wife conducts one of the popular hostleries of the place. Mr. Walker also holds a responsible position as salesman for Messrs. Buchanan & Sloan. We also visited South Riverton and the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Blankenship. South Riverton is hidden from the view when at the station in Riverton, but here are many beautiful homes of Riverton's most prominent and cultured citizens, nestled snugly among the wooded hills with beautiful winding roads.

It was also our pleasure to visit the mercantile establishment of Mr. J. R. Moody, who is doing a fine business, and who recently resigned a lucrative position with the N. A. Railway Co., as agent at Riverton, to attend to his large and increasing business interests.

Mr. W. A. Cardon formerly of Florence is now the popular agent at Riverton. We wish we could mention many more of the good people of Riverton, but time and space will not admit. We must mention the fact that Mrs. Leila Harland, the widow of our late friend J. M. Harland, is conducting a firstclass hotel and boarding house. We also met Mr. George Barnett, the mail man, and were delighted to add several names to our subscription list among the number being Messrs. J. F. Long, W. T. Matthews, etc.

Riverton is an ideal place for the location of almost any kind of a factory. A large lumber plant would pay there. It is a splendid location for a factory for the manufacture of fine China and other pottery; the hills abound in the finest quality of kaolin. The water power at the Lock could be easily developed at a small cost producing enough power to electrify this whole county and East Mississippi. Electric railways, and electricity for operating factories, lighting homes, etc., could be generated here at a small cost.

Riverton is beautifully located, and in our opinion it is only a matter of time before a great city will arise on the south banks of the Tennessee. It is skirted by the beautiful hills of Tishomingo county, Miss., one mile west and the hills of Colbert on the south and east, and Lauderdale across the river on the north. Wells at Riverton produce the best of free stone water, and on the high lands the health is excellent.

The most of the river bottom lands produce from 85 to 100 bushels of corn to the acre. These river lands extend also along up Bear Creek above Riverton Junction, which is navigable all the way for gasoline launches.

Riverton also has two good churches of the Baptist and Methodist denominations, and a good free school seven months of the year.

We returned Saturday afternoon, as the train from Riverton does not make connection with the eastbound "Newsboy" train. We believe if the Southern would make the schedule of this train a little later, or the Riverton train a little earlier, they would save many a dollar they are now losing. We trust they may make a change of this kind, as it will be a great convenience to the traveling public. Mr. B. P. Thorn is the section foreman of the Riverton branch and he has a much smoother track than it was many years ago, when we traveled over it. On our return we stopped sometime at Riverton Junction

and met Mr. Merideth Thornton of this city who is the popular salesman for Mr. John Hastings, who conducts a store and a large saw mill at that place.