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VEGETABLE HAIR: THE SPANISH MOSS INDUSTRY IN FLORIDA

by ANNE GOMETZ FOSHEE

SOME people do not care for Spanish moss. According to an anonymous writer in the *American Cyclopedia* in 1881 "its effect, on account of its sombre color, is not altogether pleasing."¹ However, the moss, eyecatching feature of the southern landscape that it is, has usually been regarded as an aesthetic asset, appealing to tourists and to the romantically-minded. Many people today have forgotten, if they ever knew, that it was once a more direct economic asset, serving a number of utilitarian purposes. Along with its value as a cattle feed and as a cheap packing material for crates of fruits and vegetables, went its value as a processed product. As early as 1773 William Bartram observed that "it seems particularly adapted to the purpose of stuffing mattresses, chairs, saddles, collars, &c; and for these purposes, nothing yet known equals it."²

The moss, botanically *Tillandsia usneoides*, has been variously known as black, gray, crape, Florida, or New Orleans moss, and more poetically as treebeard and treehair. Bartram called it long moss, a term which remained in use for many years, and described its incredible abundance. "It is common to find the spaces betwixt the limbs of large trees, almost occupied by this plant: it also hangs waving in the wind, like streamers, from the lower limbs, to the length of fifteen or twenty feet, and of bulk and weight, more than several men together could carry; and in some places, cart loads of it are lying on the ground."³

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1. *American Cyclopedia*, 1881 ed., s.v. "tillandsia."
2. John S. Otto, "Open-Range Cattle Herding in Southern Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 65 (January 1987), 321; William Bartram, *Travels of William Bartram*, Mark Van Doren, ed. (1928; reprinted., New York, 1955), 92.
3. *Ibid.*

A single tree may hold several tons of moss. The plant has an extensive range, all the way from Virginia to Florida, west to Texas, and down into South America, always thriving best in humid climates since it receives its nourishment from the air and rain. It is not a parasite, despite its pejorative labeling as a "vegetable thug" in a well-known poem, nor is it actually a moss. Instead it is a member of the pineapple family and one of the many epiphytes or "air plants" to be found in Florida.⁴

Such an abundant natural resource was soon exploited, at least on the local or handicraft level. The Indians met by early European explorers used the moss for clothing. White settlers in the same areas learned to use it for braid and cord which could be turned into a number of useful articles such as rope, nets, and bridles. In the 1850s a soldier stationed at Tampa described it as being "very valuable when properly cured, being commonly applied to all those purposes for which curled hair is used, such as stuffing mattresses, sofas and chairs."⁵ Most of the earlier references do speak specifically of mattresses. Mattresses made with moss had several advantages: they were supposed to be cooler in the summer, they were extremely resilient, and they were unattractive to moths and other insects. As Gloria Jahoda tartly pointed out, "Few enough things in Florida can boast of being untempting to bugs."⁶

Moss was also stuffed into saddles and horse collars and padded the seats of railroad cars. In 1916 *Scientific American* informed its readers that "the great development of the automobile industry affords an extensive market for the moss, and is stimulating the business materially."⁷ Even airplane pilots flew by the seat of pants resting on moss stuffed cushions.⁸ When

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4. For botanical detail see R. E. Garth, "The Ecology of Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*): Its Growth and Distribution," *Ecology* 45 (Summer 1964), 470; for the poem see Lafcadio Hearn, "Spanish Moss," *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days* (New York, 1924), 331.
 5. George Leposky, "Spanish Moss," *Florida Wildlife* 40 (March-April 1986), 5; George Ballentine, *Autobiography of an English Soldier in the United States Army* (New York, 1853), 102.
 6. Raymond J. Martinez, *The Story of Spanish Moss* (New Orleans, n.d.), 9; Gloria Jahoda, *The Other Florida* (New York, 1967; reprint ed., Port Salerno, FL, 1984), 10.
 7. Samuel J. Record, "Spanish Moss: The Source of a Valuable Upholstering Material," *Scientific American* 115 (July 1916), 59.
 8. George S. Corfield, "Spanish Moss: Forest By-product of the South," *Journal of Geography* 42 (November 1943), 316.

the United States Tariff Commission submitted its 1932 report to the president on *Crin Vegetal, Flax Upholstery Tow and Spanish Moss*, the investigators found that Spanish moss was used “principally for filling or stuffing upholstered furniture” and “to a lesser extent as filling material in cheap mattresses.” They also reported that moss was used primarily in medium-priced furniture.⁹ A 1936 manual on the construction of upholstered furniture confirmed this observation. “Next to curled hair, moss is considered the best upholstery stuffing.”¹⁰ Prepared moss was often referred to as “vegetable hair” or “vegetable horse-hair.”¹¹ Perhaps the use of this term helped sell the moss since it stressed the resemblance to a familiar product.

The method of changing the raw material into a usable product remained recognizably the same for two centuries. First, as the classic recipe says, you gathered your moss. It could be obtained from the ground, especially after storms, or from the trees. In Louisiana, it was commonly fished out of the water in swamps and bayous.¹² The tools used to pull the moss from trees were described as long poles with hooks and, later, as wire-tipped bamboo poles.¹³ Proper technique required inserting the pole into a dangling clump and giving it a good twist. Often children or the skinniest and most agile person available went up into the trees. Cypress trees which were often heavily covered with moss above a tall and limbless trunk must have been particularly frustrating to the gatherers. When lumber crews were at work in an area, some moss gatherers followed them so avidly that the lumbermen regarded them as a nuisance.¹⁴ In Louisiana boats moved slowly through the bayous while a man perched on a derrick-like structure hacked at the masses overhanging the water— a method apparently not used in Florida.¹⁵

9. United States Tariff Commission, *Crin Vegetal, Flax Upholstery Tow and Spanish Moss* (Washington, 1932), 3, 6.

10. Charles W. Seager, *Upholstered Furniture* (Milwaukee, 1936), 6.

11. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “vegetable”; *Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*, 1897 ed., s.v. “vegetable.”

12. Brittain B. Robinson, “Minor Fiber Industries,” *Economic Botany* 1 (1947), 48.

13. *Ibid.*; Jahoda, *Other Florida*, 10.

14. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss in Florida*, N.S. Bulletin 85 (Tallahassee, 1937), 17.

15. Corfield, “Spanish Moss,” 312.

Kirk Munroe described one peculiarity of Florida topography for the readers of *Harpers Weekly*. "The country immediately around Gainesville abounds in numerous sink-holes...vast depressions of the surface, from which the bottom seems to have fallen out, and allowed portions of the upper crust to drop from fifty to a hundred feet, with their trees still standing, and their tops showing over the edges....These are favorite resorts of the moss gatherers, to whom the steeply sloping sides of the great depressions, and the moss-laden trees springing from the depths below, afford peculiar facilities for prosecuting their business."¹⁶

Gathering moss was generally not a fulltime occupation. Instead it was a slack time activity which enabled subsistence farmers, both white and black, to obtain a small cash income. The moss itself was free for the gathering, at least in the early days. Later, "swamp leases" are mentioned. Sometimes people even paid to have the growth removed from their trees, especially from pecan and citrus groves since a heavy overlay of moss may shade trees enough to reduce production.¹⁷ Moss can be, and was, harvested in all seasons. However, it was best able to withstand curing when it was collected in late fall and winter after the growing season had ended and the stems had toughened.¹⁸

The purpose of "curing" was to strip the plants of their grey-green outer covering which holds water, dust, and various animate inhabitants. A cross-section of an individual plant stem reveals a central black core which gives the plant its strength and elasticity. When the moss is cured and cleaned, the resulting curly fiber is black or dark brown. It strongly resembles horsehair and, as mentioned above, built its strongest economic niche as a cheaper substitute for that commodity. (If owners of old furniture closely examine a sample of the stuffing, they can distinguish "vegetable hair" from animal hair by the bumps left by the fibers which branch off a moss stem at regular intervals.)¹⁹

16. Kirk Munroe, "Spanish Moss," *Harper's Weekly*, September 2, 1882, 551. This article carried no byline but was reprinted (without the illustrations) in *The Florida Adventures of Kirk Munroe* (Chuluota, FL, 1975).

17. Faye Bell, "Spanish Moss is Right Back to Just Looking Pretty," *Jacksonville* 16 (September-October 1979), 65; Writers' Program, Florida, "Hair of the Pale Moon Flower." Typewritten (carbon copy), n.d. in P. K. Yonge Library, University of Florida.

18. Corfield, "Spanish Moss," 313.

19. Record, "Spanish Moss," 59.

To remove the cortex, the moss was buried in pits or piled on the ground in heaps about five feet high and left to rot. According to one observer in the 1940s "pitted" moss was thoroughly wetted and then buried in trenches about four feet deep and left there for six to eight months.²⁰ Another writer in the same decade says that the process was still generally referred to as "pitting" even though the above ground method was in more general use. Corfield believed that factories tended to cure by pitting while individual pickers were more likely to use "mounding."²¹ The time period necessary for the pitting to be complete seems to have varied widely. Ira Brown, writing about the Florida industry in 1949, says that it took five to twelve weeks.²² Whether buried or mounded, the piles were periodically remoistened and turned so that disintegration proceeded evenly throughout the mass. In Louisiana, the moss was sometimes placed in swamp water to rot. (Material gathered from the swamps or from old ground falls was often partially, but inadequately, cured by nature and the job had to be finished.)²³ Any gardener who has ever constructed a compost heap will recognize the process, but here it was vitally important to stop the rotting, or retting, at the right moment— not too soon, but before the central fiber began to weaken.

When the fiber's skin had rotted, the piles were removed from the ground and hung to dry on wires like laundry drying in the sun. The next step was cleaning; the desired product would contain only the central black fiber. According to Bartram, "after a little beating and shaking, it is sufficiently clean."²⁴ American ingenuity was soon applied to this industry and machinery constructed to do the beating and shaking. For example, on August 4, 1857, Louis Boudreaux of Thibodeaux, Louisiana, was granted U. S. patent 17,954 for an "improvement in cleaning and carding moss." Ten years later Henry Hall, also of Louisiana, received his patent for still another "machine for

20. Corfield, "Spanish Moss," 314.

21. Lyster H. Dewey, *Fiber Production in the Western Hemisphere*, [U. S. D. A.] Miscellaneous Publication 518 (Washington, 1943), 90; Corfield, "Spanish Moss," 314.

22. Ira D. Brown, "An Industrial Survey of the Moss Industry" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 1949), 6.

23. Dewey, *Fiber Production*, 90.

24. Bartram, *Travels*, 93.



B. Moss being piled in large heaps for fermentation, July 9, 1928.

cleaning moss."²⁵ This step was called ginning and the machinery resembled gins used for other purposes; the function of any gin is, of course, to comb and clean the material.

When Munroe observed the operation of a mill in 1882, he reported: "The moss is first passed between two grooved iron rollers to 'break' it. Leaving the 'rolls,' it is caught by two sets of iron teeth or 'combs,' set in rollers and revolving in opposite directions, which tear it in pieces, and finally allow it to fall upon a frame of slats, along which it is raked, and through which all sticks and other trash fall to the ground." Once cleaned, the

25. United States patent no. 17,954. S. Ex. Doc. 30 (35-1), serial set v. 925, 510; United States patent no. 66,026. H. Ex. Doc. 96 (40-2), serial set v. 1334, 909.

moss was sorted into piles by grade and placed into a press which formed it into bales for shipment.²⁶

The preparation of moss can only be described as labor intensive. Even the substitution of gins for hand cleaning did not do a great deal to reduce the amount of hand work involved. Gathering was simply hard manual labor. It was still necessary to remove large sticks and other objects before ginning. (One edition of the Florida government bulletin, *Spanish Moss*, included a picture of two surprised squirrels whose nest had arrived at a moss factory.)²⁷ The retting process involved large amounts of both time and labor. In 1881 the *American Cyclopaedia* confidently stated that, "The rude method of preparing the moss is to place it in shallow water until the outer covering becomes loosened; after it is thoroughly dried, it is beaten until nothing is left but the horsehair-like central portion; of late years the process has been much facilitated by the use of steam; the moss is placed in large tight vats, steamed and dried, and afterwards beaten by machinery, the product being superior to that prepared in the slow way."²⁸ The fate of this technological advance remains a mystery. Perhaps it was too capital intensive.

Discussion of the moss "industry" is complicated by the fact that complete processing was not necessarily done in one location. There were factories which bought green moss and retted, cleaned, ginned, and baled it. However green moss was not cost-efficient to transport. Two thousand pounds purchased by the factory were diminished to 500 pounds in the curing stage and half of that was lost in ginning and cleaning, leaving only about 250 pounds of finished moss to sell.²⁹ To avoid the high cost of transport, many gatherers did their own curing and delivered the retted material either directly to a gin or to a pickup spot. Sometimes there were two links in the chain, and a storekeeper or other middleman would buy green moss or take it in trade, cure it himself, and then sell it to the gin. A factory might also operate branches or "curing yards" in several localities. Only the cured moss then had to be transported to the gin.³⁰

26. Munroe, "Spanish Moss," 551.

27. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss in Florida*, rev. ed. (Tallahassee, 1957), 14.

28. *American Cyclopaedia*, s.v. "tillandsia."

29. Corfield, "Spanish Moss," 315-16.

30. *Ibid.*, 311; Robinson, "Minor Fiber Industries," 48.

The price paid for the moss depended on how well it had been cured and how far it had to be carried. In 1882 the cured moss came to the mill at Gainesville "piled high in the rude two-wheeled carts of the country" which were usually drawn by an ox or cow. The sellers received one-half to three cents per pound for the two or three hundred pounds of moss crammed into a cart. The final product sold in the North, after cleaning, ginning, baling, and shipping, for fourteen to seventeen cents per pound.³¹

In a later era, some factories sent especially modified trucks out on regular runs to pick up the waiting moss. These trucks were basically large flatbeds with an additional platform constructed out over the cab and hood. This was braced by posts extending up from the front bumper. The trucks "were usually ramshackle and always monstrously overloaded, and when they got caught in the rain their loads soaked up water and they broke down," remembered Archie Carr.³² A 1949 analysis of a factory's running costs reveals that the driver of this mechanical monstrosity made seventy cents an hour. The factory paid seventy to eighty-five cents per 100 pounds for the moss the trucks collected and sold the final product for about four dollars per 100 pounds.³³

It is difficult to determine at what point the processing of moss in Florida changed from a purely local enterprise selling to a local market to an exporting commercial industry. As the Tariff Commission found in 1932, there were few official statistics kept on the moss industry.³⁴ It was not one of the specific industries reported on by the federal census, and even when the system of standard industrial codes came into use, moss was lumped with all other upholstery fillings. Most sources say that the commercial moss industry began in Louisiana after the Civil War and in Florida about 1910.³⁵

31. Munroe, "Spanish Moss," 551.

32. Brown, "Industrial Survey," 10; Archie Carr, "The Moss Forest," *Audubon* 73 (September 1971), 42.

33. Brown, "Industrial Survey," 9.

34. United States Tariff Commission, *Crin Vegetal*, 4.

35. Ca. 1900-1910 in Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss* (1957 ed.), 7; ca. 1910 in Mac Oclair, "Spanish Moss," *Florida Wildlife* 24 (July 1970), 17; ca. 1920 in Brown, "Industrial Survey," 5.

A visiting New Englander, writing from Jacksonville in 1834, reported that “lumber trade is profitably followed by some and also the moss.”³⁶ A later and more famous visitor was the poet Sidney Lanier whose guidebook to Florida was published in 1876. Upon reaching Tocoï on the St. Johns River, he commented, “Here is a factory for preparing gray moss for market.”³⁷ A few years later the Census Bureau issued a special report on the forests of North America as a supplement to the 1880 census; this mentioned the presence of eight moss factories in Louisiana and one at Pensacola, Florida.³⁸ In the 1882 description of the mill at Gainesville which was quoted above, Munroe definitely says that this mill’s output was shipped to New York and other northern cities.

When the Florida Department of Agriculture published in 1904 the book *Florida, A Pamphlet Descriptive of Its History, Topography*, containing promotional sketches of each county, the Wakulla County propagandist made a special plea for new industry. “A moss mill or factory in the mossy realm for the purpose of converting the live gray into dead black moss— a saleable staple— would develop an industry that would fleece the forest of its garland of gray.”³⁹ Still, when Roland Harper wrote his report on “Geography and Vegetation of Northern Florida” in 1914, he commented that in Leon County, “Some Spanish moss is used for mattress-making and probably shipped away to some extent,” but in Wakulla County it was “gathered for mattress-making, but perhaps used only locally.”⁴⁰ The introduction and growing popularity of the innerspring mattress some years later gradually deprived the industry of one of its major outlets. The switch in emphasis to upholstered furniture probably also meant increasing shipments from Florida to out-of-state furniture manufacturers.

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36. W. Stanley Hoole, ed., “East Florida in 1834: Letters of Dr. John Durkee,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 52 (January 1974), 301.
 37. Sidney Lanier, *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History* (Philadelphia, 1876; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1973), 126-27.
 38. Charles S. Sargent, *Report on the Forests of North America (Exclusive of Mexico)* (Washington, 1884), 538.
 39. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Florida, A Pamphlet Descriptive of Its History* (Tallahassee, 1904), 579.
 40. Roland M. Harper, “Geography and Vegetation of Northern Florida,” *Sixth Annual Report of the Florida State Geological Survey* (Tallahassee, 1914), 279, 295.

Several descriptions of moss factories exist from different periods. Again the resemblances are as striking as the differences. The 1882 mill in Gainesville was described as "very crude." Interestingly, it was linked to a sawmill which supplied its power. (Munroe does not say how the sawmill was powered—probably by a steam engine.) Factories could run on their own refuse, fueling their steam engines with a peatlike substance made from the dried waste left by the retting process— an elegant and ecologically satisfying cycle. Fifty years later, the waste material itself was sold as mulch. The mill's second major piece of equipment was a press which shaped the clean moss into bales. Munroe's description was accompanied by a full page illustration which focused on ox-carts unloading in front of a crude shack and a depiction of a gatherer working in a gloomy forest. Insets showed the combing machine and the press.⁴¹

At all times, the factories were constructed of local materials which usually meant pine. Thus they, in common with Florida's naval stores and lumber industries, ran a great risk of fire. The most notorious fire in a moss factory is undoubtedly the one which broke out in Cleaveland's Fiber Factory in Jacksonville around noon on Friday, May 3, 1901. Sparks from neighboring chimneys ignited some of the material spread out in the yard to dry. When the factory, which is described as constructed of pitch pine with a shingle roof, caught fire it collapsed. The brisk wind which had blown in the original sparks now picked up thousands of pieces of flaming fiber and blew them all over the city, starting what is known as the Great Fire which destroyed much of the city and killed seven people.⁴²

The most complete description of a moss factory is one of the last. It was written in 1949 and, ironically, was not meant to be a historical record. Instead it was a master's thesis in engineering for the University of Florida, "undertaken with the hope that it would serve to point out some of the phases of the moss industry which needed investigating and that perhaps some of the suggestions, layouts, etc. could be utilized immediately by the people who are in charge of Florida's moss

41. Munroe, "Spanish Moss," 551; Record, "Spanish Moss," 59; Martinez, *Story*, 11.

42. Benjamin Harrison, *Acres of Ashes: The Story of the Great Fire...* (Jacksonville, 1901), n.p.; T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (St. Augustine, 1925; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1964), 219.



A. Milling the moss. Engravings from *Harper's Weekly* (1882). Photographs from the Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.

industry." This interesting paper, which can be described as a time and motion study, included not only photos of the equipment, but also a diagram of the factory showing the path taken by the moving moss. There was also a "process chart," which listed the steps in processing and the distance in feet occupied by each. In sixty years the industry had substituted trucks for ox-carts and added to the factory's equipment an endless revolving belt to carry the moss through the gin and out to the sorter and baler.⁴³

How many moss factories were there? Again there is a lack of reliable statistics. The Florida state census of 1905 did count manufacturers, but there are some anomalies in the figures given. The terms used varied from county to county in the listings. By county, the following were reported: Alachua— 4 moss fibre and mattress works; Duval— 2 fiber and mattress works [moss?]; Lake— 1 moss manufacture; Marion— 2 moss factories and 1 moss and cotton mill combined. Hillsborough had one firm engaged in "mattress making," but it may or may not have used moss. Missing is any mention of a factory in Leon County, yet the book *Florida, A Pamphlet...*, which was published in the same year the census figures were collected, says there was one there. It is possible that it had gone out of business; it is also possible that it is one of the ten "ginneries" listed in the county.⁴⁴

An "industrial survey" of Florida published in 1928 found five moss factories, one each in Duval, Gulf, and Putnam counties, and two in Alachua.⁴⁵ In 1937 there were an estimated seventy factories in four states (Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina). Approximately a dozen of these were in Florida.⁴⁶ By 1957 this number had dwindled to two. These were the Vego Hair Company in Gainesville and the Florida Moss Company in Ocala.⁴⁷ Both firms could be found in the *Directory of Florida Industries* for a few years more, but the 1969

43. Brown, "Industrial Survey," 1.

44. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Census Report of the State of Florida* (Tallahassee, 1906), table 4, "Specified Industries by Counties," unpagged; Florida Department of Agriculture, *Florida, A Pamphlet*, 455.

45. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Florida, An Advancing State* (Tallahassee, 1928), 27.

46. Bell, "Spanish Moss," 65.

47. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss* (1957 ed.), 13-14.

edition listed no companies under "Moss" and several years later even the heading had disappeared.⁴⁸ A long-lived Florida industry had finally succumbed to the competition offered by foam rubber and plastics.

APPENDIX

The following are locations of moss companies in Florida.

The dates given are usually the publication date of the source. This list does not include the county locations from the 1905 census and the 1928 "industrial survey" which were listed in the text.

Anthony 1939 (unidentified).⁴⁹

Apopka 1956, listed as branch of Vego Hair of Gainesville.⁵⁰

Auburndale 1937, W. R. Dougan.⁵¹

Bushnell 1956-1965, listed as a branch of Florida Moss Co. of Ocala.⁵²

Citra 1911, J. S. Wyckoff.⁵³

Citrus County ca. 1935 (unidentified).⁵⁴

Cross City 1948-1954, Dixie Moss Co.⁵⁵

Eagle Lake 1937, Bodow Moss and Fiber co.⁵⁶

Gainesville 1882 (unidentified)⁵⁷; 1937-1965, Vega Hair Manufacturing Co⁵⁸; 1951-1955, Southern Moss Hair Co⁵⁹; 1954,

48. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory of Florida Industries* (Jacksonville, 1948-1973). The title of this directory varies, the 1948 edition was the *Florida Industrial Directory*.

49. Federal Writers' Project, *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* (New York, 1939; reprinted. New York, 1984), 534.

50. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1956-1957, 35.

51. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss* (1937 ed.), 23.

52. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1956-1957, 1965.

53. *Florida Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Jacksonville, 1911), 80.

54. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Central Florida* (Tallahassee, n.d.), 15.

55. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1948, 1951-1952; Florida Secretary of State, *List of Corporations That Have Been Dissolved...under the Provisions of Chapter 166880, Acts of 1935, Laws of Florida* (Tallahassee, 1954), 6. This law provided for clearing the files of the secretary of the names of corporations which had not paid taxes in three years, therefore the end date given is several years after the company ceased operating. This is especially true of the names in the first (1936) report.

56. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss* (1937 ed.), 23.

57. Munroe, "Spanish Moss," 551.

58. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss* (1937 ed.), 23; Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1948-1965.

59. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1951-1952, 1954-1955.

- Florida Moss Ginning Co⁶⁰; 1958, reference to moss gin burned.⁶¹
 Hawthorne 1948, Deluxe Cypress Moss Mfg.⁶²
 Jacksonville 1901, Cleaveland Fiber Factory⁶³; 1905, American Fibre Co⁶⁴; 1936, Florida Moss Products Co⁶⁵; 1937, Wooton Fibre Co.⁶⁶
 Leon County 1912, possible reference to a gin.⁶⁷
 Marion County ca. 1935 (Probably one of the companies listed under Ocala).⁶⁸
 Ocala 1905-1936, George Giles and Co⁶⁹; 1937, Central Florida Fiber Co⁷⁰; 1946 Ocala Moss Co⁷¹; 1951-1967, Florida Moss (Ginning) Co.⁷²
 Oldtown 1939 (unidentified).⁷³
 Palatka 1922, gin burned⁷⁴; ca. 1935, Mr. Amons⁷⁵; 1937, Southern Products Co⁷⁶; 1942, Vego Hair Manufacturing Co.⁷⁷
 Pensacola 1884 (unidentified).⁷⁸
 Plant City, one undated reference (unidentified); 1956, Branch of Florida Moss Co. of Ocala.⁸⁰
 San Mateo 1954, Dan Ross.⁸¹
 Sumter County ca. 1935 (unidentified).⁸²
 Tallahassee 1904 (unidentified).⁸³

60. Florida Secretary of State, *List of Corporations*, 1954, 7.

61. Bell, "Spanish Moss," 66.

62. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1948, 14.

63. Harrison, *Acres of Ashes*, unpag.

64. *Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers* (New York, 1905), 685.

65. Florida Secretary of State, *List of Corporations*, 1936, 59.

66. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss* (1937 ed.), 23.

67. Harper, "Northern Florida," 279.

68. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Central Florida*, 41.

69. *Thomas' Register*, 1905-1912; Martinez, *Story*, 19; Florida Secretary of State, *List of Corporations*, 1936, 67.

70. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss* (1937 ed.), 23.

71. Florida Secretary of State, *List of Corporations*, 1946, 6.

72. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1951-1952, 1967.

73. Federal Writers' Project, Florida, *A Guide*, 417.

74. Oscair, "Spanish Moss," 16.

75. Frances D. Freeman, "Moss Man," *Florida Living* 7 (June 1987), 34.

76. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Spanish Moss* (1937 ed.), 23.

77. Florida Secretary of State, *List of Corporations*, 1942, 11.

78. Sargent, *Forests*, 538.

79. Bell, "Spanish Moss," 66.

80. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1956-1957, 108.

81. *Ibid.*, 1954-1955, 149.

82. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Central Florida*, 73.

83. Florida Department of Agriculture, *Florida, A Pamphlet*, 455.

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Tampa 1948, Southern Moss co.⁸⁴

Tocoi 1876 (unidentified).⁸⁵

84. Florida State Chamber of Commerce, *Directory*, 1948, 69.

85. Lanier, *Florida*, 127.