

Working on the C&O Canal

It is the early 1870s- the most active time period in the history of the C&O Canal. Over five hundred cargo boats are working the canal. It's early March and the canal will soon open for the year. You are Captain Bowers, a local captain from Williamsport. You need to prepare your boat for the coming season. You start your journey by walking down to the Emory and Cushwa Warehouse to get much needed supplies. There you meet with Mr. Victor Cushwa who helps put your order together.

You and your wife have four children and your entire family is planning on working the boat for the first time together this year. The thirteen year old will be helping lead the mules and learning more about how to run the boat. This will be the first summer your nine year old boy gets to lead the mules. Your oldest daughter will be helping her mother with cooking and cleaning and the youngest is still too young to be helpful.

Your four mules spent the winter on a farm in Four Locks west of Clear Spring about 12 miles away. You send both of your sons to walk up the towpath to get your mules and bring them back to Williamsport. They will be back with the mules tomorrow. After a cold winter your mules will be hungry. Remember to purchase grain from Mr. Cushwa to help your mules rebuild their strength.

You will need to have your boat supplied and ready to start working the canal within two days. When purchasing your items at the warehouse remember that most of these supplies need to last until the season is over. Of course you will occasionally get fresh food and baked goods from the lock keepers. You have a budget of \$15.00 for supplies, so please shop wisely. Attached you will find a price list from Emory and Cushwa Warehouse.



Emory and Cushwa Warehouse Price List

Eggs - 20¢ /dozen	Rice - 35¢/ 5lb. bag
Sugar - 3 ½ lbs. for \$1.05	Cheese - 75¢/ 5lb. block
Lard - 2 lbs. for 38¢	Flour - \$1.80/bag
Tea - ¼ lb. for 38¢	Coffee - 35¢ /lb.
Honey - \$1.29 /jar	King Syrup - 89¢/bottle
Chocolates - \$1.49 /box	Dill Pickles - 15¢ ea.
Rock candy - 35¢/1 lb. bag	Peppermint sticks - 55¢ /5 sticks
Butter - 40¢ / lb.	Potatoes - 89¢ / 2 lbs.
Salted Hams - \$2.95/5lbs.	Beans - 35¢ /bag
Slab Bacon - \$2.30 /5lbs.	Onions - 85¢/ 2 lbs.
Kerosene - 30¢/quart	Coal - \$1.38/ 2 bushels
Needle and thread - \$1.15	Calico - 15¢ per/yd
Canvas - 25¢ /yd.	Mule Harness - \$3.75 ea.
Tow Rope - \$3.00/100 ft.	Wool Hat - \$1.15 ea.
Straw Hat - 95¢ ea.	Coal Shovel - \$2.25 ea.
Soap, starch, pepper, salt, and vinegar \$1.10 ea.	

Sources: <http://oldrecipebook.com/1800s-livingcost.shtml>
<http://www.choosingvoluntarysimplicity.com/what-did-things-cost-in-1860/>

Challenge: You need to decide what supplies you think are important to purchase for your canal season.

1. Brainstorm independently for five minutes and think of what supplies should be purchased.
2. Then meet with your group to share your ideas. Discuss as a group what items should be purchased.
3. After everyone has shared and agreed upon which items to purchase, make a shopping list.
4. Total your items ahead of time so that you do not spend too much. Remember you must work as a team!