

Interview Log

Interviewee: Walter Chase (W.C.)
DOB: March 28, 1935
POB: Trappe, Maryland

Interviewer: Harriette Lowery (H.L.)
Eleanor Shriver-McGee (E.S.)
~~Charlene Brooks (C.B.)~~
Chillean

Date: February 17, 2011

Location:

Topic: Historical Society of Talbot County
African American Oral History Project

Comments: [??] denotes phonetic spelling
Index page indicates the audio clip where that portion of the interview can be found

Documentation:

Audio:
Video:
Digital Photos:
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Transcription by:

town to be on the Commission. Danny couldn't run again two years ago, and I took Danny Adams' place. One of the things that they're involved in now is about the hospital moving up on Route 50. Paige Beck is the director. We just got another business partner to take over at Waverly Press. Another business coming in where the glass place was in the development out by Black and Decker, I believe it's out that way. I think that's a Chinese organization.

working in Easton

main part

Paige went to talk to Tommy's (??) in Trappe but he had decided he was going to close down his restaurant there. There's a hall they were working on, some kind of development, they were getting some money from the county. I can't think of the name. The place going out here where the coffee place is out on Route 50, Verizon where Starbucks was. And then the president of Chesapeake College came and talked to us about needing, I think, it's a couple million dollars for infrastructure at Chesapeake College this month.

H.L.: Of all the experiences you've had, did you ever expect to be a commissioner of Trappe, and what has that experience been like for you?

W.C.: After I had moved to Trappe, my great-great-grandfather, he actually built Scott's Church, another church Barber, Nathaniel Hopkins. And we have prayed every year, recognize him and all that. When I went back to Trappe, I said well I might as well try to do something too. And that's what inspired me to try to get on the Trappe Town Council. I was the first black ever elected in Trappe. That was the driving force there.

Barber

H.L.: What has it been like for you?

W.C.: It's been a good experience, and I believe I've made an impact there. We were paying about \$600 a month for one room for a police station, and I felt as though it was unsafe. I let it be known I felt it was unsafe. We had some discussions about it, and then we had it open to the public. I felt as though we could borrow money to build our own police station, only pay \$300 a month and save \$300 a month. So they built the building. Our water and sewage plant was aging and, for years, all they did was put band-aids on it. We finally, after some discussions, realized that you can't put band-aids on it; it's going to fall apart. So we started just replacing some of this stuff. And then it was one road I know had never had any blacktop put on it since I

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Historical Society of Talbot County

Chase Interview

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was a little boy, Highency Lane[??], and that got blacktopped after I got on the Town Council. So I felt as though I'd made the impact there.

E.S.: You and your kids are very successful and motivated. To what do you attribute? You just seem driven and involved in so many things, and you want to give back and that's why you're on the town commission and doing things in your town, and you mentioned Mr. Hopkins being a role model. What do you think attributed to your successes and now your children's successes?

W.C.: My mother. I used to tell my kids they couldn't bring me any Cs or Ds. So they'd bring a B, and I said, "Well, you ain't a B; you got to get an A." That's the way it was. I just want them to be something. I never told them what they had to do. And my problem was really, for instance, when my oldest graduated from school. He said, "Well, dad, I want to get a car." I said, "You want to get a car?" "I want to buy a new car." I said, "You're going to college, aren't you?" "I never thought about that." I said, "Well, if you stay with me, you got to pay. If you get a car the same time some of the fellows graduate with you, by the time you graduate they're just paying for the car, and you can buy a new car and do anything you want." So he went to college.

My youngest daughter, she didn't want to go at first. It took me six months to get her to do it, but she was staying at home. I said, "If you go to college, I'm going to pay for it. I'm going to pay. But if you stay here, you pay me." And when she started to divvy out the money, I said, "If you go live somewhere else, you've got to pay all these bills," she decided to go to college. Actually, she was the first one to get her master's degree, the youngest one. So it was just one of those things they just had to do. And all of them, they tell me today, they thank me for it, say "I see why you're like you were."

H.L.: Mr. Chase, we want to thank you very much. Your life has been interesting, I learned so much, and I appreciate you sitting down with us. Thank you.

W.C.: You're very welcome.

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H.L.: Mr. Chase, we want to thank you very much. Your life has been interesting, I learned so much, and I appreciate you sitting down with us. Thank you.

W.C.: You're very welcome.

[End of interview.]