# HAMILTON OTTO COKE COMPANY

A few miles north of Hamilton, there is located the small village of Coke Otto, with a population of almost one thousand souls. Ten years ago at the spot where the village now stands there were only a few houses here and there.

The growth of the community is due to the construction there, in 1900, of the mammoth plant of the Hamilton Otto Coke Company, and the name of the village, "Coke Otto," is taken from the corporation name. When the plant was constructed only fifty ovens were installed but the great demand for the company's product made it necessary, in 1908, to install fifty additional ovens, and today the plant is one of the largest and best equipped of its kind in the country. Practically every male inhabitant in the village is employed at the Hamilton Otto Coke Company and the salaries that are paid out by the corporation amounts to a small sized fortune each week.

Modern methods have made it possible for the plant to produce almost twice as much coke as the same number of ovens would have produced a generation ago. Operated under the old system it required from 48 to 72 hours to convert coal into coke, but by the present system in use at the big Hamilton plant, the time has been cut in half. The ovens can be emptied and filled without delay and but 24 hours is required for a complete cycle of operation.

The plant at the present time, has an output of 175,000 tons of coke annually. This is marketed in two forms, domestic, for household use, and foundry, for metallurgical use. No small amount of the product of the company is sold to local consumers.

To give a complete and adequate description of the plant would be almost impossible. The accompanying cuts give one a better idea of the immensity and intricacy of the plant, than any word picture possibly could.

There are a few features, however, which deserve special attention. The coal bin is one the largest in southern Ohio. It holds over 1,000 tons. An one hundred ton scale is used in weighing the product of the company which is sent to other cities and states. There is a ninety foot standpipe, and a 300 horse power Hamilton Corliss engine furnishes the power.

The company manufactures a very valuable by-product, to which thousands of Hamilton families can testify, artificial gas. This gas is driven from the coke, is purified and then sold to the Hamilton Utilities Company. This company distributes the gas to the many patrons in Hamilton to be used for heating and lighting. One of the best testimonials as to the worth of this important by-product is the fact that over 160,000,000 cubic feet are used annually.

Within the past few years consumption of coke for household purposes has increased many fold, and it will only be a matter of a few more years until it entirely supplants the use of hard or anthracite coal for domestic use.

At the coke plant there is generated an electric current which also is sold to the Hamilton Utilities Company and from there is distributed to patrons in Hamilton. Until a year ago, the coke plant was owned by the Hamilton Gas and Electric Company, now the Hamilton Utilities Company, but the corporations were reorganized separately and while both have the same set of officers, their stockholders for the most part are different individuals.

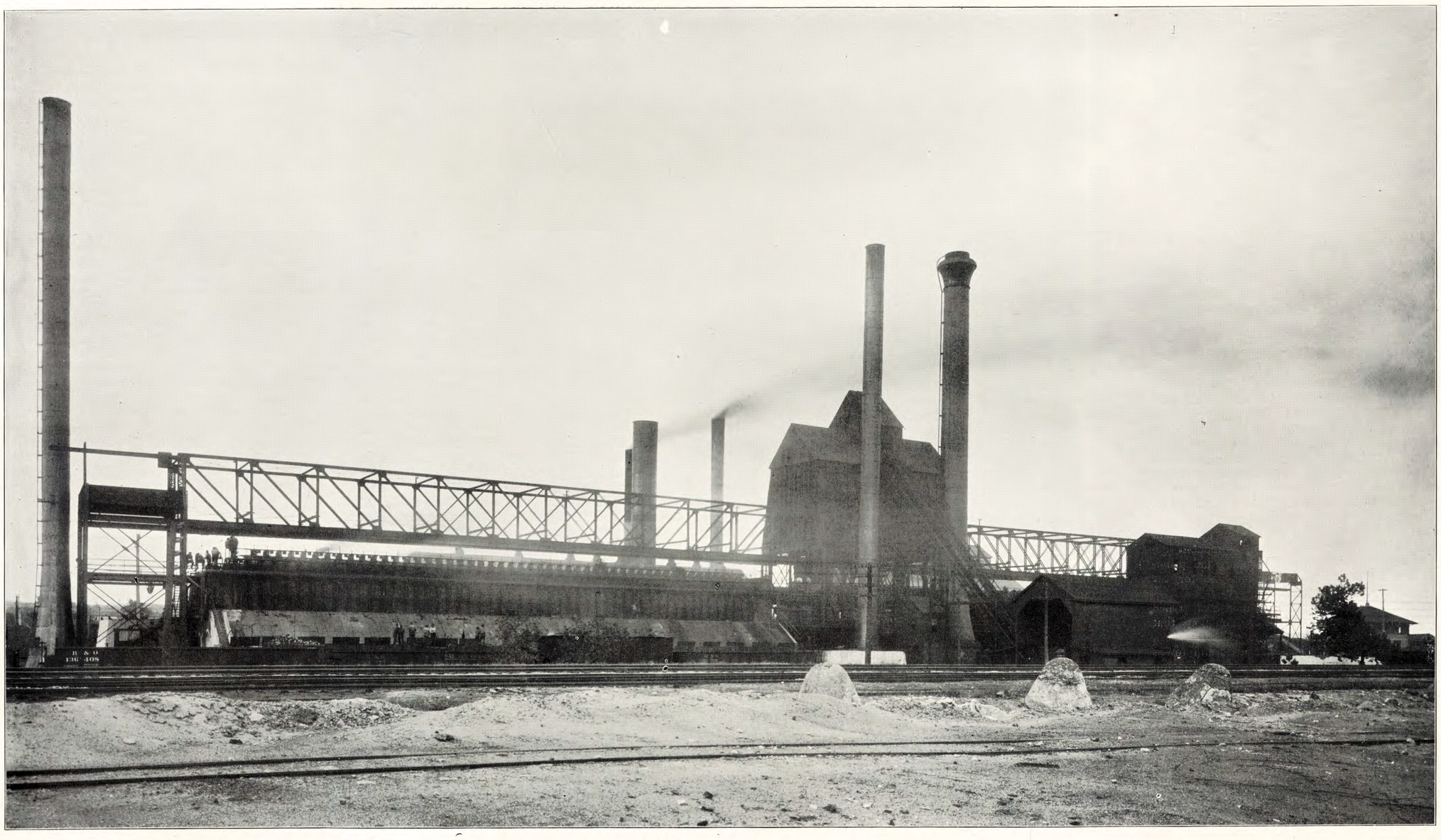
The big plant of the Hamilton Otto Coke Company was partially wrecked by the big flood of March 1913, and miles of gas pipe of the Hamilton Utilities Company was torn up.

With characteristic energy the work of restoration was begun and within a short time, in fact in less than two weeks, gas was again being furnished a great majority of the patrons. This entailed a great deal of hardship and work. The company saw that each individual service in the flood district was inspected by one of its authorized and experienced men. Over three thousand meters were changed. Five car loads of pipe were received from Cincinnati via traction. This was the first big shipment of this character received in Hamilton after the disaster. The company's officials were determined upon getting affairs into normal condition again as soon as possible.

The headquarters of the Citizens' Relief Committee and of the State Militia were in the Rentschler building in Hamilton and the company made an especial effort to get its current to that building as soon as possible in order to facilitate the labors of the officers and committees. It was eight days after the flood when the heroic men and women of Hamilton, who were working night and day to relieve the suffering in the city, were startled one evening to see the skyscraper lighted by electrcity.

To do this work meant the placing of many poles and the stringing of miles and miles of wire and the employment of as many additional men as it was possible to get.

The company was ready to give Hamilton the use of electricity for street lighting purposes but just before it was prepared to do so, the Ohio Electric Company came to the relief of the officials.

The big gasometer of the Utilities Company on East High street in Hamilton, is one of the biggest in the country. It is larger than any in a city of the size and population of Hamilton. It has a capacity of over half a million cubic feet of gas and will supply the needs of the city for a time sufficient to fix any break down that is likely to occur at the plant at Coke Otto. It is built of half-inch steel, between thirty and forty carloads of material being used in its construction.

The officers of The Hamilton Otto Coke Company are: E. M. Peters, president; J. C. Thoms, vice-president; E. C. Siemer, secretary and treasurer.