

3 Tremont Row
Boston July 15th 1864

Gentlemen

Your note inviting specimens of Fibrilia as a substitute for Cotton & Wool, as well as directions and explanations for its manufacture, is at hand— My previous specimens, and my work on Fibrilia, gave you some idea of what I had done in that line, and I had hoped for leisure enough before this to add to them according to your request, but have not as yet been able—

I have been many years engaged on this subject, and believe I have made the only practical advance which has been in fibrilizing flax and hemp— All those now engaged on that subject using my process more or less— Of all other processes hitherto tried and which have failed, I use nothing with the exception of one machine which was patented by Messrs. Randaall and Treat in 1857 as Flax Brake, but which is valueless for that purpose, though very valuable as a stranding machine, for which purpose I only use it— It strands the fibre by stranding better than my own process for that single branch of my business— Mr. Treat died some years since, but Mr. Randaall is still living and has much experience in

preparing flax for short stapled spinning and ought to
be encouraged.

I know not what plan your Commission has
have for developing this subject, but shall be happy
to give you any assistance in my power, though from
the immensity of the subject, I could do but little
by letter or samples.

I think I could write a report, or
work on the subject of some three or four hundred
pages in print, which would be valuable to all
concerned in the manufacture of long stapled fibres,
but it would need to be fully illustrated by Lithographic
cuts of machines and anatomical drawing & which
would cost some five hundred dollars and a great
deal of labor, but as I have already ^{spent} twelve years
time and more than one hundred thousand
dollars in encouraging the growth of flax, and getting
up mills, I do not feel that I can afford to do
more at my own cost, than furnish such specimens
and information as I can do with my present
facilities. — I have visited the Western Country several
times, and have lectured and written ^{a great deal} on the subject.
While running a small set of machinery for preparing
flax cotton in East Greenwich, R. I. in 1857, I got
acquainted with Mr. Randall who suggested his machine
as an improvement on one branch of my process, and I



bought the right and have used it some to advantage.
I can recommend Mr Randall as a good man
to conduct experiments if ^{you} wish, or I would conduct
them myself, or write a work illustrative of the
whole process at your expense, if desired.

If I might
be allowed to suggest a plan of helping this interest,
I should say something like the following plan of
development would be a good one.

First, Premium (under
proper restrictions) to flax growers - Second Premium
to the best machines for Cleaning + Breaking Flax -
Third, Premium to the best reducing or stranding
machines - Fourth, Do. to Solving, Coloring and
Bleaching - Fifth, Do. Carding and Roving - Sixth,
Do. to Spinning - Seventh Do. Weaving & C. Also,
the preparation of a Standard work on fibrous
plants and the best method of Cottonizing &c.
I will send you more specimens soon

I have the honor to be

Yours Truly

Signed Stephen H. Allen



Copy
of
the
Transactions
of
the
Smithsonian Institution

Vol. 10
Part 1

Washington

D.C.

18 July 1864

