

Interviewee: Calvin Hopkins

Interviewer: Dr. Alyce Miller

Filmed By: Cris Silvent

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Interview begins.

Alyce Miller: It's March 21, 2014, and we're here with Mr. Calvin Hopkins at Second Union School on Hadensville-Fife Road in Goochland County. Thank you for coming.

Calvin Hopkins: You're welcome.

AM: First what we're going to do, the first few questions, are just questions like your name and things of that nature so that we can get them on record.

CH: Okay.

AM: Could you tell us your full name?

CH: Calvin Hopkins.

AM: Do you have a middle name?

CH: No middle name.

AM: Do you have any nicknames?

CH: Butch.

AM: Where'd that come from?

CH: I don't know, I guess I was mischievous when I was growing up so, that's the only thing I can say about that. [Smiles]

AM: [Laughs] What're your parents' names?

CH: My parents' name-- Well first of all let me say I was adopted by my great aunt and uncle and they became my parents. I was actually adopted by them at about twenty-eight days old. So their names are John and Minerva Hopkins.

AM: Can you tell us a little bit about your parents?

CH: Yes, my--, I call her my mom, because that's the only mother I knew at the time. She was-- went to New York, she became a beautician, came back to Goochland and she worked as a beautician in the house until she went out to start working day's work in Richmond, Virginia. She also would come home at night and work in the beautician shop that was right in the home and she also would work on weekends, on Saturdays doing hair. And, as far as my father, he actually worked sawmill. He didn't have much of a education. I think he only went probably to maybe to fourth or fifth grade in school, and he was a--, like I said he worked at a sawmill, then he also worked at landscaping, and then he also when he retired he worked for Greenwood Memorial Cemetery, as a laborer.

AM: What was the highest grade that your mom completed?

CH: I am not sure, but I knew that she had got a license from the beautician school in New York so therefore she must have gone pretty well in the education as far as I would say maybe to the seventh or eighth grade in school.

AM: Do you have any siblings?

CH: Yes, I have many siblings, only one that resided with me in the household there in Goochland, the others were located in Richmond and elsewhere.

AM: Tell us about the sibling that you lived with in Goochland.

CH: She was two years old than I was, name was Vivian Ann Hopkins, and she was a-- I would say a great student. She also would actually instill in me to actually to do my homework, and she was more like I would say a inspiration to me to make me do better in school.

AM: Was that something that your parents also emphasized to you, the importance of school?

CH: Oh yes, yes, definitely they emphasized the importance of education because of the fact that we didn't miss a day out of school hardly. I mean like I said I have my report cards, my sister's report cards, I think she might have missed twenty days of her twelve years of school and I probably missed maybe about thirty. So therefore they made sure that you went to school and that you got your education.

AM: Did they ever talk to you about why they thought it was so important that you got your education?

CH: Yes they did because of the fact they would say, "Well, you know, we didn't get the opportunity to go to school. We're going to give you every opportunity to go to school and you can make something out of yourself, you know, we are proud of you but you can even make us more proud about attending school and graduating."

AM: Where and when were you born?

CH: Born April 17, 1947, in Goochland County. In the Chapel Hill area.

AM: Did you grow up in the Chapel Hill area as well?

CH: No, I grew up right on Hadensville-Fife Road.

AM: And what was the Hadensville-Fife neighborhood like when you were growing up?

CH: It was a community that everyone looked out for the kids in the community. They were just like your mother and father. The store was down the road here, on Hadensville-Fife road, it was Haden's store. You would go there and it was where you would actually, the owner would give you cookies, candy, whatever, and you just enjoyed the community, you know. If you didn't have anywhere that you were worried about being bothered or molested or anything like that because of the fact that everybody in the community knew each other.

AM: Were there any issues in the community that you can remember any racial tensions, any racial issues that you can remember growing up?

CH: No, I don't recall encountering any racial issues in Goochland County, that I can recollect. I do recall, you know, when we went to Richmond, during the summer, this was in high school, that my brother and I, you know, because I used to go down and visit him in summer months and we would come up 250 and there and we had a flat tire and some Caucasian people came by and said, "Hey you" [Speaker pauses to insinuate a derogatory term was used] the word they used. And you know so I got upset and my brother said I started chasing after the car like I was some wild man or something like that. But other than that, no tension existed between the people in Goochland that I can recollect, with racial tension.

AM: When you went to Richmond, did your parents talk to you beforehand about what to expect?

CH: No, they never said anything in regards to hey you might be involved with some racial problems there. No, they always just said, "Hey, you value people as how they are, you respect them for who they are, whether it be black, white, or whatever color."

AM: You mentioned your mom was a beautician growing up [CH responds "Yes"] and historically females, African American females engaged in that profession. Beauticians were, these were-- beauty salons were places where networks of information would really flow throughout the community and particularly in the Civil Rights Movement. And so I was wondering if you heard things from your mom?

CH: Not really because I would say that the majority of the time that they were actually there they would talk about church-related things, that's what they would be talking about. We didn't hear racial type things, you know, and matter of fact the majority of the time I was trying to listen in on what's going on in the household, and mom would say, "Well hey, you need to go outside you need to play or whatever because of the fact grown people are talking." You know.

AM: And, how many years did you attend school? Through what grade?

CH: I started here in 1953, at Second Union School, right here where we are. And went here until 1959 when it closed. And then I went to the new Second Union School, which is now Byrd School, went there for a half a year. And then after that I went to Central Elementary, which is located across from where the Goochland Middle School was and which it was the old Central High School. So total years of school I went was twelve years.

AM: What did you do after you left Central-- after you graduated from Central High School?

CH: After I left Central High School, I went to work at MCV. Okay, was working as a in receiving and supply area. After that I said well you know hey, was only making about one hundred and twenty six dollars every two weeks and I said well this is no money, so then I decided I wanted to go into the Air Force, so that's what I did in 1966.

[Someone knocks on the door, briefly interrupting interview].

AM: So you joined the Air Force?

CH: Right. And I really enjoyed the Air Force. I wouldn't have-- I retired in 1987. I would not have traded it for anything in the world.

[Someone knocks on the door, briefly interrupting interview again].

AM: So what year did you join the Air Force?

CH: 1966. April first, April Fools Day. [Speaker grins]. Which was a traumatic experience because of the fact that we, the family, went to Byrd Airport at that particular time what it was called and was actually going to see me off. My, I guess friend at the particular time, my mother, father, everybody was there and it was just a sad time because of the fact that I didn't know what I was getting myself into, you know. And everybody's have their handkerchiefs, while they're crying and stuff like this and everything that day and, it was a traumatic experience.

AM: And so where were you deployed?

CH: Well yeah. Well we went through, I went through training in Texas. And then after training in technical school I went to a station in Langley Air Force Base. And then I was working on C-130 aircrafts and during that time we would go T.D.Y.s to a lot of places, I've been many places. T.D.Y. and then after 1970, we got station in Hawaii and then we had stayed there for about two years and came back to Langley Air Force Base and then got reassigned to Hawaii. Stayed there a total of thirteen years, so, it was really nice until the nineteen and eighty three, we got reassigned to Pease Air Force Base in New Hampshire so we went from one extreme climate to the other which was another devastating thing, and that's when I decided to retire.

AM: Now, in Texas for example, do you-- when you were stationed there, did you encounter anything different as far as the racial tensions in Texas in the town or also on base?

CH: No, not in the racial tension on base or off base. The only thing I would say that as far as promotion in the military during that time frame, it seemed like to me was not equal, it was like you being held back and when they came up with the testing program in the military which actually gave people a better fair chance of being promoted and I think things became more equal.

AM: What was it before the testing program that made it clear that it was unfair?

CH: Well I would say because of the fact, more or less your supervisor or someone recommend you for promotion, and that way okay it seemed like to me it was like unfair to actually be-- you could be influenced by the person that actually was your supervisor. And more majority of the time you didn't get the recognition that you should have gotten and so other people if you were doing something they would take credit for what you were doing and they got the recognition and they got promoted.

AM: Now spending so much time in Hawaii, which is an interesting area demographically, did you notice any difference between New Hampshire and Texas and even Goochland?

CH: Well not really because of the fact that like I said, I grew up in Goochland, you know and everybody was friendly, everybody was actually involved with each other, the same thing within Hawaii. Hawaii was where you know it was like a melting pot. Races and ethnics groups and stuff gathered there, you didn't have a problem with racial tension there, and majority of the time after we went to New Hampshire it was like okay, people in the New England area, they hate you. They didn't bother you, you didn't bother them, and you didn't realize there was racial tension there.

AM: What do you think, what did you find most valuable about your time in the Air Force?

CH: Most valuable, I would say the travel, the experience and travel. I would say the knowledge and education I gained there. I would say the camaraderie It was just something that was so unique that I would not have trade it for one day of anything.

AM: So what did you do when you retired from the military in 1987?

CH: 1987. I came home and I took care of my father, which he was ninety five when he passed away and in '84, we took him with use to New Hampshire and we came back to Goochland, built a home right behind the old home place and I took care of my father until the time he passed away. And since then, I've just been doing community service trying to help people in the community with no charge.

AM: Now, going back a little bit to your time in Goochland as a student, particularly at Second Union, how far was Second Union School, the original Second Union Rosenwald School, how far was that from your home growing up?

CH: Less than one half mile.

AM: So did you walk to school? Did you take a bus?

CH: No, we were fortunate to ride a bus. The bus came right by the doorstep there and we just, you know, got on the bus my sister and I.

AM: And from the entire time you were at--, you were attending school you were able to take a bus?

CM: Yes, for the entire twelve years of school, we were able to take a bus. And matter of fact the individual later that your going to interview, Sherman Ware, he was my bus driver.

Richard Carchman: Oh that's the father of Sherman junior?

CH: Yes it is, yes.

Richard Carchman: Oh, cool.

CH: And also I was a substitute driver for Sherman Ware when I was in high school and that was one of the things I feel that you know-- I think I would get four dollars a day for being a substitute driver which I feel today that they stopped students from driving and I think that was probably the great thing because if at sixteen I don't think that, you know, were responsible enough to drive a bus. And I got my license when I was sixteen-years-old.

AM: Any-- do you have any particularly good stories from your time driving a bus?

CH: Oh yeah, I mean I loved to drive the bus and you know I would be a baseball player and we went to other locations, other schools, we would have to-- someone would have to drive the bus, you know, and we would have students on there and you actually had a lot of fun listening at the cheerleaders and the students on the bus and having, just a lot of fun. And that's what I'm saying, at sixteen years old it was just something that was traumatic to me to actually to be able to do that, you know. And then you went to a night game and you coming back and the kids are having a lot of fun on the bus and you know and you a student and you trying to tell them like, "Well you going to need to quiet down" and they're like, "Okay, yeah sure" [Speaker laughs].

AM: Do you remember your principal at-- we'll start at Second Union and then go through your schools.

CH: Yeah, I remember Ms. Beale, cannot forget Ms. Beale. Ms. Beale was a lovable teacher, she was a caring teacher, she was very strict and she believed in education, and she was I would say dynamite because of the fact that when she taught me I always had a problem, and I always tell this story, had a problem remembering nine. And I would get to counting one through-- to get to eight, to skip over nine, and Ms. Beale said "Oh I have had enough of this I guess." So, she called me to the desk one day and she just took the ruler, she wacked me in the hand with the ruler, and I said okay, ever since then I had no problem with nine [Speaker and Interviewer laugh]. So these are some of the things and stories that mean a lot to me. The-- Ms. Beale was also the principal, but she was also the person that would take, and go out into the little pantry area there and she would have the snacks and for sale at lunch time and you would actually enjoy-- because she could be down to Earth with you, but when you get back in the classroom, when she rung the bell after lunch, you was back to work as usual.

AM: And what was Mrs. Beale's first name and could you spell her last name for us?

CH: Okay, it's Fanny and last name is B-E-A-L-E, Beale. Matter of fact it's Fannie Mealy Beale.

AM: Okay.

CH: And I'd like to say one thing. In regards to what I was telling about the pantry area in **[mumbles]** my mom and dad used to give us a dollar and a quarter for our allowance. And that was for the week and you would have that for the week and you would actually utilize it to buy your snacks or whatever and then you would save some of it because of the fact like on a Friday, maybe once every month or whatever, they would have like a movie in the building, and then also they would have either a magic show. So these were some of the things that we looked forward to doing so we would actually save that money so we would have that quarter to actually to do, to watch a movie or the magic show.

AM: Would this be after school hours?

CH: No, no, no, this would be during like say two o'clock on a Friday evening. You know, your classes have done for the week, therefore you had the opportunity to get a little leisure time.

AM: Would the whole community do you remember be invited to this, or was it just the school?

CH: No, just the students, just the students. And that would be the first through the seventh grade and you know, they would push the doors back and it would open up into one room.

AM: Do you remember any of the movies that you saw here?

CH: Well most of them, most of them were cowboy movies, you know with Gabby Hayes you know and, and what was his name? Um.

Richard Carchman: Roy Rogers.

CH: Roy Ro-- exactly, exactly, thanks! [Speaker laughs]

AM: Do you remember any of your other teachers here at Second Union in particular?

CH: Yes, dynamite [Speaker laughs]. Yeah, Ms. Lucy Fleming Long, I think you know she was probably one of the best looking teachers that you ever could find and see. She was just a good looking lady. And she was young, she was you know, she came right out of college, came to Second Union, and I would say the majority of young men they really hey, they really enjoyed coming to class just to look at Ms. Fleming. And we had a teacher named Mr. Burnett and Mr. Burnett was you know from the fourth to seventh grade. We didn't get a-- I didn't get a opportunity to be taught by Mr. Burnett, but Mr. Burnett I can recall, we used to have a field day at the Goochland High-- well Central High School, as it was, and what we used to do, we used to have our shirts with Second Union on it. Mr. Burnett I guess would say well maybe we want something like something like-- or teaching us like what it is tie-dye or whatever you wanna say back then because of the fact we used to put our own initials on the shirts, anyways, but we had to make sure that it was done like with a chalk, different colors chalk. And then after that, didn't have that many clothes, so what you did, you could actually wash that chalk out and you could wear that white t-shirt, you know afterwards. So Mr. Burnett was actually very instrumental in teaching us how to do things like that, plus the fact he was very good with writing. And I think the majority of the students that had-- was under him, would tell you that hey he had the most beautiful penmanship there was.

AM: You mentioned Lucy Fleming Long. Do you know, is she related to Steve Fleming and the Flemings at Shady Grove now?

CH: I don't believe they are. I think they are a different set of Flemings. But her name was Lucy Fleming Long.

Richard Carchman: That's her over there? [Points to a photograph of screen]

CH: Yes it is, the nice looking lady over there. [Speaker smiles]

AM: Can you tell us a little bit about the physical structure of Second Union?

CH: The physical structure. I would say it still remains almost exactly the way it was when I was going to school. I don't think there was no changes here except for maybe that the right now we only have one stove which was actually was a two-stove school and the rooms were actually identical that they are now, we didn't have any type of I would say extra type of lighting or anything like that, it was only the four lights you see, as you see now but, it's basically the same.

AM: Would you remember what would happen if you needed a drink of water during the day?

CH: Well if you needed a drink of water during the day we had where that either-- we used to have a well located right in the parking lot between the church and the school, and majority of the time it was actually malfunctioned with some reason because of washer had gone bad or whatever because it was a hand-pumped well. So other than that we would go down to the spring, which was located in the rear of the church building and the school, so we would go there with a bucket and come back with the water, however, you might have spilled half of it before you got back because you were playing around when you were walking to come back from the spring. But the well and the spring was our source of water and we used to have a bucket where you could actually had a dipper and everybody would use the same dipper, and we were fortunate enough during that timeframe, we didn't catch colds or have any type of illness from one drinking behind the other one.

AM: You mentioned the church. There is a newer structure of a church sitting next to where we are, Second Union School. Can you tell us where the church was located or when you went to school here, or is it the same structure?

CH: Well the church is located in the same area it is right now. There has been additions made to the church, okay, however, the church at one time was a wooden structure which at a later date they bricked it in. But, basically I can remember it being a wooden structure and if you look at the steeple on the church, you'll find out it still has the wood part there, it's not bricked up top.

AM: Do you remember the church community being very involved in the school when you were a student?

CH: Yes the community-- the church was definitely involved, the pastors of the church were involved, and matter of fact they would actually make sure that you on Sunday mornings you went to Sunday school and they were there and then they would continue and tell you that hey you need to pursue your education and therefore you need to get the best that you can get out of Second Union School.

AM: There was an outhouse here when you went there, was there?

CH: Yeah there was an outhouse. We had outhouse for the young men which was to the left in the rear of the school and to the right it was the young ladies' restroom.

AM: When your school needed new books or needed repairs done, painting, do you remember what happened? Did it seem like the parents got together and took care of this or was it the school board?

CH: Well, well, my recollection is that when we needed wood or whatever that the bus drivers, you know, the bus drivers used to go, they'd drive the bus to school in the morning and several of them would remain and would actually be on I guess payroll during that time frame and they would bring wood and do maintenance at the Rosenwald Schools. And you probably when you were interview Mr. Ware this evening, you'll find out that he probably can tell you, because I think he was one of the ones that would remain after and actually come out to the schools and do maintenance.

AM: Do you remember if, if Second Union or any of the other school buildings in the time period when you were growing up, were any of them used by the community outside of school hours for other purposes? Maybe meetings, things of that nature.

CH: You know, I don't recall. However, I would say I don't recall them having P.T.A. meetings during the elementary era but, probably there were some schools that actually had where that the parents had P.T.A. meetings, but as far as a community gathering, I don't believe they did.

AM: Does the term Second Union School League sound familiar to you or ring any bells?

CH: No, it doesn't.

AM: How long was your school year? Do you remember that?

CH: It was the same as it is, a hundred and eighty days I believe it was.

AM: And that was from when you started?

CH: Yes.

AM: Do you remember if there were any enrichment programs offered at Second Union over the summer?

CH: No.

AM: What did you do over your summer breaks?

CH: Over my summer break, I'd say, well, during the early years we would actually go to visit my grandparents, like I said, in Richmond, Virginia, and other than that when I got a little bit older, got a job during the summer.

AM: Where did you get a job during the summer?

CH: Well we cut grass during in Richmond on Saturday mornings, we'd get a ride or whatever and then after that I got a job at Greenwood Memorial Cemetery working with my father.

AM: And what did you do at the cemetery?

CH: [Laughs] Doing a little bit of everything as far as landscaping, raking leaves, help digging the graves, just things of that magnitude.

AM: Tell us some about the resources provided at your school. Things like books, desks, blackboard, library, sports equipment. Did you feel like these were adequate at the time?

CH: I would say adequate [Speaker pauses]. As far as the material in the books, yes adequate, but as far as the quality of the books and the literature, the books that we received, they were not I would say adequate because some they were actually deteriorated where that you know, you couldn't actually-- the pages were torn or whatever, because they were actually passed down from one student to the other, and you did not-- you were able to buy brand new books but during that era there was a lot of people that couldn't afford to buy books and so you actually, actually would buy used books. The county did not supply you with books.

AM: Do you remember having any sports' programs or non-sports special events, like maybe May Day, things like that at Second Union?

CH: Well, yeah like I was saying before with Mr. Burnett we had a competition with all the other elementary schools. We had this in May. And we'd come to the-- we'd practice here first at Second Union School, we would have like potato race, sack race, three-legged race, relays and things like that. And we would go to the high school in May and we would actually participate, and I would say Second Union almost always came out on top. But it was, it was a tremendous time that people really enjoyed and looked forward to, that was the one time of the year you looked forward to, other than receiving your report card to see that you passed. You know and cause we did have that May Day was a May Day where you wrapped flag pole and the young ladies would seem like they would have so much fun in doing that, they used to do a dance called Virginia Reel, you know which they actually really enjoyed doing that and we would come back on I guess Monday morning or whatever and this would be the talk of the entire week, you know, hey how much fun we going there and doing that and participating.

AM: What else was involved in this May Day celebration?

CH: It was just, it was just basically a time when all the elementary schools came together and they participated, competed against each other, and it was just a time when you got to see people in the other community that was not in the local community with you so therefore you actually enjoyed the friendship and camaraderie.

AM: So that the sports-- [CH interrupts]

CH: Was the highlight-- [Speaker nods]

AM: Those were a part of the May Day?

CH: Yes.

AM: Tell us a little bit about the lunch program here at Second Union. Did you bring your own lunch, was there anything for you to buy, where did you keep your lunch?

CH: Okay, we actually brought our lunch from home, and as you can see to my right over here, in this little lunch area, that was the place that we stored our lunches. There's a little replica in there for three lunches for Joe Lewis, Calvin Hopkins, and Rush Pace that we made for the annual meeting that we had here. The lunches was actually like bologna with the mayo and everything like that, we didn't have to worry about the mayo-- mayonnaise being spoiled or whatever like that and for some reason it just seemed like we didn't get sick from the lunches that we had. A lot of children did not have lunch, a lot of them were embarrassed too because maybe they had a biscuit or something else in their lunch, they didn't have sliced bread or stuff like this. And no one after laughed at the other kid because he didn't have you know, but I would say a lunch that was actually with a sandwich. You actually had something that you might have had for supper that particular night before and you brought that for lunch the next day.

AM: Where did students keep their personal belongings?

CH: Personal belongings, you either kept them in the bottom of your desk or either you kept them beside you because you didn't bring in any personal belongings, you didn't have computers, you didn't have computers, you didn't have you know radios, you didn't have cell phones, you didn't have any of that so you didn't have belongings that you would have to worry about.

AM: Now what subjects did you study and which were your favorite?

CH: Well we had what you wanna call today is math, we had arithmetic you know and we had spelling, we had health, we had geography, we had history, those types of subjects basically we had. My favorite subject probably would have said would have been reading, if you want to call reading a subject, and reading I say that because I didn't realize how important reading was when I was growing up until I got into the military, you know because I didn't realize I was being taught reading and comprehension during the time frame that I was in elementary school because we used to have to read a story and come back to school that next day and we'd have get up and then we'd would have to tell what the story was about. So therefore, it was actually teaching us reading and comprehension during that time frame and when I went in the military, I found out how important reading comprehension was because that was one of the things that was key in the military.

AM: What about history? When you were taught history was black history ever a component of it?

CH: Negative, no, see to like me it was more like Virginia history, you know, and you learned a lot about Jamestown and things like this you know. It was not where the African American history was being taught.

AM: Do you remember if slavery was touched in it, how that was discussed at all? Does that--

CH: Never recall being taught or said anything about slavery in school. Never even until I got to high school when they talked about I think I guess it was James Weldon Johnson. The poem, the first poem that I can recall them talking about was "The Creation" you know, other than that, no.

AM: Did your parents talk to you about black history at home?

CH: They would talk about you know the things that they could you know because like I said my father did not have that much education but he would highlight the things like Jackie Robinson, you know Joe Lewis and things like that, athletes of that magnitude. But as far as someone that has contributed to the society, with like the contributions a lot of blacks have made, that was not prevalent at home.

AM: Were there any extra curricular activities offered at Second Union?

CH: Not that I can think of, no.

AM: Were your parents active in your school?

CH: Well, my mom was. My mom was active, you know, because she was actually a beautician like I said and she had involvement with a lot of people in the community and she would gather and talk to the principal on a weekly basis because I would say I was a little mischievous. So they would actually correspond together and she would know exactly what's going on and the whole community was well wrapped around the education that their kids received at the school.

AM: Do you remember what you did, you said a couple times now you were mischievous, do you remember the thing you did that got you in the most trouble as a little kid?

CH: In the most trouble, hm. I don't know I think it was just, I guess you would say a total of everything that I used to do like from pulling hair to fighting, I think those were the things that got me into the most trouble. So I would say that, it was just being a boy.

AM: Do you feel as though you are part of black history now that having attended a Rosenwald School, now that you're aware of that?

CH: Yeah, I think yes, definitely a part of black history because of the fact that some of the things that we went through I would say that hey, due to the era that we grew up in but didn't realize it at the time, being able to tell the story now I would say it was definitely a part of history.

AM: Did any of your classmates return to teach at Second Union?

CH: No, in my class when I got to high school, I think if I can recall there's two individuals that actually came back to teach in the county.

AM: Okay, and who were they?

CH: One was Patricia Keale, well Patricia Roane Keale, and the other one was Diane Owens.

AM: Patricia Roane Keale, can you spell her last name for me?

CH: R-O-A-N-E. And her father was one that teaches agriculture, teaches at Central High School.

AM: Do you remember his name?

CH: Arkell Roane.

AM: A-R--?

CH: K-E-L-L.

34:46

AM: How do you feel like your school experiences in Goochland County prepared you for life after school and the military?

CH: It taught me disciplinary action for one thing and it also prepared me to be able to test well because of the fact that was key in the military. Like I said in the beginning you weren't actually given the opportunity fair as far as promotion but then you once the testing became available, you actually knew how to test because you actually grew up starting out with Ms. Beale being tested and therefore it helped me tremendously in my military career and further in life to make decisions.

AM: So do you feel as though you got a good education in Goochland County?

CH: I would say I received the best education in Goochland County and I will always say what my sister that now lives in California said. She said that hey she could not have received a better education at any place that she felt that she had gone hadn't it been for the education in Goochland County.

AM: What's your most outstanding memory of being a student at Second Union? What sticks out the most to you?

CH: Umm, the most outstanding memories. I guess like I said, passing to the next grade.

AM: Was there a ceremony involved?

CH: No, there was no ceremony involved, it was just a ceremony within yourself when you got the report card [Speaker laughs].

AM: What impact do you feel like a segregated education had on you, your classmates, your teachers, the community?

CH: I, I think it provided that the teachers were more into their students during that era because of the fact that hey they knew what you were going to face in the future going forward, so they wanted to make sure that you got the best education that you could ever get. And that was key for them and I think that was the feeling of the community, that hey we need to prepare our children for the future because we know that they are going to face a lot of challenges.

AM: So do you feel as though education was something that the African American community in Goochland really rallied behind?

CH: Oh yes, most definitely because I feel that a lot of the parents felt like hey I didn't get the fair opportunity and chance to go to school so I'm going to make sure that whatever we try to do we going to make sure that our students and our kids get the best education. And the teachers, it seemed like to me they also felt that way because they would not let up on you, you know, they were determined that you were going to get what you needed to get to be prepared for the next step in life.

AM: Do you remember any community-wide examples of the community really fighting for education for the African American children?

CH: I don't recall any because like I said, you know, at that particular time we didn't realize that there was a lot of you know unfairness going on, I think that you know we did just talk about briefly probably sometime about ok well hey, well our books are sorta like deteriorated and here it is that other people the white schools they are actually given their books and we had to pay for our books and we had to buy our books or we just had to get them from the next student that was ahead of us or a family sibling. So therefore, I feel that, you know, it wasn't something that was actually talked about.

AM: Had you heard of Rosenwald Schools while you were a student?

CH: Never heard of Rosenwald Schools, didn't even realize there was Rosenwald Schools when I was going to Second Union. We only realized this when the church had decided okay that the school was no longer needed at this particular time because they were using it as a storage area after we built the fellowship hall there. So they said, okay, we want to re-pave the parking lot, so what are we going to do with this school? So the consensus was at the particular time, we going to push it down through the woods, we going to bulldoze it and make room for parking spaces. So several of us in this church got together and said oh no, no, no, this is something that's valuable to us so therefore, we want to preserve our school. And doing-- going to historical society, this is when we realized that okay, hey, we have a gold mine here, you know. This is something that we didn't realize it but we wanted to save it because it was our school but after talking to Phyllis Silber over at this history society she said, "Well, mm, let's do some research," and so that's when we found out it was a Rosenwald School and the relationship between Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald.

AM: Just to back track a little bit with the history of the school, you went here until the school closed. What year was that?

CH: 1959.

AM: Do you know what happened to the school in the time period from 1959 until when you were able to help save it?

CH: Yeah. When the school closed in 1959, since it was located near the church, the church trustees and the church decided that they would purchase the school. And if I recollect correctly, I think the church paid something like nine hundred dollars for the school. And then after that, what they used to use the school for was actually for homecoming events because of the fact that they used to have like this is where, used to be like a fellowship hall where they could eat whatever they needed to do or have meetings. And after that, when they built the new fellowship hall onto the church, they decided well hey we'll use this as a storage building and this is what happened up until the time that we decided we were going to save the school.

AM: And what year was that?

CH: Um, hm, the year that we started that we wanted to save the school was 2005.

AM: Okay. And so once you, in 2005, decided you wanted to save the school, you said you went to the historical society, spoke with them, found out it was a Rosenwald School. What happened next?

CH: Well what happened next, okay, we established a board of directors through the historical society and then we said okay well hey we need funds to actually to restore to rehabilitate the school because they said it was rehabilitation and not restore. So, with the board of directors, we decided to say okay hey we need grants and then that is when a lot of publicity got involved and then we sent a grant of for through the National Trust to try to apply for a grant, which Andrew Donnelly was instrumental from the historical society and on our board of directors, wrote the grant sent it out, and Lowes gave us a grant for forty nine thousand five hundred dollars to actually to start, and we utilized that money to do the exterior and to put in the heating and air conditioning and to rewire the building.

AM: And tell us about the process to get the historical marker out front.

CH: Well the historical marker, we had to write the letter which was actually not a I would say a real tremendous type of job to get that done once we got involved, the historical society helped us to write the letter and to get the marker the marker was dedicated.

AM: And what year was that?

CH: Oh don't make me say [Speaker laughs]. I will say, well I'm not going to say off the top of my head 2007 I believe it was.

AM: Okay. And did you have a lot of community support in your efforts here to save the school? Have you had a lot of community support?

CH: Well we've had community support, not to the magnitude I would like to see it, but as the school become more close to being a museum, to getting it where it's in the condition inside, people are more or less gravitating to it now so like where hey we do have something here we wanna participate. And there's two men that I would say have really contributed in work as far as labor Joe Lewis, Senior and Rush Pace. We have had a lot of work done. We have saved the foundation or organization a lot of money by completing the work ourselves.

AM: What's your end goal here for the school?

CH: The end goal is to have this to be a living museum, and to house artifacts and memorabilia, and to where people can come and they can actually get educated on the past and to the future.

AM: What do you mean by living museum?

CH: Living museum, where the museum would actually tell the story itself, when you walk in the door you will be able to say okay well hey when you walk ought to here I can see where this is a living museum.

AM: And who's your target audience for the museum?

CH: The target audience for the museum is everyone. Everyone. We want to open the doors so that everyone can come in and when you leave out of here you will be able to say hey, gee-whiz this is a living museum.

AM: Do you remember any type of civil rights activity in Goochland throughout the time you lived here? I know you were gone for a while in the military.

CH: I don't recall any civil rights movements during the era that I was going to school here and then when I came back I didn't see any civil rights movement in within Goochland.

AM: When's around the first time you recollect hearing about and becoming aware of the NAACP activity in Goochland?

CH: I would say I probably was aware of NAACP awareness during my high school years, you know, as far as being a member, I was not a member, do not recall my family being a member of the NAACP, but always heard of that the NAACP was you know doing a lot of things in the community for the black race and not only the black race but for the white race, for people that was less fortunate than what we were.

AM: Is there anything in particular you remember hearing about them in high school, is there anything in particular that they were active in that sticks in your memory?

CH: No, just that they wanted to try to make it equal for everybody and supposedly-- I guess to, concentrate on those issues that they felt that blacks were not being treated fairly on, and so that's the only thing I can say you know about the NAACP involvement as I know it.

AM: Do you remember anyone, any adults in the community going to the school board to talk to the school board about getting resources for your school, when you were a student?

CH: I don't recall per say. But, I would say if it was anyone it was Ms. Alberta Jackson which you're going to interview her I believe her grandson, well excuse me he's not her grandson, it's her nephew, which is Reverend Joseph Haden you're going to interview him on Friday I believe and Ms. Jackson used to live within right on top of the hill here which is no more than I guess three tenths of a mile. And she was a person that was actually went to I believe Virginia State University, and she always stressed education.

AM: What was your relationship to the school system at the time of *Brown*? So that was 1954 so you would have been a student here.

CH: I would have been a little fellow here yes, I just you know, recollection none because like I said, that would have been my second year in elementary school.

AM: Did you attend segregated schools throughout your time in Goochland County Schools?

CH: Yes I did.

AM: And what year did you graduate high school?

CH: 1965. And I will say this, I did have the opportunity to go, like I said, to the new Second Union School and it was the most enlightened thing when we went there and we were able to actually go in and have lunch at a cafeteria. You know, it was just amazing, hey you know, it was such a dramatic change when you could go in at lunchtime and you would get a hot meal. So therefore you know we say that was, that was a experience you know that I think I can remember actually in school that was actually something that was very positive to us.

AM: Were there any other stark differences between the new school and this school?

CH: I would say no. Well yes it was because you had, you had a restroom. Yeah [Speaker laughs]. You had a restroom, it was something that you were not used to. You had indoor plumbing, you know, you had a water fountain, you know, so these were things that hey, that you could appreciate you know and you didn't, actually you didn't realize until you got there what you were actually missing. You know and what you had the same quality of education going on there because Ms. Beale which was the principal here at this Second Union School was the principal at the new school.

AM: Now I've-- in this part of the county that the students from Second Union came from, was indoor plumbing prevalent or not at the time?

CH: It was not.

AM: Okay. So having it at the school then was a particular treat?

CH: Exactly. And then I guess I would also like to say in regards to the Second Union School, the new Second Union School that was built in 1959 when we started there, that it was actually when they closed down all the little two-room and one-room Rosenwald Schools and other community African American schools in the community and that's when we went there and so therefore, you got a opportunity to meet more people and the students you know were there that they would say oh hey I'm so glad we actually could be able to get together and we could actually meet more friends, you know.

AM: Do you have any, any other recollections of your time at Second Union or in Goochland County that you'd like to share with us?

CH: Hm, no I don't think so.

AM: Well you know where to find us!

CH: Right [Speaker smiles].

AM: Well thank you very much.

CH: And thank you.

Richard Carchman: Could I ask a question?

CH: No [Speaker laughs].

Richard Carchman: Do you have that shirt, the Second Union shirt?

CH: Which Second Union shirt?

Richard Carchman: The ones that you did the chalk on.

CH: No, are you ask-- no you had to wash that shirt, I told you we had to wash that shirt [Speaker laughs].

Richard Carchman: Yeah, yeah, yeah, does anybody have that shirt?

CH: No.

Richard Carchman: Nobody has that shirt?

AM: That would be neat.

Richard Carchman: That would be cool.

CH: You know I'm sayin--

Richard Carchman: Yeah--

CH: But if they do it with chalk-- Yeah huh?

Cris Silvent: It just became a regular white tshirt.

CH: Thank you, thank you--

End of interview: 49:27

Transcribed by Nicole Kappatos 7/11/2014