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Researched by Past & Present Research

Shay Locomotive, Lumbering Relic, Arrives Here Today From Cadillac - Soo.

U P Lumbering Company Gives Logging Engine To City of Cadillac.

With the arrival of the Shay locomotive today, memories of by-gone lumber days were brought to mind by many of the older citizens of the city.

The locomotive, a gift to the city by the Cadillac Soo Lumber Co., and presented to the city through the efforts of T. Walter Kelly, is over 60 years old. As near as could be determined it was built in 1890 and was used in the Cadillac area and by another Upper Peninsula lumber company before being purchased by the Cadillac Soo Company. At that time it was converted from a narrow gauge into a standard gauge locomotive and was in use until about two years ago, when it was retired to rest in a Sault Ste Marie swamp where it was when it was presented to the city of Cadillac.

Excepting the gift, the city commission appointed Commissioners Henry Kidder and Drexel Swartwood to find out how to get the locomotive to the city. After a trip to The Soo July 18, the two commissioners made the recommendation to the city Commission that every efforts should be made to get it here and Manager L. A. Hanson was instructed to proceed with the task.

After a trip north Hanson made arrangements with a Grand Rapids firm to truck the 45-ton, 35- foot long locomotive to Cadillac, and a site for displaying of it was made in the city park. Although the bell and whistle are not attached, it was learned the Hanson had brought them down with him on his return trip.

The Shay locomotive tops the lists of firsts created during the lumbering days. It was conceived by Ephriam Shay then of Cadillac, about 1873 or 1874. The engine differs from the standard type of railroad locomotive in that it had vertical pistons to operate the driving cranks instead of the usual horizontal pistons connected directly to the large main driving wheels, thus multiplying the power needed for starting heavy loads without slippage or spinning the wheels. The Shay engine was not speedy, but powerful, and was developed to pull logs loaded on flat cars. The first engine was made in the Crippen Foundry and Machine Shop, located on the site that is now the 7-Up Bottling Works and was used for the first time in Shay's own lumber camp at Linden which is now the area around the Haring Township Hall. Only three or four locomotives were built here.

April 26, 1916, Shay died in Harbor Springs and later the patents were sold to the Lima Locomotive Company now known as the Baldwin - Lima - Hamilton Corporation, Lima, Ohio. In recent correspondence with the company it was learned that the Shay locomotive were built by that company from 1880 through 1937 and that one built in 1925 had recently been donated to the Allen County Historical Museum, Lima, for display.