

LAKESIDE IN '60'S

Henry T. Shrubsole Describes Village Then

Father Was Pioneer Brick Maker of North Oxford—Came to This Continent in 1846 and Knew Buffalo as a Struggling Town—Squire Ingersoll Owned Much Land Near Lake.

The Journal Man had an interesting conversation with an old-time citizen of the district on Saturday when Henry T. Shrubsole of Downie, came to the office regarding a recent article about the old Lakeside Mill which appeared in the columns of this paper. As will be remembered by those who read that history of the Lakeside Mill, the Shrubsole family was connected with the village in the early days, in fact it was Henry Shrubsole's father, Charles Shrubsole who made the first brick and tile there. Henry, though he is eighty-one years of age has a fine memory and gave us an insight into conditions and those who did business in and about the lake when he as a lad took his first job of work at the age of seven.

♣ Buffalo In The Forties

Mr. Shrubsole's father came from a farm in the Maidstone district of Kent, England, nine miles from the big naval barracks at Chatham. He and his wife landed at Buffalo, New York in 1846 and after working about for a few months Mr. Shrubsole secured work in a brick yard. He soon mastered the art of brick and tile making and finally started up in business for himself. He stayed in Buffalo for eleven years and saw that town grow from a comparatively small place to a bustling city. He used to tell of the early days there when much of the ground now covered by the city was a bog where tufts of rushes grew. During his residence in Buffalo the senior Shrubsole was a member of the fire department and he used to tell of the terrible Cholera epidemic which carried off hundreds of the citizens and of the fire which swept through the shanties in what was known as the foreign quarter. In 1857, in the month of March, the Shrubsole family moved to Ingersoll and there the father engaged with a Mr. Long, making brick in a yard three miles west of the town for a period of two years. This was at the time when the Crimean War's ending caused such a slump in the markets of grain and produce, the settlers being especially hard hit. The Long brick yard failed and the proprietor left the town, Mr. Shrubsole having to take and sell brick to get his pay.

Made First Brick In Lakeside

About this time Mr. Shrubsole's father became acquainted with the late Squire Ingersoll, who owned 325 acres of land in and about the present site of Lakeside. A bargain was struck and the Shrubsole family began the move to the shores of the little lake in the dense forest of East Nissouri. Henry Shrubsole, then a boy of seven, remembers quite well that trip from Ingersoll into the North Western part of Oxford. The family and furniture was loaded upon two wagons, the large one drawn by two horses and the smaller one by one animal. The journey was made along the Governor's military road to the village of Thamesford thence north through the mud on the Tenth Concession, a road that had just been completed two years before. It was March and the spring thaws had set-in as the little caravan wound its way along the bush-girt trail. After an all day journey the Shrubsole's (the party consisted of Chas. Shrubsole, his wife and family and Thomas and Sidney Shrubsole, brothers of Thomas) reached the clearing just south of the present village of Medina, where lived the late John Brazier, a friend of the Shrubsole family since childhood back in Kent County, England. The family stayed all night with the Braziers and in the morning took up the trail for the lake two miles to the Eastward. Roads were practically non-existent here and to help the travellers over the trail Mr. Brazier loaned the family a team which was attached to the one horse rig while the third animal was used on the big wagon.

The Ingersoll farm was as explained in a previous article, on the South-East corner of what is now the village, his land running well round the east side of the lake. At a spot just east of the present Anglican Church there was a log dwelling and into this the Shrubsole family moved. In a few weeks kilns were set up and work was commenced with the manufacture of brick. Squire Ingersoll had decided to build a saw mill at the north end of the lake and as steam was the only power available a tall chimney was necessary. The first kiln full of brick burned by Mr. Shrubsole therefore went to the building of this chimney which was erected in the summer of 1859 and was fifty feet in height. The chimney was built by John Morrison, an early bricklayer of the district. The saw mill building and machinery was built and installed by Hugh McKenzie, assisted by John Harris and George Brazier.

The boiler of the first steam engine had to be brought from Ingersoll and Henry Sweeney, who Mr. Shrubsole says was a teamster and not a miller, was engaged to transport the heavy iron tank from the railway. When he got into the sand hills east of Lakeside his horses were unable to make further progress and Shrubsole senior lent three horses to help him out. When the boiler was installed and the sawmill operating, plans were made for the erection of a grist mill also but this was not carried out until the next year (1860). This building still stands, a monument to the durability of the brick