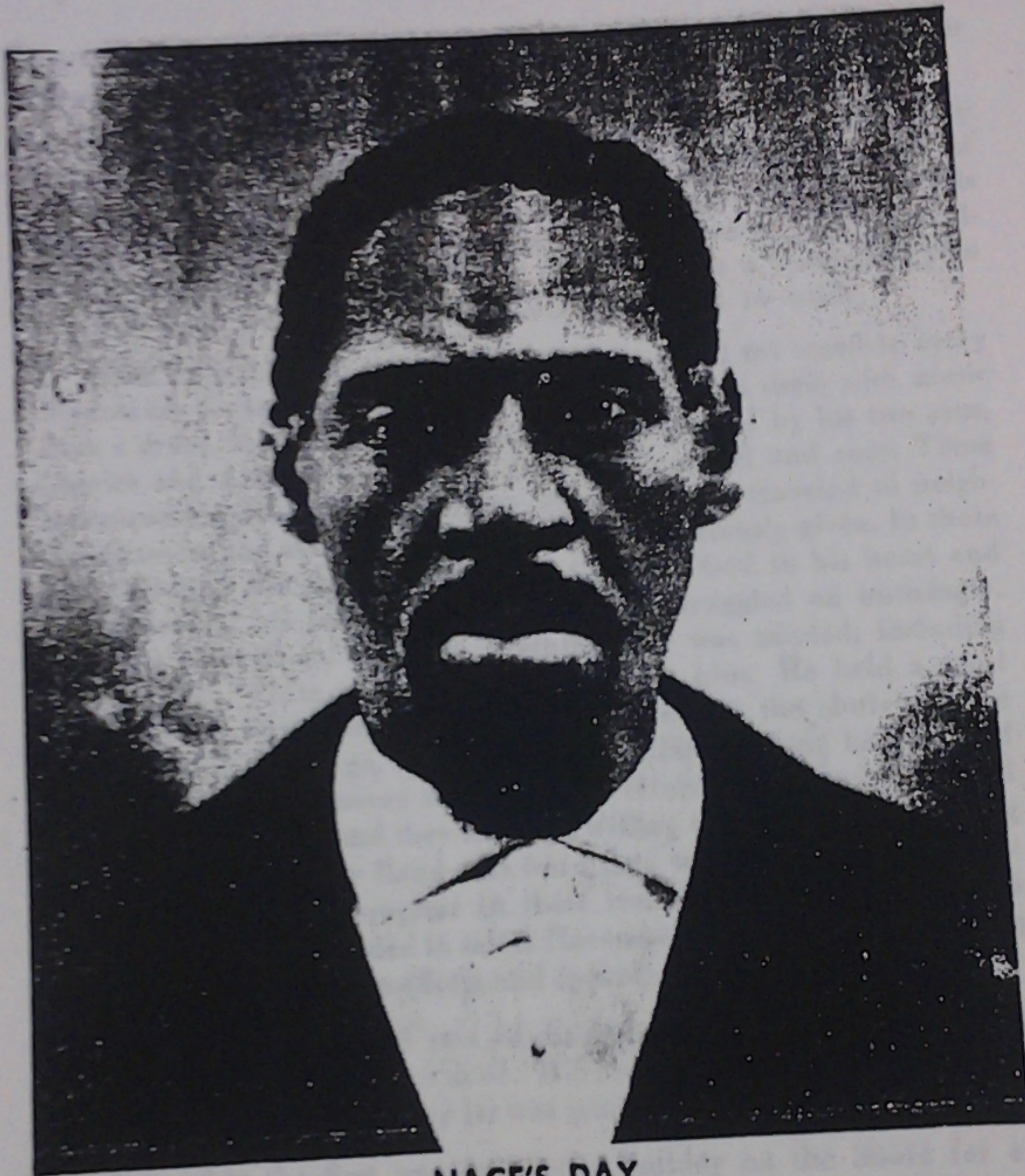


From Mr. Roberts

9/29/87



NACE'S DAY

We celebrate Nace's Day here at Trappe, Maryland, because of a man named Nathaniel Hopkins.

On returning home after the Civil War, and The Declaration of the Emancipation of the Proclamation was signed and passed in 1863. Nathaniel Hopkins thought much of what he might do to help his people who along with him had just been set free, to keep up their spirits and strive on to keep the way open so that generations to come

might not know and suffer what they had known and have better ways of living in all things.

Nathaniel Hopkins sat around his home, on the farm of Percy McNett, Bamba, Trappe, Md. (whittling, which was a pastime of his) talking to two of his buddies, Jeremiah Thomas and Morris Trippe, about a plan to have a parade in celebration of "The Emancipation of The Proclamation." They too thought it a wonderful plan and agreed to help him. He immediately started to work.

First he trained all the boys and girls he could get together every Wednesday night at the old school house. He drilled them with music from a drum, flute, accordion and tambourine played by his two sons, Charles and Alexander and Mr. George Brunniell and sons. These instruments were loaned to him by neighbors. He traveled to neighboring towns and asked assistance, which was graciously given. In those days traveling was slow, but with the Grace of God in his heart and the welfare of his fellowbeings in mind, he struggled on untiringly. Everyone pitched in, donating anything that was needed, including money. Both White and Colored joined with him. He held a great place in their hearts and minds, being a leader in the church, home and community at large. A Cambridge laborer, working here at that time (his name was never remembered) returned to Cambridge and told the people there and they too were willing to contribute something to this day. The Merry Band sent word they would play. By the time the children showed progress in their training, everything else was ready. Uncle Nace decided to select November 1st, the day to show the public the results of their efforts and appreciation of their freedom.

He went to the town seat of Easton, told the authorities there of his plan and what he had done. His request to have a parade in the town of Trappe on November 1st was granted.

November the first was declared a holiday on the Shore for all our people. People from the cities and surrounding towns came to Trappe. Around sunrise of that morning, wagons and teams carrying kitchen stoves, utensils and food arrived in town. In fact the kitchens and dining rooms of the various homes of the people who wanted to sell and serve food were carried out and set in the yards of the church and the school. The women busied themselves getting the food ready. Three free meals were served to guest speakers and the band. There was no admission at the gate in those days. All elderly, crippled and shut-ins, able to leave their homes, were brought out.

After breakfast on the church yard greene (weather always seemed to be in their favor) there was a Prayer and Praise Service followed by an eleven o'clock Church Service. After the folk calmed down from an old fashioned meeting, dinner was served.

Then the parade, led by Nace Hopkins and Aunt Aday Nixon, carrying the Bible, beside him, the children, men in uniform, horses, and everything colorful to make a parade to express their outward feeling of gratitude. Happy to be free from slavery for themselves and their children to come. On returning to Church they heard addresses of encouragement and enlightenment from the more fortunate than they. These addresses were made from a grandstand erected outside the church. There were amusements of various kinds for the young people and horse racing.

There was an afternoon service in the Church.

At night Uncle Nace presided over a social side for the young people. The young folks were always on his mind. He lived and worked with his people to help them become respectable and honorable citizens.

In February 1900 God called Nathaniel Hopkins from work to his reward. He was born 1831 in or around Trappe, Md. A slave and veteran of the Civil War. He was the husband of the late Caroline Hopkins, father of the late Alexander, Charles and Madison Hopkins, Alice Roberts, Irene Smith and Lourena Cole. His close neighbors and friends at the time of his death were the late Albert Eason, Perry Rackes family, the Bantumn family, Camper family and Liza Laurence and family.

The celebration he started was carried on for quite some time and called "Nace's Day." The followers were Robert Pinder, Jim Stanley, Clayton McDaniel, Alonzo Pinder and others as the years rolled by. During World War I the celebration was not held publicly, but there was always a gathering at Trappe on November 1st in various homes, at his grave, and as usual it was Nace's Day. People away came home that day just to visit. At the hymn goes, "There is something within I cannot explain." To the people born in and around Trappe, November 1st was special. The the younger ones could not explain, but would say this is "Nace's Day." There were on different occasions mention of it in the "Star-Democrat."

In 1947 the Women's Society of Christian Service of Scott's M. E. Church, Ruth Bailey, President, took it over and held a celebration. They, with the help of the various organizations of the Church, Young Men's Club and Boy Scouts, Nurses Unit and men and women of the vicinity joined in and had a wonderful parade. It was once more Nace's Day. The public, both White and Colored, donated flowers and everything necessary. It was not easy but they did as Uncle Nace would have done — forged on and never faltered.

In 1878, May 5, a letter was sent to him by Mr. A. Chaplan, secretary of Board of School Commissioners, telling him the board's plan to build a schoolhouse for the Negro children, as they were meeting in the Church. He was told what requirements the Negro people of Trappe had to meet. He went to work and a lot was secured. After the Trappe school was built, he interceded to get a school at Bolingbroke so the children in that vicinity would not have to walk to Trappe. In 1882 he was asked to use his judgment in selecting a suitable person of the community to represent his people on the School Board as Trustee. When people began to buy land at "East Field" or "Money-Make" it was nothing but a large field. He journeyed to Easton and obtained funds and permission to have a road cut through. Things too numerous to mention, records lost down through time, kept the memory of Nace Hopkins alive. Whenever Uncle Nace sought something for his people, it was always granted because of the faith people had in him. They knew it was worth while.

Respectfully submitted,

Lourena Cole (daughter deceased) Per H. C.

In 1948 the Baseball Club of Trappe, Md., selected Wilbert Roberts as president (a great-grandson of Nathaniel Hopkins). The Club was assisted by Rev. Randolph Fisher and older men of the community in the celebration program.

In 1949 they organized what is known today as "The Emancipation Community Club." They have held the celebration with the assistance of the people of the community. Its present chairman is Edward Smith. William Myers has been with the Club as business manager down through the years of organization.

IN MEMORIAM

It singeth low in every heart,
We hear it each and all,—
A song of him who answers not,
However we may call.
He throngs the silence of the breast,
We see him as of yore,—
The kind, the brave, the true, the sweet,
He walks with us no more.
It was hard to take the Celebration up,
When he had laid it down;
He brightened all the joy of life,
He softened every frown;
But oh, 'tis good to think of him,
When we are troubled sore!
Thanks be to God that such had been,
Although he is no more!
More home-like seems the vast unknown,
Since he has entered there;
To follow him was not so hard,
Where he may fare;
He cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore;
Whate'er the tide, thy love abides,
Our God for ever more.

A few of the living grandchildren, great and great-great-grand-children:

Mr. Moses Smith — Baltimore, Md.
Mr. Raymond Smith — Camden, N. J.
Mrs. Eleanor Lewis — Salem, N. J.
Mrs. Elsie Cooper — Trappe, Md.
Mrs. Helen Chester — Trappe, Md.
Mrs. Irene Chase and Family — Trappe, Md.
Mrs. Mary Chase and Family — Trappe, Md.
Rev. Harvey Chase — Cordova, Md.
Mrs. Edith Lane^{Wife} — Baltimore, Md.
Mr. Wilbert Roberts and Family — Trappe, Md.