

Slipper's Soliloquies

By Fred Slipper

My friend Brownie Smith (now Thomas) has brought me a number of Hamilton newspapers from the 1910 era. It is fun browsing through them and noting the difference in the way certain news items are written, and to look at the various advertisements.

One of the main items in the March 26, 1910, issue was the proposed erection of a large shingle mill at Hamilton. The big timber operators in those days were Messrs. English and Butler, and the paper said they own vast resources of timber. In those days cedar was very plentiful and up to that time they had been shipping their cedar logs to other mills. The paper says English and Butler investigated the shingle market, and decided they may as well make the shingles, too, and realize the profit from two sources rather than just the sale of the logs. Not bad thinking.

According to the article, the shingle mill in Lyman was in full operation and the one at Hamilton was going to be patterned after the Lyman mill, which was considered very efficient. The Lyman mill had six shingle machines, and was producing a daily average of 220,000 clears. Apparently 180,000 clears a day was considered an average daily output, so English and Butler decided to copy their operation after the Lyman mill.

The article mentions the Hamilton mill would be built on the lake. I am not just sure what "lake" they were referring to—maybe this is what we called the mill pond halfway between Hamilton and the siding, now known as Punkin Center. However, it would have been an excellent place for the location for the shingle mill, as the cedar logs could be hauled directly from the logging sites to the storage lake.

This was apparently long before shakes were popular, as only shingles are referred to in the article. Also the fact that there were enough cedar trees to supply the necessary logs for 30 years seemed to be an important factor in the decision to erect the shingle mill. Of course 30 years seemed like a long time, and as the paper was dated 1910, this meant they would run out of logs in 1940. This must have been a pretty good prediction way back in 1910, as by 1940 the shingle mill had been out of production for many years.

One of the ads in the paper said "Let us light your home with our gasoline lighting system. Something every member of the family can enjoy 365 days in the year. Cheapest light there is and does away with ill-smelling, smoky kerosene lamps. Nothing you can buy will make home so attractive". As the price of electricity continues to go up and up, maybe I will look into a gasoline system. . .

Another ad was the Seattle Lodging House, which had plain, comfortable rooms, 25¢ per day.

It is fun looking through the news items. One of them said "The remains of the Hamilton National Protective Legion met Thursday evening with the object of organizing a club. Nothing exciting happened".

MAN 1984