S0655 T.J. Moss Tie Company
Records, 1898-1925
485 Folders, 33 Volumes

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The T.J. Moss Tie Company records were donated to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection by Mr. Bernard Mabry in April 2002.

Thomas Jefferson Moss was born March 1, 1857. He was orphaned at the age of six and began working when he was ten. He saved his money and went to Central College at Fayette, MO. He took a teaching job in Tennessee for one year and returned to Missouri with six hundred dollars. He began a small business providing railroad ties to road being built in Missouri. In 1879 Moss bought an interest in a mercantile company. His new partners joined him in the tie business and he was able to expand. Three years later he bought out his partners and organized the Moss Tie Co. In 1886 he purchased 40,000 acres of timber land in Stoddard County Missouri. He had seven sawmills cutting railroad ties and bridge timbers and an equal number of general stores operating in various places. He was employing around 3,000 men in all his operations. The great railroad expansion of this period allowed Moss to take a leading role in supplying ties to railroads in the Midwest. He established his headquarters in St. Louis in 1888. Moss was known as 'The Tie King'. He built and became president of the Paducah, Tennessee and Alabama Railway, Tennessee Midland Railway, Cape Girardeau Transportation Company and the Mississippi Packet Co. Moss died in August of 1893. In 15 years Moss had built his 600 dollars into over one million. He had left behind the largest tie company in the country.

John Wallace Fristoe took over the reins of the T.J. Moss Tie Company and it was incorporated in September of 1893. By the turn of the Century the cross tie market was over 100,000,000 units per year. In these early days of the tie business, only white oak ties were desirable to the railroads because they would last the longest. The company eventually built and operated three treatment plants for injecting preservative chemical into other woods to make them last longer.

Kerr McGee eventually bought the company and merged it with American Creosoting Corp. to form Moss America.

SCOPE AND CONTENT
The records consist of correspondence, reports and business ledgers. The bulk of the material is from 1919-1923. The interesting thing about the correspondence is that the company saved both sides of all correspondence. This gives a real insight into the way the company did business. How they handled the good times as well as the bad.

SERIES DESCRIPTION
SERIES 1: Correspondence, Agent. The tie business was handled in the field by agents who would oversee the cutting and milling of ties on company land, inspect and buy from contractors and arrange shipping of the ties to the customer or company facility. Arranged
SERIES 2: Correspondence, Treatment Plants. The company operated three treatment plants during the period covered by the records. The correspondence covers various issues related to the treatment of ties as well as the plant construction and staffing. Arranged alphabetically and chronologically.

SERIES 3: Correspondence: Internal. This is memoranda and letters between the various officers of the company regarding the business. Arranged chronologically.

SERIES 4: Correspondence, Vendors and Customers. This series deals with many other tie companies, numerous railroads and even the office supply vendors. Those companies with which there is sufficient correspondence have been indexed. Arranged alphabetically.

SERIES 5: Correspondence, General. Most of the general correspondence is with vendors or customers. Arranged chronologically.

SERIES 6: Grace Community Club: A men's club associated with Grace Church.

SERIES 7: Fruin-Colnan Construction Co., Correspondence, invoices and other material relating to the construction of the East St. Louis processing plant.

SERIES 8: Reports, Cross Tie Inspection Reports, weekly statements, daily shipping reports and other reports.

SERIES 9: Invoices and Receipts. Invoices and receipts for material purchased and sold.

SERIES 10 Publications: Publications relating to the business.

SERIES 11: Ledgers: Ledgers covering shipping, production, cash, and other business ledgers.

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extra box:

"Stamp of Character", in 35 mm, VHS and DVD formats. (A 16mm copy is stored with the unprocessed Mabry papers.)
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