

woods. Its features made for easy maintenance, great flexibility on rough track, and, of course, very slow speed. The Shay's top speed was about 12 to 15 miles per hour. This 1930s photograph by William H. B. Jones. *Courtesy, Collection of Tony Howe-Gilbert Hoffman-David Price.*

[Larger view](#)

great bulk of cutover lands was unsuitable for farming. Few people in the industry had an interest in planting a second forest on the devastated land, and the effort from 1909 to 1915 to make the pinelands into farms was a total failure.

New processes bring planting of second forest

Then, in 1911 a plant at Moss Point, Mississippi, was built to produce paper from the waste products of the L. N. Dantzler sawmills. William H. Mason at Laurel, Mississippi, developed a process for manufacturing a building material called "Masonite" from young second-growth timber. These processes convinced land owners that quick returns could be had from young trees. So, they planted a second forest.

Sawmills brought the local population ample opportunities for employment during the first three decades of the 20th-century. People who had grown up on farms preferred jobs in the lumber industry and became loggers or sawmill workers.

George Teunnison, who worked in sawmills in South Mississippi before going to work for several railroads around 1900, said, "From about 1897 until 1919, an engineer could start out riding a local freight from Hattiesburg and he could just about always find a job on a log road long before he reached Lyman. It was the same way up toward Jackson."

By the 1930s, most sawmills in Mississippi had been forced to close. Encouraged by local tax laws, sawmill operators tried to cut as much timber in as short a period of time as possible. Many small mills had cut all the timber available to them within a few years, while larger mills lasted more than forty years. Dwindling timber supplies, coupled with the effects of the Great Depression, forced most mills to shut down. Some companies, such as Gilchrist-Fordney Co. and the Finkbine Lumber Company, moved their operations to the West Coast. For the most part, the timber boom from virgin forests that started in the 1890s was over by the 1930s.