



Museum of Chincoteague Island People ♦ Culture ♦ Heritage

Press Release - For Immediate Release – December 14, 2015

Suggested headline:

Chincoteague Island Native Flies Home to be Share His Life Story

Submitted article

Charlie Marshall, who grew up on Chincoteague Island, visited his island home in early December. He was invited by the Chincoteague Island Life History Project to be interviewed. While Marshall lives in Missouri now, he still remembers his childhood home of Chincoteague fondly. He started a long and fulfilling career with the Fish and Wildlife Service at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge while he was still in high school.

The Life History Project is a collaborative project set up by the Museum of Chincoteague Island and Chincoteague Island Library. The Project strives to record video interviews with people whose memories can help to tell the story of Chincoteague's history. Marshall is an African American who grew up on Taylor Street, and his recording his memories of Chincoteague will help the Museum and Library to better tell the local story of school integration in the 1960s.

Marshall remembers being bused from his home on Taylor Street to a segregated school in Wattsville and returning home to Chincoteague to find his friends waiting for him to arrive back to the island so that they could start playing baseball. In the interview, he recalls finding out from his mother that he would start going to school with his friends on Chincoteague. When his mother asked him how he felt about this—having the opportunity to go to the previously all white school on the island—he said he was pleased because this meant his friends and he could start playing baseball earlier in the afternoon, since they would all be walking home from the same school.

In the interview, Marshall speaks about feeling “no different” from his white friends when he was growing up on the island, and he now realizes this was not the case for African American children

growing up in many other parts of Virginia in the 1960s. After, the interview is edited, it will be available for viewing on the Museum's website (chincoteaguemuseum.com/life-history).

The Life History Program is gearing up to hold a volunteer training session on Monday Jan. 11 from 1 pm to 3 pm at the Museum of Chincoteague Island (7125 Maddox Blvd). The program has successfully recorded video interviews with 18 islanders about their lives—covering topics from WWII and the US Coast Guard to life as a waterman and decoy carver. In 2016, the program would like to interview even more local residents.

“We would love to get more people involved as trained volunteers, especially people who are interested in learning about the video editing aspect of producing these interviews,” said Ennis Barbery Smith, Executive Director at the Museum of Chincoteague Island.

To sign up for the training on Jan. 11, recommend someone to be interviewed, or generally learn more about the Life History Program, please contact Ennis Barbery Smith by emailing info@chincoteaguemuseum.com or calling the Museum at 757-336-6117.

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