

**MEMORIAL AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE
RIVER AND HARBOR IMPROVEMENT
CONVENTION: ASSEMBLED AT
TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA, NOVEMBER
17TH, 1885. PP. 1-65**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649333530

Memorial and Proceedings of the River and Harbor Improvement Convention: Assembled at Tuscaloosa, Alabama, November 17th, 1885. pp. 1-65 by H. H. Brown & S. A. M. Wood & W. C. Jemison

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Cover @ 2017

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MEMORIAL AND PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
RIVER AND HARBOR
Improvement Convention:

ASSEMBLED AT

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA,

November 17th, 1885,

INCLUDING VALUABLE, INTERESTING AND RELIABLE STATISTICAL FACTS
AND OTHER INFORMATION

CONCERNING THE

Coal, Iron and Agricultural Resources

OF

ALABAMA, EAST MISSISSIPPI AND WEST GEORGIA,

CONTIGUOUS TO OR DRAINED BY THE RIVER SYSTEM OF ALABAMA;

WITH

AN ACCURATE MAP OF THE TERRITORY

PENETRATED BY THE WATER-WAYS OF ALABAMA FLOWING
INTO THE GULF OF MEXICO AT MOBILE.



CINCINNATI:
THE OHIO VALLEY PRESS,
No. 143 RACE STREET.
1886.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

This publication contains a Memorial to the Congress of the United States and the deliberations of a Convention of more than two hundred representative business men of Alabama and adjoining States, met together to consider the important subject of River and Harbor Improvement, looking to the speedy development of our rich coal and iron fields, which lie so close to the Gulf, and accessible by water-ways so susceptible of improvement, and to bring into market the fertile lands watered by these streams, so fitly located to carry their bountiful products to the trade of the seas.

The accompanying map has been prepared with care and accuracy by Colonel HORACE HARDING, Engineer, with the assistance of Dr. EUGENE A. SMITH, State Geologist of Alabama, with a special view to showing the water-ways and harbor of Alabama, and their intimate connection with the great coal and iron wealth of this section. And the undersigned Committee respectfully ask the thoughtful attention of the reader, not only to the map, but also to the Memorial and the several communications in these pages from prominent men of scholarship and scientific knowledge, giving reliable and accurate information upon the subjects treated, and information valuable to business men, and valuable to the representatives in the Nation's councils from every locality. Indeed, this section of the country is destined at an early day to play a conspicuous part in shaping and controlling the commerce of this portion of the world, and in furnishing cheap coal and iron to the sea-going service of the United States Government.

H. H. BROWN, *Chairman*,
S. A. M. WOOD,
W. C. JEMISON,

Committee on Publication.

MEMORIAL
OF THE
River and Harbor Improvement Convention
ASSEMBLED IN TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA,

November 17 and 18, 1885,

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ASKING THE APPROPRIATION OF A SUFFICIENT SUM OF MONEY TO COMPLETE THE DEEPENING OF MOBILE HARBOR, AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE NAVIGATION OF THE WATER-WAYS OF ALABAMA, WITH THEIR TRIBUTARIES IN ADJOINING STATES.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

Your Memorialists, who assembled in Convention, at Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on the 17th and 18th days of November, 1885, from the States of Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, respectfully and earnestly recommend, and ask the appropriation of a sum of money sufficient to complete, at an early day, the deepening of the Harbor of Mobile at least to twenty-three feet, and the improvement of the water-ways of Alabama and their tributaries.

It is a matter well known that through the Harbor of Mobile the agricultural productions of many States are sent to markets abroad, and the convergence of many railroads to the Port of Mobile gives it an importance with regard to direct trade with all the neighboring nations of the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

This is a matter in common with many other ports on the Gulf of Mexico. In addition to this, and rapidly becoming far more

important to the great interests of the whole United States, is the development that at this point, where almost all of the waterways in the State of Alabama pour their floods into the Gulf, is found the nearest and cheapest port to which the immense mineral treasures of the State can be transported.

The rivers which finally fall into Mobile Bay spread out over the State like a fan, touching north-western Georgia on the east, and entering the eastern side of Mississippi. All of these rivers traverse immense coal fields, the FULL EXTENT and RICHNESS of which has not yet been fully determined, although enough is known now to justify the assertion that they are unsurpassed in the known earth.

Besides the coal deposits beds of iron ore, surrounded by every facility to be worked and used by man, are found contiguous to the coal and near all of said rivers.

These coal and iron deposits are rapidly attracting the attention of capitalists in this country and in Europe, and their development in the last ten years has been such as to create surprise in the minds of men habituated to the study of the mineral resources of the world.

For many years the coal used by vessels in navigating the waters which wash the shores of the West Indies, Mexico and all the South American States on the eastern side of that continent, has been brought from Europe, except a small fraction furnished at very high rates from Chili.

With water transportation, which the improvements of the rivers in Alabama will give, this entire traffic can all be turned to the Port of Mobile, and coal of a superior quality, and at vastly cheaper rates, furnished to those who need it.

To accomplish this the sum of money needed and asked for is comparatively insignificant when we consider the immense benefits to be obtained therefrom in actual wealth to the whole country.

This Convention, in this Memorial, need do no more than mention these things. No argument is necessary to press upon your minds the facts of the lasting advantages to result to the United States from the accomplishment of the object as stated.

That it may be easily attained the reports of competent engineers of the Government have fully demonstrated.

Nor have we, in this Memorial, thought it best to detain you with reiterating the excellent results to be reached by the com-

pletion of the great Governmental works on the Tennessee River. So many States are directly and positively interested in the early completion of the canal around the Muscle Shoals, and the removal of every obstruction to navigation in that noble river, that the recommendations of the River and Harbor Convention on that subject must have many able advocates.

The commercial relation of Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky, with all the North-western States, are directly involved in this work; and the recommendations of the departments at Washington indicate that there will be no delay in its completion.

The Convention, which assembled at Tuscaloosa and which addresses you in this Memorial, have directed the publication of the proceedings of that body, so that the results of their labors may be laid before Congress and the country.

The many able papers submitted to the Convention from its Committees, and which are contained in its printed proceedings, demonstrate, fully, these propositions:

First.—The existence of large and inexhaustible deposits of coal and iron and other minerals in the State of Alabama, near and along the line of the water-ways which flow into Mobile Bay.

Second.—Also, that along these rivers, outside of the means of transportation by railroads, there is produced large amounts of cotton and grain, which should be the subject of export from said Port of Mobile.

Third.—That the whole country traversed by said rivers is covered with forests, almost in their virgin state, of the finest timber, suitable for commercial purposes and for ship-building.

Fourth.—That all of these things apply strongly to the Tennessee River, with the addition that it flows through several States besides Alabama.

Fifth.—That the channel leading to the Port of Mobile can be made, with a moderate expenditure of money, of sufficient depth to admit vessels capable of carrying all the immense freight which the country will produce and the rivers bring to it.

Sixth.—That the improvement of the rivers of Alabama will have the effect to put at the Port of Mobile the best and cheapest coal in the world, sufficient in quantity to supply all the neighboring Nations, and all the vessels that sail from any of those ports, as well as those of the United States, so as to greatly enrich the whole country.

Seventh.—That the water-ways of Alabama will not only be of immense benefit to the commerce of this country and of the world in time of peace, but will also be of incalculable advantage to the United States in time of war.

Your Memorialists, therefore, with earnestness, request your early attention to the accomplishment of these great works which much redound, so certainly, in the increased prosperity of millions of your fellow-citizens, and inviting your careful and just consideration of all the matters contained in the Proceedings of the Convention, submit, most respectfully, the subject to your final determination.

Respectfully,

S. A. M. WOOD, *Chairman*,
DAVID CLOPTON,
A. O. LANE,
W. H. DENSON,
THOS. A. HAMILTON,
J. T. HARRISON,
N. H. R. DAWSON,
REUBEN CHAPMAN,
R. O. PICKETT.

FIRST DAY.

MORNING SESSION.

THE RIVER AND HARBOR IMPROVEMENT CONVENTION assembled in Tuscaloosa, Ala., November 17, 1885.

Hon. W. C. JEMISON, Mayor of Tuscaloosa, called the Convention to order in the following words:

GENTLEMEN—It becomes my duty and my pleasure to welcome you to the freedom and hospitality of the City of Tuscaloosa, which you have honored by selecting it as your meeting place. This is a peculiar pleasure to me, not alone because the whole State of Alabama is so intimately interested and connected with this Convention and its objects, but I trust you will pardon me for saying that I feel a pride in the fact that Tuscaloosa, my native city, stands at the base of, perhaps, the greatest coal and iron fields the world has ever produced, and at the head of navigation, on the Warrior River, connecting them with the Gulf, and standing as the gateway through which the rich treasures of the Warrior coal basin must pass to the commerce of the seas. I am satisfied beyond doubt that, the objects of this Convention being accomplished, nothing short of an earthquake can prevent Tuscaloosa's being one of the largest manufacturing cities of the South.

The committee of which I have the honor of being Chairman, in order to expedite matters, have taken the liberty of selecting several speakers to address the Convention, as follows: The Hon. H. Austill, on the subject, "The Importance of Deepening the Mobile Harbor;" General J. W. Burke, on "The Deposits of the Coosa and Warrior Coal Fields;" and Hon. E. L. Corthell, Chief Engineer of Captain James B. Eads, on the subject of "The