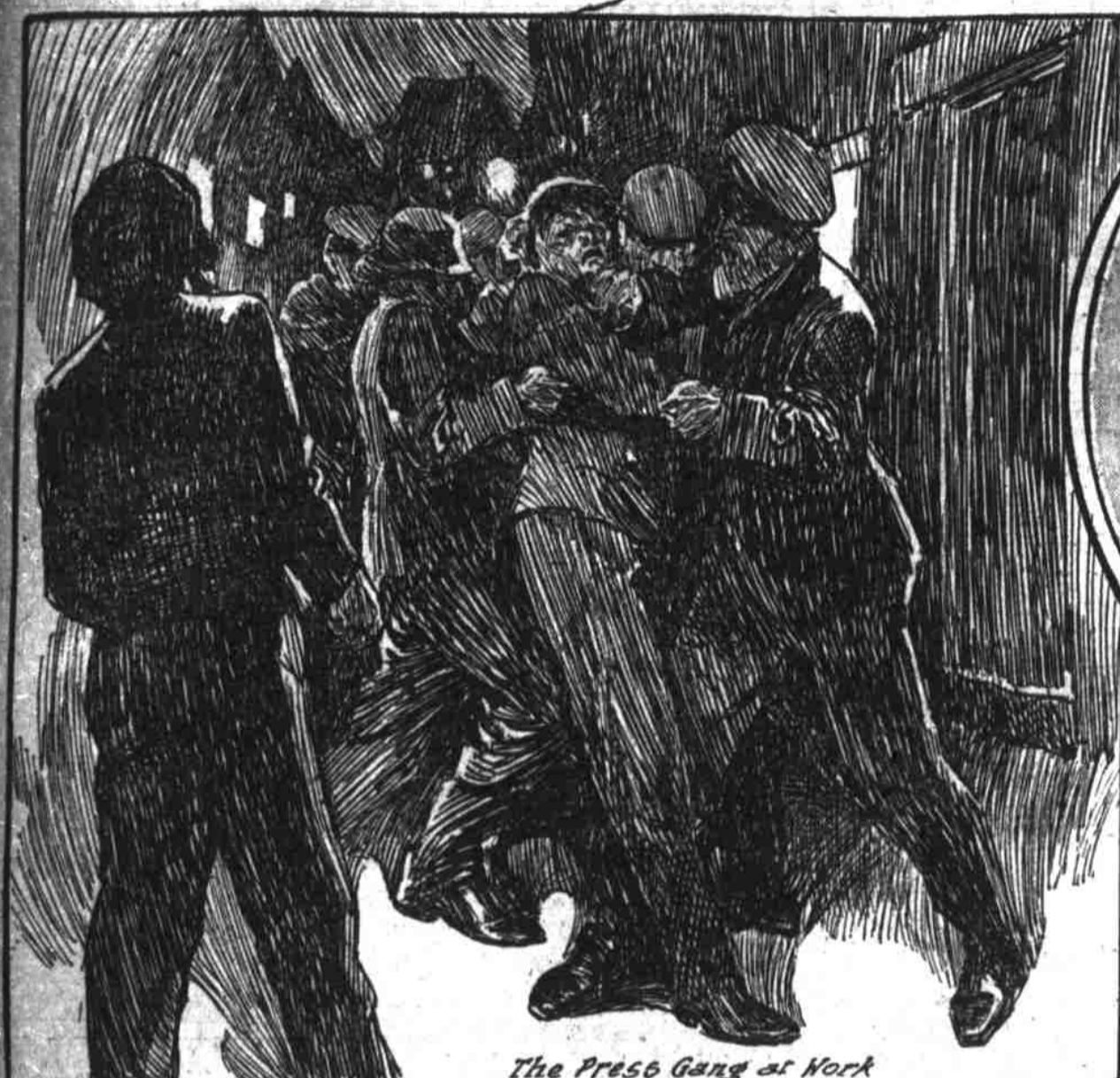
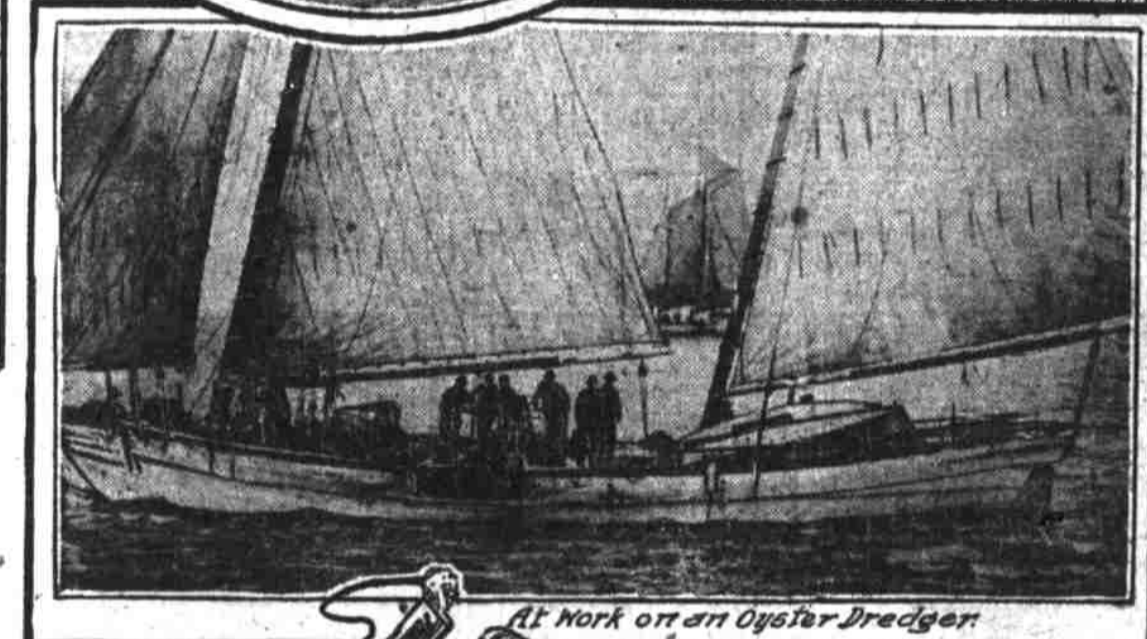
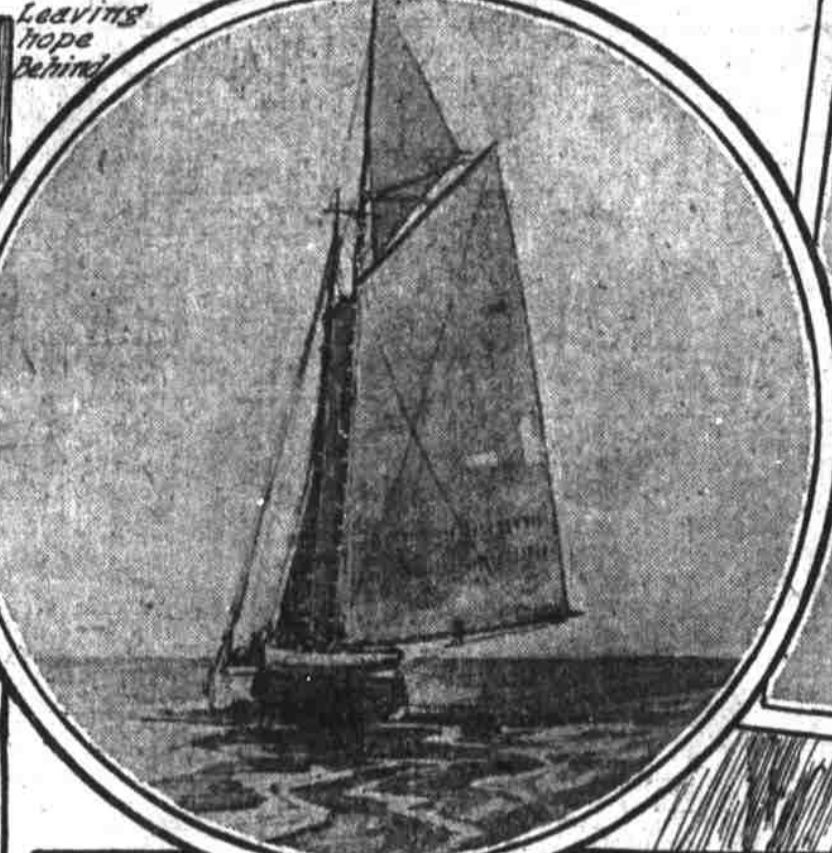


THE PRESS GANGS OF 1908



The Press Gang at Work



At Work on an Oyster Dredger



Rescued Victims of Shanghaiing

Oyster Boat Methods Such as Caused the War of 1812

ALONG the shores of the Chesapeake bay there stalks a historic specter that was supposed to have been laid nearly a century ago by the shot and shell of war. The spirit of the press gang of 1808 is abroad once more in 1908.

School children learn from their histories that one of the chief causes of the second conflict with England was the prevalent British habit of impressing American sailors for service on the king's warships. It is rather singular to find Uncle Sam at this day confronted by nearly a similar problem presented within his own domain.

Press gang methods of today are called

"shanghaiing," and they are particularly useful in supplying crews for the oyster-dredging vessels of the Chesapeake bay. "Shanghai" directors have operated for years, but only recently have they grown bold enough to capture and impress into service enlisted men of the United States Navy.

When they "shanghai" Charles F. Hammond, a seaman apprentice attached to the receiving ship Franklin, at the Norfolk Navy Yard, they "caught a Tartar." While other navy seamen had been impressed of late years the Hammond case, it seems, proved the last straw. And so Uncle Sam is after the press gangs of 1908 with a big stick.

WHILE the impressment of American sailors for British warships was ended virtually by the War of 1812, that method of filling the ranks of departed crews continued for a number of years on the other side, and was by no means despised by masters of American merchantmen finding themselves short-handed in some ports.

It was not an unusual occurrence for men, beginning with a round of merriment in some drinking place, to a deep, roaring cry of "Here's a good sailor," awakening a day or two later in the forepeak of a ship at sea.

Nor were men who prowled about docks or wandered up three men that night, for they looked neither the one nor the other. They were liable to be pounced upon by a body of kidnapers and hurried off to a short-handed vessel in the harbor. Such outrages were common in England before the war.

A vivid description of the press gang methods of a century ago is given by W. Clark Russell in one of his sea stories. The supposed narrator, a sturdy young sailor, was making his way along the streets of Deal at night.

"I heard footsteps; a sound of the tread of feet came from Beach street. I walked up the alley to the entrance of it, not for a moment doubting that the fellows coming along were Deal boatmen. When I reached the entrance of the alley a body of ten or twelve men came right upon me, and in a breath I was collared by a man, magnificent in the eyes of the British sailor; they were armed with cutlasses and some of them carried truncheons. Two of the mob were pressed men, like myself.

made his way back to the Norfolk Navy Yard, to find, as he expected, that he had been posted as a deserter and would have to face a court-martial.

Of course, any enlisted man who had long overstayed his time might cook up a story of having been "shanghai" and detained against his will. Hammond, however, was able to prove his story to the satisfaction of the officials.

Similar cases of "shanghaiing" had been investigated, and with the latest case the Navy Department grew heated under the collar.

A revenue cutter was sent post-haste after the vessel on which Hammond had been detained, and its master was arrested and held for the action of the federal grand jury. The Navy Department is determined to break up "shanghaiing," especially of its enlisted men.

Nearly every winter men are picked up on the streets of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk and other cities and hurried into oyster boats, but this nefarious work is conducted as quietly as possible. The kidnapers do not care to attract attention; they do not wish to get into trouble themselves nor risk losing a

Their Winter of Discontent

victim through the interference of other persons.

Baltimore and Norfolk are the cities to which the oyster dredgers look principally for supplies, and there they ship most of their crews. There is always a demand for crews during the dredging season. Men accustomed to the rough life and hardships soon tire and return ashore—if permitted to do so.

Of course, all oyster boat masters are not brutal, nor would all sanction "shanghaiing" by receiving "shanghai" men. The majority, perhaps, are as kindly and

honorable as men in any other vocation, but the entire class suffers because of the dishonest and cruel methods among their numbers.

In a number of cities there are "crimps," or men who make a business of furnishing crews for vessels, no matter by what means. Dealing with the oyster fleets of the Chesapeake, there are more in Baltimore and Philadelphia than anywhere else, naturally, as they are the cities nearest the field of demand.

Time was when men were "shanghai" in the streets

of Baltimore almost as openly as the press gangs of old did their work. When the "crimp" received orders for a certain number of men, he sent out "runners" to gather in all they could find, like the servants of the man mentioned in the New Testament went into the highways to gather guests for the wedding feast.

Saloons along the water front generally yielded a fruitful harvest. Intended victims were plied with drink, often drugged, until stupefied, when they were quickly conveyed to the security of a vessel in the harbor. Men were seized even as they walked the streets, their cries being choked off by gagging or a judicious application of the sandbag.

Now, however, this business can be done only with stealth, if it is done at all, owing to recent legislation in Maryland regulating the method of shipping crews. But "shanghaiing" is going on, nevertheless, deception being used as a general thing instead of force.

It is surprising how many men are "shanghai" from cities at some distance Philadelphia, New York, Pittsburg, for example. A large percentage of the "green" oystermen found on the dredge boats hail from Philadelphia.

Along the water front streets of Philadelphia men have been kidnapped boldly. Taken into saloons, they would be filled with liquor and then offered tempting positions on "gray vessels." With a number of others in a similar state of intoxication, they would be taken to a train and sent to Baltimore. In that city a covered van would meet them and convey them to the water front. A Philadelphia man would be taken to the water front a day or two later in the forepeak or on the deck of an oyster boat far from home.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which was used principally because its station in Baltimore is nearer the water, finally shut down on these shipments of intoxicated men. Now the method of the "crimp" is to take the victim with promise of a fine position in Baltimore and start him on the way toward that city with a bottle of whiskey. There is always some one to look out for him upon arrival.

A specimen case will illustrate the present methods. Charles Patislo, 17 years old, was standing on a street corner in Philadelphia one morning in late autumn, when he was approached by a negro.

"Know of any one around here who wants a good job?" inquired the negro. The boy pricked up his ears; he would like a job.

"All I think you'll do," remarked the negro. "You see, I know of a fine position on a tramp steamship; you'll get \$20 a month, good food and have little work besides a chance to see the world. The captain of a good friend of mine, and I promised to find him a good man."

Pleased by the flattery, as well as the prospect of a position, Patislo accompanied the other "crimp" to the office of an employment office. There, apparently much to his dismay, the runner "discovered" that the steamship had just sailed.

THE DOCTOR'S PROBLEM COLLECTING HIS BILLS

SHOULD a physician go to law to collect his bills? Or, if he feels he cannot go to law, how can he make people pay what they owe for services?

Upon what basis should a physician make his charges? Should he charge the rich man more than the poor man? Or should he attend the poor gratis and charge the rich according to their means? How might doctors solve the financial difficulties in which they often find themselves?

These are questions which are often discussed among physicians; that of collecting bills is one of the most delicate, and often the most difficult, problem in a practitioner's life.

My John Jones
No REGINALD PILLBOX, M. D., Dr.

Dec	To bill rendered	2
"10	To professional services	2
"15	"	2
"26	"	10
Total		16

NOTICE COLLECTED
MAR 1 1908
J. Jones

"A MONG physicians it is not considered ethical to go to law," declared a well-known member of the profession recently. "So what is one to do? Let me tell you the monotonous routine of a doctor's life.

"He is called to attend a patient. He visits him faithfully, diagnoses his disease, carefully analyzes the symptoms and gives not only medicine, but hours of deep thought, worrying himself and often spending sleepless nights over the case. The doctor may visit the patient for weeks, perhaps months. The patient recovers or he dies.

"Well, the bill is unpaid. If the man lives he ignores his obligation, and if he is dead the relatives pay no attention. Now, if the man lives, enjoying the health which was restored to him through the attention of the doctor, out of gratitude one would think he would gladly pay the physician. But no, the physician is the last man to get paid. The baker, butcher and candlestickmaker all come first.

"And what is the physician to do?

"If he goes to law and sues a patient he is likely to antagonize all his patients and lose prestige among the members of his profession. A man in business, be he a merchant, a banker, a lawyer, may sue his creditors, but a doctor cannot. Naturally, the profession suffers. To my mind, there should be some legal protection for the doctor.

"It is outrageous when one thinks that the man whose services are the most invaluable is the last one to be paid. Yes, a man will pay all his debts by April 1, but he'll forget all about the family physician."

Many physicians seem to favor the idea of legal protection. If there were a law in force which would give the physician first claim upon a man's estate the position of the medical creditor would be greatly

strengthened, they say.

Difficult is the financial end of a doctor's life, according to members of the profession. On the books of nearly every doctor are unpaid accounts; in fact, some physicians declare that as many as one-third to one-half the persons they treat are either tardy in payment or do not pay at all. After struggling with this problem, the next question with which he must deal is the rate of charges. Regarding the work and pay of doctors, a famous physician recently declared:

"No one should adopt the profession of medicine as a business. The first and most potent consideration in undertaking the life-work of a physician should be the usefulness of one of helping those in physical affliction.

"It is not too much to expect that in the near future the standing disgrace of our civilization, the existence of preventable diseases, will be made to cease. To be sure, the state will, or should, always play the chief role, but, judging by the records of current leg-

islation, little is to be expected from government regulations or provisions until the material of which legislators are made becomes less venal or more wise.

"Meanwhile, in every community composed of average human beings there must be supplied guides in physical conduct, who shall be equipped with both knowledge and forcefulness, and who, if possible, will be of ample authority, direct or vested, who not only shall succor the lame, the halt, the diseased, turn the feet of the rich deserts of his folly, but also exercise an inhibitory influence upon the acts of the unwise, both individual and joint, and throttle health-destroying human or domestic—in their lairs.

"In the doing of this, in the pursuit of his chosen line of duty, the physician has great need to possess large capacities, powers, wisdom and knowledge. Furthermore, he must be ready to give his undivided attention to a quest which, while perfectly possible of attainment, has never been near realization. To fit himself for his life-work requires exceptional traits, years of training and the ceaseless exercise of judgment night and day.

"He also must live; he has a right to the enjoyment of equal privileges and emoluments with the man who tills the ground, digs the ore or sets cholereric human savages by the ears to their own undoing and his financial betterment, or the one who manipulates the market whereby lambs yield their fleece. It would indeed seem that all his patience, his years of dangerous toil, ought to be highly rewarded. Health and life are almost insuperable obstacles, he has a right to almost insuperable obstacles, he has a right to claim material acquisitions.

"All this tends to show that a capable, conscientious, experienced medical adviser is a boon to any community, and should be provided with full returns for his labor, time, skill and strength. When once his capabilities are demonstrated, his experience ripened, his terms must be ready to give his undivided attention to a quest which, while perfectly possible of attainment, has never been near realization. To fit himself for his life-work requires exceptional traits, years of training and the ceaseless exercise of judgment night and day.

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PAID "PER HEAD"

"Never mind," he said to the boy, "the vessel has gone to Baltimore. I will advance the money for your ticket and you can go right down there and meet her."

"All I think you'll do," remarked the negro. "You see, I know of a fine position on a tramp steamship; you'll get \$20 a month, good food and have little work besides a chance to see the world. The captain of a good friend of mine, and I promised to find him a good man."

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Very many of the men who go "down the bay" on oyster vessels find themselves under indeterminate sentence, as it were. That they are there is about the only certain fact; when they return is a matter of conjecture.

Years ago, when oysters were so plentiful that to dredge up a boatload was a matter of a comparatively short time, most of the boats ran to market with their cargoes. But with depleted oyster beds a much longer time was required to secure a load, so that, to make the season a profitable one, the dredgers were compelled to spend as much time as possible at work.

No lines are drawn by the "crimps" as to the "run" boat and the "buy" boat—became common. Their function is to carry the catch of the dredgers to market. The "run" boat is owned or employed generally by one or more dredging concerns and plies between certain vessels of a fleet and the city. The "buy" boat, as its name indicates, is on a purchasing mission. It will buy cargoes from any who will sell, therefore, that a regular dredging vessel may not find it necessary to visit port often during a work season. Unless forced into harbor by storm or ice, it may remain on the oyster ground virtually all winter, receiving new supplies from time to time by the "run" boats.

These "run" boats, by the way usually distribute the selling recruits. Receiving dozen or so "green-horns" while in harbor, the vessel will hasten back to a fleet on some oyster ground and distribute the men among the short-handed craft.