

Interview with Joseph Liener, 2/6/86

Harrison and Jarboe Packing Co. - its main office used to be in Sherwood, used to be a plant in St. Michaels, later moved to McDaniel.

At one time there was a cannery in Sherwood, near the county wharf

In McDaniel there used to be a small canning house owned by Emma Caulk in partnership with Sam Shannahan's father, at corner of Route 33 and old Claiborne Road.

The Shannahan's also owned a cannery near where the St. Michaels Yacht Club is today. One of the few places that used to can tomatoes in jars.

In Wittman there was 3 canning houses where the county wharf is today. One was Howeths. They used the boiler of the adjacent sawmill to provide steam for the cannery. The wharf used to be an old scow that was grounded. Coal was brought to the wharf by bugeye. Cost was \$4 a ton. Used for boilers.

Wittman used to have a shoemaker, millinery shop, barber shop, movie hall. The blacksmith used to be at the intersection of Pot Pie Road and Route 33. The red building is still there behind the store on the corner. On the other side of the village center on Pot Pie Road used to be another canning house and boatyard, beyond this a shucking house owned by Old Man Frye. owned by John Dickson.

At Wittman were built at Jones' Yard the buy boats Mary E. owned by Capt. Bridges and the Dorothy owned by Capt. Cooper. They often hauled freight out of Harris Creek.

Most of the canning was for tomatoes, which started up around 1900

At first the cannery workers were a mixture of white and black, later they tended to be mostly black.

There was a packing house at Newcomb - across from the railway station.

In Royal Oak there were mainly blacksmiths and wagon builders.

Easton - at Cow Landing (steamboat wharf) there was a lumber yard, coal yard and peach packing plant.

There was a grist mill on Navy Point. It blew up one day. The danger is if the stones get off-balanced. This can produce sparks which can ignite the dust in the air.

Location of other mills:

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Where the oxford Road crosses Peachblossom Creek there was a windmill.

Nearby to the Anchorage at the Miles River Bridge there used to be a windmill. Nearby was also a racetrack. Traces of this are still visible in the fields at certain times of the year.

There were a number of steam-powered grist mills, driven by belt driven machinery.

Just before entering Longwoods from the south there was Potts Mill, a water-powered mill. The dam bank is still there.

North of Skipton there was another water-powered grist mill owned by Capt Hardcastle. There was also another one in the vicinity, where the same mill creek crosses the old Easton Road (the first 2 above are on the 1877 Atlas).

A cannery and wharf also existed on Skipton Creek.

Near StM on Hambleton Hill, there was a tide mill, using a small inlet from the Miles River west of Deep Water Point. Tide mills operated by the flow of the water. Other water-powered mills operated by the weight of the water.

Tomato canning: were first run through the steamer to soften the skins. They were then skinned and cooked in cans before sealing 40-45 minutes. Then the tops were soldered by hand. Most of the cans were made in Baltimore and shipped by train or boat to the Eastern Shore.

Some canning houses had their own labels. Many times canning would be done for another company who would supply the labels.

Cans were shipped in wooden boxes. The boxes would arrive at the canning houses as shooks or dissassembled boxes. Many of these were made in lower Delaware (like Marvil Packaging Co.) Were made from pine.

By the end of WW I, many of the smaller **packi-xg** canning houses had closed.

RJD

Chesapeake Bay Fisheries

In the spring most of the fish packing was done. Fish brought back to be processed were pickled in barrels. They were scaled, headed and gutted then packed in salt (mostly from the Caribbean). Two or three different sized barrels were used. Herring was the main catch-mostly caught by pound-netting.

The offal was used in fertilizer plants like the one in Tilghman and Valliant's in Bellevue.

(Oyster shells were also ground up to be used with chicken feed)

Shad fishery - some was salted for personal use but most were sold commercially as fresh, iced and shipped to fish markets. Shad roe was also sold fresh as was herring roe.

A fancy way of having shad was on a plank. The shad was gutted and tacked onto a beechwood plank and baked in front of a fire.

Much of the shad fishing took place at the head of the Bay using large drift gill nets. Four or five sections were tied together. The top of the net was suspended on lanyards 4-5 feet below the surface of the water to allow floating debris to pass over. Lanyards held up by corks. In case any buoys got in the way there was a pole with a crook that could lift the net over the buoy.

The nets would be 10 - 12 feet in width and each section would be a quarter mile long.

At night the ends of the net were lighted, sometimes by a lamp fixed to a floating board (an example is in the collection).

In the shad skiff there would usually be three men. One man rowing and two men boating the net over the stern. As the net was hauled in the fish would be removed and put into a container in the boat. Had to fish according to the tide, usually one haul a tide.

There used to be a run boat. Would take the fish from the shad skiffs so they wouldn't have to land. Men would often spend the season away from home living in shanties on the shore near the nets and grounds.

The nets were not tarred, that would make them too heavy. They were made of linen, and later synthetic.

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Fishing for shad was also done with a gill net, but the net was staked. The net would not be taken into the boat but would be hauled to the side, the fish removed, and then the net dropped.

The Sharptown shad barges dimensions were made according to the size of the net. The net was deep as the boat was long. The net was pulled in over the side; one man pulled in on the weight side, one man pulled in on the float side.

The large shad skiffs like the Lorraine went through several changes. The sterns of the skiffs were changed as larger engines were added. Changed to wine-glass and later barrel-sterned to compensate for squat. The sturgeon skiff used on the Delaware was similar but larger.

RJD