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Green Gold: Alabama's Forests and Forest Industries

by James Fickle

Summary

Green Gold is a thorough and valuable compilation of information on Alabama's timber and forest products industry, the largest manufacturing industry in the state. Alabama has the third-largest commercial forest in the nation, after only Georgia and Oregon. Fully two-thirds of the state's land supports the growth of over fifteen billion trees on twenty-two million acres, which explains why Alabama looks entirely green from space. Green Gold presents the story of human use of and impact on Alabama's forests from pioneer days to the present, as James E. Fickle chronicles the history of the industry from unbridled greed and exploitation through virtual abandonment to revival, restoration, and enlightened stewardship. As the state's largest manufacturing industry, forest products have traditionally included naval stores such as tar, pitch, and turpentine, especially in the southern longleaf stands; sawmill lumber, both hardwood and pine; and pulp and paper milling. Green Gold documents all aspects of the industry, including the advent of scientific forestry; and the development of reforestation practices with sustained yields. Also addressed are the historical impacts of Native Americans and of early settlers who used axes, saws, and water- and steam-powered sawmills to clear and utilize forests. Along with an account of railroad logging and the big mills of the lumber bonanza days of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the book also chronicles the arrival of professional foresters to the state, who began to deal with the devastating legacy of cut out and get out logging and to fight the perennial curse of woods arson. Finally, Green Gold examines the rise of the tree farm movement, the rebirth of large-scale lumbering, the advent of modern environmental concerns, and the movement toward the Fourth Forest in Alabama. A Copublication with the Alabama Forestry Foundation.

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