

COMPILATION OF
CANAL TRADE ARTICLES FROM
Miscellaneous Issues of
SHARPSBURG ENTERPRISE
SHARPSBURG
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MD
1878 - 1882

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A. PREFACE

This compilation of newspaper articles about the C. & O. Canal is one of a series. In 1878, *Sharpsburg Enterprise* was published weekly on Fridays. The microfilm record indicated that the contents were from Nov. 22, 1878 through Oct. 20, 1882, which is true as regards the first and last edition. However, every edition between those two dates was not found and every edition that was found did not include stories about the C. & O. Canal. All microfilm was from: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD or Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, MD.

This compilation follows the format of the other compilations: *The Alleganian*, a Cumberland, Md. newspaper; *The Washington*, a Leesburg, VA newspaper and *Shepherdstown Register*, a Shepherdstown, WV newspaper.

Readers are encouraged to search the enclosed report for information on their ancestors as their time and interest permits. Feel free to send additional observations for the benefit of others.

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11/22/78, p. 3. **Drowned.** On Monday evening last at about 1 o'clock a young man by the name of Jackson Stewart, hailing from some part of Pennsylvania, was drowned in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal near the stop lock. The circumstances are as follows: The man was boating on the Charles Knott, Captain Jos. Frederick, and whilst changing the fall board, or rather knocking the chain off the board, his feet slipped and he fell into the water and was drowned. A pole was handed him, but he made no effort to grasp it. Deceased was about 18 or 19 years of age. Justice R. W. Grove was notified of the fact, who immediately proceeded to the spot and summoned a jury composed of the following named persons: Jacob Baker, foreman; Daniel Hemphill, William Ward, Daniel Marmaduke, William Shipley, Daniel Conaly, M. C. Bergman, John Whittendon, William McCoy, James D. Frese, William Whittendon. The jury rendered a verdict of accidental drowning in accordance with the facts above stated.

7/16/80, p. 3. **The Strike.**

The strike of the boatmen on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal which took place last week, on account of the refusal of two of the companies to give the boatmen \$1.10 cents a ton for coal, involves quite a number of our citizens. We are sorry to see it. The boating season seemed to open with brighter prospects this year than ever before but now trouble has ensued and the boatmen are likely to be thrown out of employment for some time. On last Sunday or Monday night one boat hauling coal under price for one of the companies was stoned and fired into from the cliffs, by someone unknown, at the place known as the "Shades of Death," a short distance below the warehouse of Keedy, Smith & Snyder. A woman on the boat becoming frightened jumped overboard and waded out to the bank. Fortunately no

one was hurt. We regret to hear of such proceedings, and hope the matter may be amicably adjusted.

11/18/81, p. 3. **The Canal.** - Boating on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal is now proceeding briskly. With plenty of water and a prospect of abundant freight until the closing of navigation a number of our people will be fully employed. The great misfortune is that good fortune come too late in the season for voyagers on the "raging canawl" to make any money out of the year's work.

12/2/81, p. 3. **The Canal.** - We understand the 15th of December has been designated as the date for closing navigation on the canal. If the weather gets much colder than it has been navigation will be suspended without reference to the direction of the canal authorities.

Canal Notes. - Geo. Colton, Esq., of the Baltimore *Gazette*, and he ought to know what he is talking about, is authority for the statement that President Gorman, of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, will resign the Presidency early in the coming new year.

Some days ago the steam packet "Maryland" passed over the canal and paid off the hands. - *Herald*.

Shot at Seven Locks. - On Monday last a dispute arose in the neighborhood of the Great Falls, between Robert Bartley, of the boat *Laura*, and Toby Ensminger, of the boat *Clinton Knode*. Ensminger is hardly of age, while Bartley is between thirty and forty years old. After fighting awhile Ensminger got worsted and ran for his gun. He fired both barrels at Bartley, badly wounding him in the arm, near the shoulder. Bartley was taken to Province hospital in Washington, and Ensminger escaped. - *News*.

Accidents. - William Mose, who has been employed by the Canal Company as a

quarry man, met with an accident on Wednesday morning that may prove troublesome. While cutting some kindling to make a fire, his knife slipped and entered his leg below the knee, penetrating to the bone. The wound, which presented an ugly appearance, was dressed by Dr. Russell.

David Gloss, while butchering on Tuesday, ran a hook in his arm, severing one of his veins and making a jagged looking wound. Dr. Biggs attended and dressed it.

12/9/81, p. 3. **The Canal.** - As the contractors to furnish lumber have not filled their contracts there will not be as many locks lengthened during this season as was anticipated.

It is estimated that the month just closing will be the heaviest of the year as regards shipments of coal by canal. It is thought the Month's shipments will aggregate over 90,000 tons. So says the *News*.

It was intended to close navigation on the canal on the 15th of December. It is now said that it would be kept open as long as the weather will admit. Give the boatmen a chance.

1/6/82, p. 3. We are informed that the water will be drawn off the Canal on the 10th inst.

Break on the Canal. - A large break occurred on Wednesday in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, near the burned warehouse at Mercerville. The water has cut through under the tow-path exactly where the same accident occurred a week or two ago, Though in this instance the break is larger. Henry C. Burgan is in charge of the division.

1/13/82, p. 3. **Coal Shipments.** - The total shipments of coal over the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal from Cumberland for the year 1881, were 521,189 tons, a decrease of 94,223 tons, as compared with 1880. The falling off in shipments was mainly due to

the low water. Of this amount, 33,100 tons were shipped to Williamsport, this county, to dealers and others. - *Herald*.

Work on the Canal. - James Marrow, section boss on the canal, yesterday took his employees, seven in number, down to Catocin, where they will be engaged in the work of lengthening the locks. We understand that this improvement will be pushed forward vigorously to its completion, and will furnish employment to a class of men who are generally idle at this season of the year, by reason of the general cessation of out-door labor.

1/20/82, p. 3. The latest act of economy on the part of the Canal Company is the cutting down of the pay of lock-keepers to one half. Nothing is said about cutting down Mr. Gorman's pay.

Since the letting out of the water in the canal, some of our epicurean citizens have been feasting on green turtle soup made out of skill pots, which is said to be very luscious this season of the year. At least they tell us so.

The Canal. - It is expected that the work of lengthening the locks of the canal will be commenced within a few days. It is not probable, however, that more than fifteen or sixteen of them will be lengthened the present season. The work, it is thought, will be completed by the latter part of March, and thus permit the reopening of navigation sometime in April.

A Large Haul. - Last Monday a party of fishermen, numbering ten or a dozen persons, dragged the canal with a seine a short distance below Delaney's lock. The raid on the finny tribe was quite successful, no less than eight bushels having succumbed to the voracious grasp of their cruel enemies. The fish were mostly of a large size and included a considerable quantity of bass. If our Tilghman friends have not yet tried their luck we would advise

them to defer it until next winter as the few fish remaining in the canal are needed for seed.

2/17/82, p. 3. The canal authorities think the lengthening of the locks will be completed by the middle of next month; if not, the prosecution of the work will not be a barrier to the resumption of boating.

3/10/82, p. 3. In conversation yesterday, an officer of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal stated that, in all probability, the water would not be in the canal until the first of April, as he did not believe the lengthening of the locks would be completed much before that date.

3/24/82, p. 3. The boatmen are upon the *qui vine* to ascertain the latest news from the coal regions. In anticipation of the water going into the canal by the first of April, they were making preparations for resuming their avocation, but the strike among the miners has made them grow very despondent over the prospect of an unprofitable season.

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. - The stockholders of the canal met in Annapolis on Tuesday. Mr. Gorman was detained in Washington by the sickness of his child. He forwarded his resignation as president of the canal, which the stockholders refused to consider until the annual meeting in June.

3/31/82, p. 3. James Marrow, who is in charge of a gang of hands working on the extension of the Canal locks near Catoclin, has been suffering with typhoid fever, but is now recovering.

4/14/82, p. 3. The boatmen are still waiting anxiously for developments in the mining regions. The prospects for an early resumption of business upon the canal are, at present, very discouraging.

4/21/82, p. 3. **Discouraged.** - A number of citizens who have hitherto depended upon boating for a livelihood, have become so discouraged at the unfavorable prospects of an early resumption of business upon the canal that they have gone to Ohio and Pennsylvania in search of other employment. A strike in the coal regions works great hardship to very many persons living on the line of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

4/28/82, p. 3. **Still Leaving.** About thirty persons left Sharpsburg on Wednesday to work upon a Pennsylvania railroad. The absence of employment upon the canal and general stagnation of business in this section of the county will make laborers unusually scarce during the coming summer, and possibly embarrass our farmers when harvest time arrives.

5/5/82, p. 3. **The Reason Why.** Some boatmen have sold their stock as mules can't live without eating, provender can't be purchased without money and money is usually not obtainable without labor which can't be had upon the canal.

We Give It Up. If a laborer is dependent for a day's subsistence upon what he has earned the preceding day, how can the canal employee, who have received no compensation for his labor during the last six or eight months, live and support his family?

A Transformation. - Thomas Bowers is building a house on West Chapline street out of lumber taken from an old boat. This transformation will enable the proprietor of the venerable craft to smile at coal companies and bid defiance to strikes, as, under the new dispensation, it will never be "out of line," or remain idle for want of employment.

5/12/82, p. 2. Canal employees report a general reduction of wages along the line of the canal, but we can't understand how wages that are not paid can be reduced any lower. The reduction must be made on paper, and merely forms an item in account statistics and reports rendered.

5/19/82, p. 3. The Canal Company has dug a well near Silas Drenner's shanty for the convenience of the employee. It is a fortunate thing for the latter that water won't be as precarious as their wages.

6/9/82, p. 3. **To the Coal Companies.** - The *Cumberland Times* says: We have received an unsigned communication with the above caption, accompanied by a request that we publish the notice therein contained. The letter comes from Sharpsburg, and the notice read as follows:

"We, as the boatmen of the canal, don't propose to boat this season for less than \$1.10. If any less then the above mentioned please let us know, and it will save us from going to Cumberland, as our supplies cost us so much, we cannot boat. Please let us hear from the operators of the companies."

The Canal. - On Monday the stockholders of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal met at Annapolis and elected Henry D. Farnandis, of Harford county, president. The meeting was a stormy one, criminations and recriminations having been freely indulged in by the representatives of the opposing factions. Robert Bridges, of Washington county, was the choice of Governor Hamilton for the Presidency, but being a minority of the board of public works, which casts the vote of Maryland's stock - the controlling interest - his nominee was of course defeated. The annual report puts the revenue of the canal during the year 1881 at \$308,837.93, and expenditures, \$241,756.04, leaving a surplus of

\$67,080.09. The salaries of the officials generally were reduced, that of the president from \$5,000 to \$4,000.

6/23/82, p. 3. A number of boatmen in obedience to notification received from Cumberland have started up the canal. It is time these men were obtaining employment of some description.

6/30/82, p. 3. A break on the canal on the fourteen mile level near Hancock occurred on Tuesday. It is being rapidly repaired.

For the first time in a number of months there is employment for all the laborers in this community. This is owing to the partial resumption of business the canal, hay-making and harvest.

Drowning of a Child. - Little Joseph Shipley, aged 3 years, son of the Lock Tender at the feeder at Dam No. 4, was drowned on Sunday afternoon under peculiar and distressing circumstances. His mother was sick in bed and the little fellow wanting a drink of water, and no one to wait upon him, he took a small tin bucket and a tumbler and went to the spring to get it himself. In getting the water he probably over reached himself and fell into the spring head foremost, and becoming entangles with the grass which grew in the water he drowned. The water was about 18 inches deep, and the spring was walled with logs, forming a kind of box. He was not discovered for some hours, and after too late to attempt resuscitation. When the body was discovered the bucket and tumbler were found floating on the water and the body was only partially submerged. His remains were interred in the graveyard at Bakersville on Monday last. Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Burgan gave their services to the stricken family, and rendered all the assistance in their power. - *Daily News*.

7/7/82, p. 3. **Declined.** - Mr. Henry D. Farnandis has formally declined the presidency of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. He forwarded his letter of declination to Gov. Hamilton on Saturday last. Mr. Farnandis says his "law practice and private business interests would interfere with the management of such a great work."

A Sunken Lock. - It appears as if everything was conspiring against the resumption of trade upon the canal. On Saturday night the bottom of the third among the four locks near Williamsport sank several feet, causing a serious break and stopping navigation completely.

A coal famine is feared in Williamsport, as the supply on hand is very nearly exhausted. The Western Maryland Railroad Company, which receives its supply at Williamsport, is also short, and will be compelled to get what it requires by rail.

7/14/82, p. 3. **The Canal Presidency.** - It was currently reported here yesterday, from what is deemed a reliable source, that the Presidency of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company had been tendered to Mr. Henry Loveridge, president of the Maryland Coal Company, and peremptorily declined by that gentleman. The Canal Company is known to be in greatly embarrassed circumstances, and under the present management unable to borrow a dollar for any purpose. It is said that the effort to get Mr. Loveridge to take charge of its affairs was made in the hope of reviving its credit. - *Cumberland Mail.*

Cun Stroke. - On Monday the 10th inst., Mr. Henry C. Burgan, one of the bosses on the Canal, was prostrated from the effects of the heat, while at work in a woods near Dam No. 4. Mr. Burgan had his two little sons with him at the time, and although badly frightened, one of them immediately

started with ice to apply to his head, while the other made determined efforts to get his father home. Having rallied somewhat in a short time, Mr. Burgan reached home with the assistance of his son in a weak and exhausted condition. Mr. Burgan although still very weak, is slowly improving, and we trust will soon recover entirely from the effects of the stroke. - *News.*

7/21/82, p. 3. The report that the Canal Presidency will be tendered Mr. Lewis C. Smith, of Hagerstown, appears to create very general satisfaction among the people of the County. The election will be held on the 17th of August.

8/11/82, p. 3. **The Canal Presidency.** - The *Baltimore American* says, "the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Presidency is said to rest between Hon. Lewis C. Smith, of Hagerstown, and Hatteraley W. Talbot, of Rockville. Mr. Smith, who is in Europe, was cabled for last Saturday to return home on the first steamer." It is thought that the chances are in favor of Mr. Smith.

8/18/82, p. 3. **The Unfortunate Ditch.**

Owing to low water in the Potomac and the leaky condition of Dam No. 6, boats are detained on the fourteen mile level, above the four locks. No boats have passed this point since yesterday morning. The very elements themselves appear to be arrayed in opposition to the resumption of traffic on the canal.

8/25/82, p. 3. **A Chance for the Boatmen.**

A telephonic dispatch along the line of the canal on Wednesday announced that circulars, signed "Knights of Labor," had been posted in the vicinity of the various mines advising the strikers to resume labor. This is cheering news to the boatmen who have been living in enforced idleness since the middle of March. Should nothing occur

to interrupt navigation until cold weather sets in, seven or eight trips can yet be made.

Mr. Lewis C. Smith Accepts.

Mr. Lewis C. Smith, the newly elected president of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, has returned home from Europe. An official notification of his election was awaiting his arrival. He immediately telegraphed to Mr. Benjamin F. Fawcett, Secretary of the Canal Board, his acceptance of the position. Mr. Smith met Hon. A. P. Gorman yesterday at Annapolis by appointment.

9/1/82, p. 3. **The Canal President.** - Mr. Lewis C. Smith, the recently elected President of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, left Hagerstown on Wednesday evening for Annapolis, where he took the oath of office and presided at a meeting of the directors yesterday.

9/8/82, p. 3. Last Thursday Hon. A. P. Gorman formally surrendered the Presidency of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to his successor, Mr. Lewis C. Smith. The transfer of the books and papers and the swearing in of the new president took place at Annapolis.

The total shipments of coal by canal during August were 226 boats, carrying 25,027.18 tons of coal and 53 tons of other articles. The revenue was about \$13,000. Compared with 1881 the decrease in the number of boats was 259, in the number of tons, 26,027.18; in the amount of revenue, \$13,000. The amount of coal shipped this year is 69,953.04 tons, the number of boats is 621.

9/15/82, p. 3. The vacancy in the Board of Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, caused by the election of Lewis C. Smith to the presidency, was filled on Thursday of last week by the election of Mr. Spencer Watkins, of Montgomery county.

9/22/82, p. 3. **Drowned.** - On Wednesday morning last, whilst Charles Embrey Poffenberger, aged 11 years, oldest son of Joseph Poffenberger, of this place, was moving about over the canal boat "Stanley Embrey," on the way here, he fell into the canal on the three mile level above Dam No. 6 and was drowned. *Williamsport Pilot.*

The officers of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal will make every effort to make a payment to their employees early in October, through what amount of this indebtedness will be liquidated at that time cannot yet be determined.

The Canal. - Owing to the protracted strike of the miners in the Cumberland coal region boating is not near so brisk as in the palmy days of the canal. The average number of boats going out of port in Cumberland during the most prosperous sessions was about forty. The average during the present month has been about twenty. The decline in trade can be attributed to the fact that many boatmen becoming discouraged by the magnitude of the strike sold their outfits, and consequently are unable to engage in the business of transporting coal. Taking all the unfavorable circumstances into consideration the present trade of the canal is flattering to the managers and the boatmen. The latter are now receiving one dollar and ten cents freights per ton.

9/29/82, p. 3. A valuable horse belonging to Silas Drener, a boss on the canal near Sharpsburg, died suddenly one day last week. Timothy Haggerty also lost a mule which was killed by lightning.

10/5/82, p. 3. Hon. Lewis C. Smith, President of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, announces that he is not a candidate for the Democratic Congressional nomination.

Sunken Boat. - On Saturday afternoon about 3 o'clock, while the steamer Star No. 6, was coming down from Cumberland. loaded with coal, the steersman became frightened at the high water, and steering wildly, ran the boat upon the rocks and sunk her in Little Slack Water, at Dam No. 5. She was not raised until Monday. This accident, of course practically closed navigation for two days, as only empty boats could pass the sunken steamer.

A Heartless Canal Captain.

A few days ago, a young man and a stranger to the residents of Williamsport was found lying in a helpless condition near to the canal in that place. Upon investigation it was ascertained that he was suffering from spasms and, not knowing what else to do with him, he was brought by the persons who found him to this city and placed under treatment at Bellevue Asylum. A day or two afterward the father of the young man, named Lewis, applied to the officers of that institution for permission to remove his son to his home, near Sharpsburg, rendering in bitter term the heartlessness of the captain of one of the boats on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal. It appears that Mr. Lewis learned from other persons employed on the canal that his son had been seized with spasms while upon his return from Cumberland and against the protests of the sick man, that were offered between fainting spells, he was ejected from the boat at Williamsport by the captain, who refused to carry him to his home. Had not the unfortunate young man fallen into the care of more rational persons at Williamsport than the captain, the opinion is entertained that his lot would have been a serious one. - *Globe.*

10/13/82, p. 3. The employees of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company on this section of the line were paid off on

Wednesday for two months - October, 1881 and August, 1882. This was the first money received by them for over ten months.

Canal Notes. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal is now doing all the business which can be done with the boats available for service. The scarcity of tonnage and of skilled workmen is felt, as the long idleness scattered the experienced forces. Hands are very scarce and it seem impossible to obtain them. Women are often seen steering the boats, while occasionally little girls, children of the captain, take the towpath to relieve the mule boy. Instead of pushing on to given points, day boats tie up anywhere that night overtakes them.

This (Monday) morning President Lewis C. Smith leaves here for Georgetown where he will join the paymaster and several directors of the canal, and stat on a trip over the line, during which the paymaster will pay off the employees for September, 1881, and August 1882, which will require about \$35,000, and to continue hereafter to pay for a month at each end of the indebtedness until the gap is closed and the last indebtedness is wiped out. - *News.*