

The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B, or in other news, the brief and possibly entertaining life of one Mr. Oscar J. Crozier, Esq. initially of Philadelphia, or maybe Boston, but who most defiantly lived in Chestertown

For much of the U.S. Civil War, and officially following the publication and enacting of Emancipation Proclamation on the 1st January 1863, African-American soldiers were an important part of the Union war effort.¹ One of these regiments raised was the 54th Massachusetts, a regiment of African-American volunteers, officered by white men, which would go on to become perhaps the most famous African-American regiment of the Civil War. This fame may be due to the immortalisation, with perhaps dubious accuracy, of the regiment's deeds in the film *Glory*.² One of the volunteers who would fight in this regiment, an Oscar J. Crozier, would not only serve in the regiment but would go on to settle in Chestertown, Maryland where he would live until his death in 1915, an outline of a life which would make him certainly very unusual, if not unique, in the history of the 54th Massachusetts.³

Although there is some information on Oscar before his enlistment in the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers on February 21st, 1863, in Boston, Massachusetts, this biography will focus from the point which makes him unusual: his enlistment in the 54th.⁴ From various records, there are two possible places of his birth: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania or Massachusetts, although they tend to agree that he was born at some point between 1842 and 1844.⁵ One clear conclusion can be drawn from this, though: Oscar J. Crozier

¹ "The Emancipation Proclamation," The Avalon Project, accessed 29th April, 2013, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/emancipa.asp.

² Joseph Glatthar, "'Glory,' The 54th Massachusetts Infantry and Black Soldiers in the Civil War," *The History Teacher* 24 (1991): 1, accessed 14th April, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/494706?origin=JSTOR-pdf>.

³ "United States, Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards, 1907-1933," index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/K6HN-LT1> : accessed 23 Apr 2013), Oscar J Crozier, 1907-1933.

⁴ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers who Served with the U.S. Colored Troops, 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment (Colored)*; Microfilm Serial: M1898; Microfilm Roll: 4. Accessed online at Ancestry.com.

⁵ *Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers*, "United States Census, 1900, Oscar J. Crozier," index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/M32C-D3F> : accessed 30 Apr 2013), Oscar J Crozier, 1900;

was born free, as was typical of the volunteers of the 54th Massachusetts.⁶ From his service record, though, it is apparent that he was resident in Philadelphia immediately before his enlistment, and letters from the 54th Massachusetts seem to suggest that the company which Crozier joined, Company B, was made up predominantly of men from Philadelphia which would corroborate the military records.⁷ It is of note that his birth place as Massachusetts only appears in the last census taken in his life: it is a possibility that he was born in Massachusetts, since his parents, according to an earlier census, were from Massachusetts, and moved down to Philadelphia early in his life, although this is conjecture.⁸

Following his enlistment into Company B of the 54th Massachusetts, his service record becomes the main source in understanding his military experience, although it must be added that this leaves little details of what it was like as an individual to serve in the 54th Massachusetts: for this a collection of letters from Corporal James H. Gooding, a non-commissioned officer, will be utilised to provide more details. Shortly after his enlistment into the 54th Massachusetts, Crozier was promoted to Corporal, a non-commissioned rank in a regiment in which African-Americans could not hold commissions and so represents a substantial leap in the army hierarchy for him. It is, however, apparent that he did not maintain this rank: the records refer to him being demoted to a private although there is not further information on this as to why he was demoted.⁹ It is clear, if Corporal James H. Gooding's letters can be

and Year: 1910; Census Place: Chestertown, Kent, Maryland; Roll: T624_566; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0056; FHL microfilm: 1374579. Accessed online at Ancestry.com.

⁶ Glatthar, "Glory," 5.

⁷ *Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers*; and Virginia Matzhe Adams, Editor's Note in Corporal James H. Gooding, *On the Altar of Freedom: A Black Soldier's Civil War Letters from the Front*, ed. Virginia Matzhe Adams, (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 14.

⁸ "1900 United States Census, Oscar J. Crozier," Year: 1900; Census Place: Chestertown, Kent, Maryland; Roll: 625; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 0050; FHL microfilm: 1240625., accessed Ancestry.com; and "1910 United States Census, Oscar J. Crozier," Year: 1910; Census Place: Chestertown, Kent, Maryland; Roll: T624_566; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0056; FHL microfilm: 1374579, accessed Ancestry.com.

⁹ Records of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, "List of Non-Commissioned Officers," Fold3, accessed 29th April, 2013, <http://www.fold3.com/image/#295750497>.

taken as at least nominally reflective of African-American opinion, that there was enormous pride held by those who served in the 54th Massachusetts. It was seen as an enormous opportunity to further their dignity and their station in life, with Gooding describing the dignity that came with carrying a musket to defend their liberty and rights in comparison to the menial jobs from which they had come. The mention of menial jobs is perhaps a reflection of the position African-Americans occupied even in northern society which was without the degrading and humiliating slave system found in the South.¹⁰

The initial phase of Crozier's experience in the 54th Massachusetts is not found in the document evidence, but an insight can be obtained through the letters of Gooding. Initially it seems that a great deal of time was spent drilling, forming the 54th Massachusetts into a coherent military unit, with Gooding describing this phase with a great deal of pride: they were becoming a unit which was going to fight in the Civil War for their freedom, as they saw it.¹¹ The band which Crozier was to later play in, according to his military and pension records, was also formed during this training phase before the regiment was deployed to the South.¹²

What is of particular notice is the recollection, in one of the letters, of the ceremony in which the 54th Massachusetts received its banners of the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from the Governor of Massachusetts: it is clear that the flags are a source of immense pride to the troops. The Governor's speech reflects perhaps the sentiments of the enlisted men: by

¹⁰ Gooding, "Letter to the *Mercury*, March 3, 1863," in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 4.

¹¹ Gooding, "Letter to the *Mercury*, March 31, 1863," in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 8.

¹² Gooding, Letter to the *Mercury*, May 16th, 1863," in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 20; and Historical Data Systems, comp. *U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2009. Original data: Data compiled by Historical Data Systems of Kingston, MA

forming an African-American unit, they have “recognised the right of every man in the Commonwealth to be a man and citizen:” this moment marks a water-shed moment in which African-Americans received the benefits of citizenship of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and hence, before the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution, citizenship of the United States of America.¹³ The link between African-Americans fighting and receiving citizenship is something which is reflected by Gooding, and whilst there is no evidence that Crozier was even present at the various ceremonies, there is no reason to believe that he would not have felt the same regarding his fighting for the Union.¹⁴

Following training, the 54th Massachusetts was deployed to the South, to initially Georgia, where they were involved in the torching of the Georgian town of Darien, before being redeployed to South Carolina to face the regiment’s most famous involvement: the siege of Fort Wagner.¹⁵ It is not clear to what extent Crozier was involved in torching of Darien, but Crozier, it is probable, was involved in the battle fought on James Island, South Carolina, a battle in which his company was part of the contingent from the 54th Massachusetts.¹⁶ This engagement, it could be argued, was even more important than the much more famous attack on Fort Wagner, which Crozier was probably not involved in, since it led to the 54th Massachusetts winning credibility amongst the white troops and commanders in the area which meant it was permitted to lead the attack on Fort Wagner. Gooding refers to how a white regiment gave them three cheers as they passed: it is apparent that the 54th Massachusetts had won acceptance from their white peers, something which Gooding, and presumably Crozier would have, reflects with pride.¹⁷

¹³ Gooding, “Letter to the *Mercury*, May 20th, 1863,” in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 21; and “The United States Constitution,” Avalon Project, accessed 29th April, 2013, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/amend1.asp#15.

¹⁴ “Letter to the *Mercury*, May 20th” 21.

¹⁵ Gooding, “Letter to the *Mercury*, June 22nd, 1863,” in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 31; and Gooding, “Letter to the *Mercury*, July 20th, 1863,” in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 38-9.

¹⁶ Gooding, “Letter to the *Mercury*, July 20th,” 36-7.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 38.

The remainder of 1863 was spent in the siege works around the forts protecting Charleston, in which the 54th Massachusetts was heavily involved.¹⁸ It is of note that Gooding describes how both white and black troops worked together to siege the forts: white and black soldiers are fighting together, although in different units, to defeat Confederacy and the slave institution it represented.¹⁹ The conditions were clearly difficult: in addition to what was being fired out of the forts by the Confederate units, the soldiers also had to contend with disease in the South Carolinian summer, with soldiers dying daily of disease.²⁰ Along with this was what was considered by Gooding, and one can assume Crozier too, as the insulting and degrading lower pay which the 54th Massachusetts received of \$10 a month rather than \$13 a month: for Gooding “too many of our comrades’ bones laid bleaching near the walls of Fort Wagner to subtract even one cent from our hard earned pay.”²¹ To add to this insult, it is clear that the 54th Massachusetts was increasingly being accepted by the white regiments as an equal to them: whilst the troops on the ground were accepting of something approaching equality, the federal government was not, hence the continued refusal to have any entity but the federal government make up the \$3 difference in pay.²²

It is not until 1864 that there is a definitive military record left by Oscar J. Crozier, with there being evidence of an injury received at the Battle of Olustee, Florida, to the left eye.²³ This was one of the more important battles in which the 54th Massachusetts fought, and was one in which Corporal Gooding was captured and imprisoned at the notorious Andersonville Prison in which he died in July 1864, thus ending his collection of letters which illuminates the life of an enlisted soldier in the 54th

¹⁸ Gooding, “Letter to the *Mercury*, August 3rd, 1863,” 45.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 46.

²⁰ Gooding, “Letter to the *Mercury*, August 9th, 1863,” 48.

²¹ *Ibid*,” 49.

²² Gooding, “Letter to the *Mercury*, August 30th, 1863,” in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 54; and Gooding, “Letter to the *Mercury*, December 4th, 1863,” in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 83.

²³ Special Collections. (U.S. Colored Troops Pension File Collection) Oscar J. Crozier, MSA SC 4126, 14.

Massachusetts.²⁴ One final letter to the *Mercury* newspaper, written by Captain James W. Grace, narrates that the “fifty-fourth did honour to themselves and our city: all concede that no regiment fought like it.”²⁵ It is clear that Crozier, who evidently fought in this battle, took part in what was a desperate battle in which the 54th Massachusetts emerged with its reputation, if anything, heightened. Furthermore, this final letter also informs the newspaper that the bill increasing the pay of the soldiers to \$13 a month had just passed: the symbolism of being treated as equals in pay and being bloodied in battle fighting for the Union is clear.

Crozier, following the Battle of Olustee and his wound, which led to the loss of sight in his left eye, would subsequently receive a wound to the back in the course of duty in July of that year: both of these would be mentioned in his pension application as justifying his application with the wounds precluding him from working.²⁶ In the latter part of 1864, Crozier was detached along with the rest of the band from the regiment, as per the order of the regimental headquarters and sent on the Broad Rivers campaign to fight in the Battle of Honey Hill in December of 1864.²⁷

The Battle of Honey Hill was the last engagement in which Crozier is recorded as having engaged in: it is believed that he spent the remainder of the war on garrison duty in South Carolina before being mustered out, sent to Boston where they received their final payment and disbanded in August 1865.²⁸

This was the beginning of what was to be a rapid process in which the African-American regiments

²⁴ James M. McPherson, Foreword to *On the Altar of Freedom*, xiv.

²⁵ James W. Grace, “Letter to the *Mercury*, February 25th, 1864,” in *On the Altar of Freedom*, 114.

²⁶ Special Collection, “Oscar J. Crozier,” 14.

²⁷ Records of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, “Return of Captain Jamie M. Wattons Company B of the Fifty Fourth Regiment of the Mass. Vols. Army of the United States, (Colonel Edward N. Hallowell) for the month of December 1864,” Fold3, accessed 29th April, 2013, <http://www.fold3.com/image/#295791308>.

²⁸ Special Collection, “Oscar J. Crozier,” 17.

recruited from the north were discharged throughout the fall of 1865.²⁹ This was due to a combination of effects: it is apparent that the presence of black troops would only heighten racial tensions, although it is probable that the demands of the troops themselves to be demobilised and returned to their families was an important factor in the decision.³⁰ As part of the 54th Massachusetts, Crozier returned to Boston to collect his final pay, before entering into the world that was the post-Civil War United States of America.³¹ It is possible that he took part in the parade at Pennsylvania's state capital, Harrisburg, which consisted of a grand procession of the troops of the 54th Massachusetts, in which General Simon Cameron, an important Massachusetts politician, thanked the black men of the regiment for the "great service which they have been to their country:" an influential politician, known at the federal level and a member of Abraham Lincoln's cabinet, was thanking the African-Americans of the 54th Massachusetts.³² These were men who only a few years previously had lived an existence when their very freedom was tenuous, living in constant fear of being kidnapped by the all-too active kidnapers in the North and sent to die on the plantations of the Deep South, yet here they are being thanked by prominent politicians, such as the fate which befell Solomon Northup.³³ Should Crozier had been present at the procession, and even if he was not, one can only imagine the pride and sense of hopefulness he felt, living in hope that African-Americans would at last be treated equally by their white peers, fulfilling the promise made by the Governor at the beginning of the Civil War in which their service granted them, and their community, citizenship.³⁴

²⁹ Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy and Leslie S. Rowland, ed. *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation 1861 – 1867: Series II: The Black Military Experience*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 734.

³⁰ Ibid, 767; and "Anonymous Northern Black Soldier to the Secretary of War by a Loyal Citizen and Friend to All," in *Freedom*, 772.

³¹ Berlin, Reidy and Rowland, *Freedom*, 767.

³² "Reception of the Colored Soldiers at Harrisburg," *The Liberator*, (Boston, MA.: 1865), Vol. XXXV, Issue 186, 47.

³³ Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1970).

³⁴ Gooding, "Letter to the *Mercury*, May 20th, 1863," 21

It is apparent, however, that this sense of hopefulness and pride that Crozier may have felt in 1865 was misplaced: the next time that Crozier appears in a census of the United States of America, in 1870, he finds himself an inmate at Eastern State Penitentiary, the notorious jail in Philadelphia.³⁵ The records as to why he was in jail are not available: instead one must examine the newspapers of Philadelphia to ascertain why he was in jail, and these suggest that following his mustering out Crozier struggled to adapt to civilian life, a struggle which ended with the death of an Amanda Mitton, an African-American Philadelphian.³⁶

Amanda Mitton was born around 1845 and presumably lived with her parents at least in 1860, according to the census record, and still lived with her mother at the time of a death in 1867 according to her mother's witness statement to the court at the trial of Crozier.³⁷ Her parents were both born in Virginia, which may possibly indicate that one or both of them were born as slaves.³⁸ The 1860 Census shows their household as being composed of two parents, two brothers, Amanda and her sister: the father is a labourer, the brother a porter and her sister a domestic, with the mother not working.³⁹ This is indicative of not an entirely poverty stricken household: within African-American communities, should a man's wages provide it, it was a matter of pride not to have one's wife work.⁴⁰ This summation is further supported by her household's neighbours: whilst they are all working-class, they are recorded as having a profession rather than being unemployed and it is of note that the neighbourhood is not entirely

³⁵ "United States Census," Year: 1870; Census Place: *Philadelphia Ward 15 Dist 45 (2nd Enum), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*; Roll: M593_1427; Page: 193B; Image: 398; Family History Library Film: 552926, accessed online at Ancestry.com.

³⁶ "A Stabbing Case," *The Evening Telegraph*, January 22nd 1867, 5.

³⁷ "United States Census, Amanda Mitton" Year: 1860; Census Place: *Philadelphia Ward 4 West Division, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*; Roll: M653_1154; Page: 984; Image: 488; Family History Library Film: 805154, accessed online at Ancestry.com; and "Legal Intelligence – The Crozier Homicide," *The Evening Telegraph*, April 30th 1867.

³⁸ "United States Census, 1860, Amanda Mitton."

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Richard Paul Fuke, *Imperfect Equality: African-Americans and the Confines of White Racial Attitudes in Post-Emancipation Maryland*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 40.

black.⁴¹ It is clear therefore that whilst Amanda Mitton formed part of the African-American community, and a relatively poor part of it, she was not part of the “poorest of the poor.”

Amanda Mitton and Oscar Crozier are described as having been living together “for some time” in what was clearly quite a stormy relationship.⁴² Whilst it is not clear how the two of them met, the stabbing case and more importantly for the historian the subsequent murder trial offers an insight into Crozier’s post-bellum life. His mother, Susan Crozier, provided a character witness for him at his trial, and stated that since the end of the Civil War, Crozier had been living with his mother on Minizer Street, between 7th Street and 8th Street, and Lombard Street and Pine Street. Although he had been working he had not been in regular employment since his demobilisation: he had not, for example, resumed his work at the William Penn Hotel where he had been employed before the Civil War as a hostler.⁴³ This would suggest that Crozier had found the post-bellum years a challenge, a challenge he possibly dealt with through drink, which may explain his defence of intoxication at his trial.⁴⁴ Although there is no record of where he lived in the post-bellum years with his mother, his mother appears in the 1870 Census, which is only three years after he lived at home with her: it would not be unreasonable to presume that he had lived at the same address. There is very little information recorded on the census: the reason why is not clear, but what is clear is that all the immediate neighbours are small households made up of exclusively African-Americans: this it could be construed as evidence that the area is a poor one, given that the majority of Philadelphia African-Americans were poverty-stricken.⁴⁵ The lack of details on the census

⁴¹ “United States Census, 1860, Amanda Mitton.”

⁴² “A Stabbing Case.”

⁴³ “Legal Intelligence: The Crozier Homicide.”

⁴⁴ Frederick Carroll Brewster, *Reports of Equity, Election and Other Important Cases Argued and Determined*, (Philadelphia: Kay, 1875), 349, accessed 2nd May, 2013, http://books.google.com/books?id=tkyTAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA1&dq=Oscar+J+crozier&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=3#v=onepage&q=Oscar%20J%20crozier&f=false.

⁴⁵ “United States Census, 1870, Susan Crozier,” Year: 1870; Census Place: Philadelphia Ward 7 Dist 18 (2nd Enum), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Roll: M593_1420; Page: 564B; Image: 436; Family History Library Film: 552919, accessed Ancestry.com.

may be evidence that the census taker could not be bothered to record the details of a poverty-stricken, unimportant, in the mind of the census taker, community.

It was in January 1867 that Oscar Crozier's and Amanda Mitton's lives collided with fatal consequences for Amanda and judicial consequences for Crozier. According to a witness at the trial, Oscar Crozier came to Amanda's house, seeking her, and being unsuccessful, returned later, at which point they engaged in an altercation. This altercation turned violent with Oscar producing a pocket knife and stabbing Amanda twice: once in the side and once in the groin, a wound which would prove fatal when it became infected.⁴⁶ It is of note that Crozier was drunk when he murdered Amanda: this would be used as a defence in his trial and result in the downgrading of the charge from First Degree Murder to Second Degree Murder, for which he would be sentenced to ten years in jail, which one would presume was Eastern State Penitentiary.⁴⁷ Oscar's mother, whom one would presume was an important figure in his life given that they lived together, would die in 1871, when Oscar was presumably still in jail: it is clear that this escapade represented a personal tragedy for Oscar Crozier as well as, obviously, for his victim.⁴⁸

Oscar Crozier disappears from the census records from 1870 till he appears living on East Front Street as a married man in Chestertown, Maryland.⁴⁹ When he arrived in Chestertown is not clear: he was sentenced to ten years in jail in 1867, so it could be presumed that he did not arrive in Chestertown till after that date, although this is conjecture.⁵⁰ It is clear, however, that he arrived before 1895, since he marries Mary E. Harris in 1895 at the Janes Methodist Episcopal Church, Chestertown.⁵¹ The witness

⁴⁶ "Legal Intelligence: The Crozier Homicide;" and "Fatal Result."

⁴⁷ Brewster, *Report*, 349.

⁴⁸ "Susan Crozier's Death Certificate," Ancestry.com. *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Death Certificates Index, 1803-1915* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

⁴⁹ "United States Census, 1900, Oscar J. Crozier," Year: 1900; Census Place: *Chestertown, Kent, Maryland*; Roll: 625; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 0050; FHL microfilm: 1240625, accessed Ancestry.com.

⁵⁰ Brewster, *Report*, 349.

⁵¹ Special Collections, Oscar J. Crozier, MSA 4126, *Marriage Certificate*, 29.

statements to Oscar's pension application does offer an insight into when he arrived in Chestertown, with Henry Mags stating that he had known Oscar since Oscar came to live in the area following the Civil War and that he had lived at Quaker Neck for twenty years prior to his marriage in 1895: this would indicate an arrival date of circa 1875.⁵² This is corroborated by Charles H. Linsey who also states that Crozier lived in Quaker Neck for twenty years prior to his marriage, although he claimed to know him "intimately" since Crozier came out of the army.⁵³ From these two reports it seems to suggest that Crozier moved to the area immediately after leaving the army, although there is clear documentary evidence that this is not the case, as well as living in Quaker's Neck, an area near Chestertown, for about twenty years before getting married and moving to Chestertown.

What can be surmised from these reports and the evidence? It is likely that Crozier moved to Chestertown around 1875: it seems that 1877 would be the most likely date given that that was the year he was probably released from jail, and that he lived at Quaker Neck before he moved to Chestertown. There are no obvious reasons for Crozier to move to Chestertown: there is, as far as can be ascertained, no family connection and no wife present: the statement of Linsey makes it clear that he acquired a reputation as a womaniser at Quaker's Neck before his marriage, which would make it apparent that it was not due to a woman that he moved down to Chestertown.⁵⁴ It is possible that he was fleeing his previous life in Philadelphia, especially after the death of his mother, but why he would choose to move to the Jim Crow South, and to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, is not a clear, or indeed a logical choice.

If it was to be assumed that the witness statements were accurate in their broad semantics and that Crozier did inhabit Quaker Neck when he first moved there, then what was the place like? It must be noted that Crozier does not actually appear on any census return for Quaker Neck for 1880 or 1890 and so his exact location cannot be determined. However, Quaker Neck, judging from the maps of the time,

⁵² Special Collections, *Henry Mags Statement*, 10.

⁵³ Special Collections, *Charles H. Linsey Statement*, 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 11.

was overwhelmingly rural and composed of scattered farms.⁵⁵ According to Linsey's witness statement, Crozier lived with a Mr. Hatto at Quaker Neck: based on this and the nature of Quaker Neck, it can be assumed that Crozier was an agricultural labourer.⁵⁶ Given that 63% of Kent County's African-American population in 1870 were employed as labourers and that Oscar Crozier himself was employed as a farm labourer in 1900, it seems likely that he was employed in this fashion at Quaker Neck.⁵⁷

What was the African-American community which Crozier had moved into like? It is clear that the African-American community was one which was heavily shaped by the white community and the relationship between itself and the white community: it is clear that Crozier had moved into a community very much dominated by the white population. It is likely that Crozier moved into Kent County after the disbandment of the Freedmen's Bureau in 1872 and as such what limited assistance the federal government had offered had disappeared.⁵⁸

Following the shocks of Emancipation and the era of Reconstruction, which had a limited effect on Maryland, the state settled into a status quo of bitter segregation of the black and white communities, enforced by the white community.⁵⁹ This system of segregation was enforced through the routine use of violence against any member of the African-American community who tried to challenge the racial status quo.⁶⁰ An example of this ease at which violence sat within white society would be the acceptance of lynching, with a flippant article appearing in the *Kent News* in 1878 in which smoking is "proved" to prolong life through delaying the hanging of the victim of a lynch mob so that he could

⁵⁵ Special Collections, MSA SC 1399-1-264-5, *Fourth District Chestertown Kent Co.* in *An Illustrated Atlas of Kent & Queen Anne Counties, Maryland, 1877* (Philadelphia: Lake, Griffing & Stevenson, 1877), 5.

⁵⁶ Special Collection, *Charles H. Linsey Statement*, 9.

⁵⁷ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, Schedule 1 – Inhabitants, in Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 16; and "United States Census, 1900, Oscar J. Crozier."

⁵⁸ The Freedmen's Bureau, *The National Archives*, accessed 5th May, 2013, <http://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau/>.

⁵⁹ Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 195.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 205.

finish his cigar.⁶¹ It is clear, therefore, that the African-American community suffered from the actions of a white community which, by no means united into one monolithic block, was clearly more than willing to be hostile towards the African-American community.⁶²

In addition to being to a certain extent an embattled community, it is apparent that the black community in Kent County was not prosperous. The broader Maryland African-American community has been described as, in general, “poverty-stricken,” suffering from real economic deprivation and inequalities.⁶³ Maryland freedmen found themselves trapped in an economic system which was based on sharecropping, subsistence wage labour or tenancy, leaving them trapped economically at the bottom of Maryland’s economic hierarchy.⁶⁴ Crozier’s experience as a farm labourer would have left him trapped in this hierarchy, subject to an existence where his wages just covered his living costs and offered little opportunity for social improvement: for the African-American community, the American Dream remained nothing more than a distant dream. This system was the result of the economic structure of rural Maryland: the limited nature of Reconstruction and especially the weak nature of the Freedmen Bureau in Maryland left white farmers with having a decisive and clear advantage when negotiating contract between themselves and African-Americans.⁶⁵

The Freedmen Bureau, which had been established to aid the millions of recently freed slaves, was weak in Maryland due to a number of reasons: it only had the power to advise rather than command over much of Maryland, it was only present for two years and it suffered from a dire lack of personnel, especially on the Eastern Shore where it lacked even one permanent field agent.⁶⁶ This weakness to

⁶¹ “Kent News,” *Kent News*, Chestertown, Saturday, April 13th, 1878, 4, collection at Miller Library.

⁶² Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 210.

⁶³ Richard Paul Fuke, “Land, Lumber, and Learning: The Freedman’s Bureau, Education and the Black Community in Post-Emancipation Maryland,” in *The Freedman’s Bureau and Reconstruction Reconsiderations*, Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller, ed., (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 294.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 307.

⁶⁵ Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 12 and 30.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 30.

prevent the white population from abusing the African-American population was compounded by the policies of the Freedmen Bureau which tended to force African-Americans to find work which tied them to white planters: the very individuals who were the least likely to accept the new social and economic structures in Maryland and do their best to ensure that the African-American community remained economically isolated and insignificant.⁶⁷

The effect of these policies, and economic structures such as economic dependence on the white conservative planter population, meant that African-Americans generally failed in achieving their goal. For most African-Americans, especially ex-slaves, their goal post-emancipation was to achieve “self-reliance” and autonomy: something which they had been denied under slavery, a goal which was to be achieved through the acquisition of land.⁶⁸ Pitifully few African-Americans even succeeded in owning land in Kent County in the post-bellum period: in 1870 only 340 African-American individuals and institutions, which included churches and schools, owned land out of a population of 7,732: this represents a land-ownership of 4%.⁶⁹ Even if they were fortunate enough to own land, the overwhelming number of landowners: 81% of African-American landowners owned less than \$800, which was what was considered the minimum land value to be considered a farmer.⁷⁰ It is clear therefore that the economic structure of Eastern Shore Maryland and Kent County in particular left the African-American community impoverished and lacking in economic opportunity: a situation which Crozier would have found himself in as a farm labourer in Quaker Neck.

Whilst there is abundant evidence that the African-American community suffered physically and economically in the late nineteenth century, there is also abundant evidence that the late nineteenth

⁶⁷ Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 39.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 4; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, *A Compendium of the Ninth Census, June 1st, 1870*, (Washington, 1872), 10-11 in Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 4.

⁷⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Schedule 1* in Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 51; and Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 50.

century also saw the development and the expression of strong African-American communities which it is likely Crozier would have been heavily involved in. An example of this expression of a strong African-American community would be the creation of schools in post-bellum Maryland for the teaching of African-American students. In Southern Maryland alone, black communities purchased over fifty pieces of property to provide schools with the property being worth at least \$5,000. This was not done individually, with individual wealthy African-Americans providing patronage to the creation of new schools but instead was done as a community with the creation of boards of school trustees to buy and manage the land.⁷¹ The achievement of the community, in purchasing property valued at an average of, at least, \$100 must be compared to the monthly wages which a male labourer, for example, earned in Kent County in 1866 of \$10 to \$12: this campaign to buy lands for schools represents significant economic sacrifice for the community, and is demonstrative of a clearly thriving African-American community.⁷²

Whilst the creation of a chain of schools by African-Americans is one expression of, and a demonstration of, a strong African-American community, it was the churches which were the focal point of the community. This can be seen in the newspaper reports related to the Memorial, or Decoration, Day observance, which became, in Kent County, an almost exclusively black occurrence.⁷³ It is clear that religion formed an important part of the day's observation and it is the two African-American churches of Chestertown: the Janes Methodist Episcopal Church and the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church which led the services.⁷⁴ Crozier, it can be presumed by his marriage certificate, was a member of the Janes Methodist Episcopal Church.⁷⁵ The Methodist Episcopal Church in Maryland was a bi-racial

⁷¹ Fuke, "Land, Lumber and Learning," 293.

⁷² "Representative Wages Paid to Black Farm Labourer, 1865 – 1867," The Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, District of Maryland and District of Columbia, National Archives, Washington, D.C., in Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 10.

⁷³ "Memorial Day," *Kent County News*, Saturday June 1st 1889, collection at Miller Library.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*; and "Memorial Day," *Chestertown Transcript*, Thursday June 4th 1891, collection at Miller Library.

⁷⁵ Special Collection, Oscar J. Crozier, 29.

church in the sense that there were both white and black individual congregations, although the congregations fell under different Conferences and were only subject to the same General Conference: they were autonomously spiritually.⁷⁶ The fact that the African-American Methodists were able to obtain two separate Conferences to cover the Maryland area demonstrates the strength of African-American Methodism which in itself demonstrates the importance of African-American spirituality to the broader community.

Another important aspect of the African-American community in Chestertown was the 25th Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, more commonly known as the Charles Sumner Post. The post as an institution was established in 1882 by 21 veterans of the United States Coloured Troop, part of what was eventually a group of 22 partially or wholly African-American Grand Army of the Republic posts in Maryland, with the organisation being unusual in 19th century United States in being interracial.⁷⁷ The Grand Army of the Republic was essentially a veterans' organisation, although for African-American posts such as the Charles Sumner Post, they conceived that part of their program was to remind white citizens that "slaves and free-born black citizens fought for their nation and their race in the Civil War."⁷⁸ This was understood in Chestertown through the domination of the Charles Sumner Post in Memorial, or Decoration, Day commemorations: as early as 1883, a year after their founding, the post is mentioned as leading the Memorial Day commemorations, and within a few years there were newspaper articles complaining as to how the white community had allowed the "sacred duty of honouring the memory of those who died in defence" of their country to fall upon the black community,

⁷⁶ Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 177.

⁷⁷ "Charles Sumner Post #25, Grand Army of the Republic," National Register Listings in Maryland, accessed 6th May, 2013, <http://www.mht.maryland.gov/nr/NRDetail.aspx?HDID=1482&COUNTY=Kent%20County&FROM=NRCountyList.aspx?COUNTY=Kent%20County>; and Barbara A. Gannon, *African-Americans in the Grand Army of the Republic: Chestertown to Oklahoma City*, lecture at Washington College, March 1st, 2002, C.V. Starr Centre, 1.

⁷⁸ Gannon, *African-Americans*, 3.

clearly viewing the work of African-Americans as fundamentally inadequate.⁷⁹ What is of interest is that the Charles Sumner Post, in their annual commemorations of fallen comrades on Memorial Day, would decorate the graves of both white and African-American soldiers buried in Chestertown: this perhaps demonstrates how African-Americans viewed their white peers during their time in the Civil War.⁸⁰ It is also of note that the G.A.R.'s processions to the graveyards: Chestertown had both a graveyard for white people and African-Americans included bands: it is possible that Crozier, as a bugler and musician in the army, may have played in the bands as a musician.⁸¹

It was not just the men who played an active part in the community of Chestertown. The Women's Relief Corps, the first in Maryland, was also associated with the Charles Sumner Post.⁸² The corps was, again judging by the newspaper reports of Memorial Day, also active with the W.R.C. in 1886, for example, providing the refreshments and flowers for Memorial Day.⁸³ It is clear that in the years up to when Crozier moved to Chestertown from Quaker Neck, the G.A.R. and its sister organisation the W.R.C. was well-established in the town as institutions, with their annual celebration of Memorial Day certainly attracting the attention of local press, if not necessarily reminding the white community of the African-American role in the US Civil War.

By 1900 Crozier had moved from Quaker Neck into Chestertown and had married, marrying a Mary E. Harris in 1895.⁸⁴ Harris was born in circa 1870, probably in Kent County and was at the age of 10 living

⁷⁹ "Decoration Day," *The Kent County News*, Saturday June 2nd 1883, Chestertown, collection at Miller Library; and "Memorial Day," *Kent County News*, June 1st 1889, Chestertown, collection at Miller Library.

⁸⁰ "Decoration Day," *Kent County News*, June 2nd 1888, Chestertown, collection at Miller Library.

⁸¹ "Decoration Day," *Kent County News*, June 4th 1887, Chestertown, collection at Miller Library; and Special Collections, MSA SC 1399-1-264-5, *Fourth District Chestertown Kent Co.* in *An Illustrated Atlas of Kent & Queen Anne Counties, Maryland, 1877* (Philadelphia: Lake, Griffing & Stevenson, 1877), 5.

⁸² Gannon, *African-Americans*, 15.

⁸³ "Decoration Day," *Kent County News*, June 5th 1886, Chestertown, collection at Miller Library.

⁸⁴ Special Collection, Oscar J. Crozier, 29.

with her grandparents in Chestertown.⁸⁵ Although Oscar and Mary never had a child together, Mary did have a child before her marriage: either Sarah C. Harris or Sarah C. Crozier.⁸⁶ The use of her mother's maiden name would indicate that the child was had out of wedlock, although the use also of Oscar's surname would suggest that Oscar accepted Sarah and adopted her as a daughter. The illegitimate nature of Sarah's birth is corroborated by witness statements in Crozier's pension application in which a witness emphatically states that Mary had not been married prior to her marriage to Oscar.⁸⁷ The adoption of Sarah as a child is an indication of what was considered quite normal amongst the African-American population, which had suffered through years of slavery in which family relationships were not recognised and were fundamentally unstable, in accepting co-habitation. Linsey makes reference to this, stating that Mary and Oscar had been married in a church wedding, implying it was somewhat unusual: for Kent County's African-Americans, a wedding was not considered a must but instead "lots of coloured people used to live with each other and people would call them man and wife who never got married."⁸⁸ Although it can be assumed that Sarah is not Oscar's child this cannot be confirmed either way: it would certainly be possible for Sarah to be Oscar's child, hence the adoption of his surname, or alternatively the surname was adopted to conceal her illegitimacy.

Crozier lived on East Front Street as part of a small African-American community located on Front Street, what is now Water Street, in Chestertown. This community on East Front Street was made up of five all-African American households clustered together from 118 to 126 East Front Street between white households: the street is now named North Water Street and lies between High Street and Maryland

⁸⁵ "United States Census 1880, Mary E. Harris," Year: 1880; Census Place: Chestertown, Kent, Maryland; Roll: 512; Family History Film: 1254512; Page: 127A; Enumeration District: 052; Image: 0253, accessed Ancestry.com.

⁸⁶ "United States Census 1900, Sarah C. Harris," Year: 1900; Census Place: *Chestertown, Kent, Maryland*; Roll: 625; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 0050; FHL microfilm: 1240625, accessed Ancestry.com; and "United States Census 1910, Sarah C. Harris," Year: 1910; Census Place: *Chestertown, Kent, Maryland*; Roll: T624_566; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0056; FHL microfilm: 1374579, accessed Ancestry.com.

⁸⁷ Special Collection, Oscar J. Crozier, *Mary Berryman Statement*, 11.

⁸⁸ Special Collection, *Charles H. Linsey Statement*, 9.

213: the main road through Chestertown.⁸⁹ These households contained at the time 28 inhabitants of varying ages but who were employed on the whole as domestic servants and help, with 71% of those working: 12 out of 17, employed as domestic help.⁹⁰ This would make Crozier's employment at the time of an agricultural labourer at the time exceptional for the community in which he lived: he is, noticeably, the only member of the community who is definitely employed outside of Chestertown on a farm.

Out of the eleven children in the community, only four are at school and there are no wives who do not work.⁹¹ Given the priorities of the African-American community, who would utilise their newly won freedom to ensure that their children and wives did not have to work, this would suggest that the community is one which is very poor: whilst Crozier may have existed prior to his marriage as a tenant farm worker, in this community he is part of a community which is existing at a wage subsistence level: an example of how a post-emancipation urban African-American community existed during the latter part of the nineteenth century. This economic system worked on the principle that African-Americans formed, in the post-bellum south, part of the working-class with in this case the African-Americans supplying domestic labour to the more prosperous white households, thus leaving African-Americans, just as they were dependent on white landowners, dependent on their employees for their continued survival.

How was the African-American community viewed by the white community in Chestertown in the first few years of the 20th century? It is clear that the African-Americans, at least within the sub-community which Crozier lived in, were economically dependent on the white community but this dependency did not translate into the white community being secure about their position in the community. Instead, they viewed the African-American community with a combination of fear and superiority. Local newspaper reports offer an indication of the fear felt by the white community, who saw the legal

⁸⁹ "United States Census, 1900, Oscar J. Crozier."

⁹⁰ See Appendix I.

⁹¹ "United States Census, 1900, Oscar J. Crozier."

structures of the Jim Crow South, especially the lack of political rights which the African-American community enjoyed, a necessity to “protect [themselves] from the clutches of the Negro.”⁹² This fear was compounded by the perception that the white community in Chestertown was under attack from the “arrogance and criminality of lawless Negroes,” whom they believed to form the majority of the population of Chestertown’s African-American population.⁹³ It is clear that the white population, or at least significant elements of the white population, believed that the African-American population not only represented a threat to them in abstract terms but also on a daily basis.

In addition to viewing the African-American population as a threat to the white community, the white community also had a clear sense of being superior to the African-American community, or perhaps more accurately an acute sense of African-American inferiority. Any perceived threat to the racial order of the South in which the economic, political or social superiority of the white community was under threat, such as the election of Republicans, led to outrage at how the “intelligence and superiority of the people of the South” was being rendered to the “barbaric ignorance and deprivations” of African-Americans.⁹⁴ This situation was something which was never going to be remedied by the actions of Republican governments: as far as the white community was concerned, the African-American community was inherently inferior to that of the white community.

The black community itself was still a thriving enterprise, with the Grand Army of the Republic Charles Sumner Post still going well. Memorial Day, by the beginning of the twentieth century, had become exclusively an African-American event with the only observation by the white community being token at best and perhaps more reflective of national commemoration rather than local commemoration. The only change in daily occurrence which occurred on Memorial Day was the closing of the banks and public offices, whilst the day was an important part of the annual calendar of the Charles Sumner Post

⁹² “An Important Issue,” *Kent News* (Chestertown), October 1st 1904, Volume 66, Number 18, 4.

⁹³ “The Constitutional Amendment,” *Kent News* (Chestertown), September 15th 1905, Volume 67, Number 15, 4.

⁹⁴ “The Race Question,” *Kent News* (Chestertown), October 15th 1904, Volume 66, Number 20, 4.

with the parade being organised by them and their sister organisation the Women's Relief Corp.⁹⁵ It is of note, however, that the number of veterans at the Charles Sumner Post was beginning to drop with sufficient rapidity to be mentioned in the newspaper coverage of the Memorial Day Commemorations with the number of veterans beginning to decline appreciably from circa 1903.⁹⁶ It can be seen, therefore, that the African-American community at Chestertown was still very much active although the community was changing from the one which Crozier had joined when he moved to Chestertown as the veterans of the US Civil War began to die.

In 1910 Crozier and his family as well as the Chestertown African-American community had undergone significant changes. The household had expanded to include his wife, daughter, a grand-daughter and two grandsons, the result of his daughter's marriage to presumably James Edward Rigby, although direct evidence of this has not been found, and Oscar's son-in-law did not live in the main Crozier household.⁹⁷ Oscar had also moved from West Front Street to West Queens Street, near the junction with Trolley Lane, although this lane no longer exists: it is probably the area around the Charles Sumner Hall on Queen's Street in the predominantly African-American area of Chestertown.⁹⁸ The area in which Crozier found him in, along with many of the African-Americans was a poor area of town, with what can be assumed to be low land value, given as will be discussed the impoverishment of the community. To the immediate south of the community lied the railroad that connected Chestertown to the rest of the United States of America and within the community was many of the industries of Chestertown.⁹⁹ It can be seen therefore that the African-American community existed quite literally on the edges of

⁹⁵ "Decoration Day Observed," *Chestertown Transcript*, June 1st 1899, collection at Miller Library.

⁹⁶ "Memorial Services," *Enterprise*, May 29th 1907, collection at Miller Library.

⁹⁷ "United States Census 1910, Oscar J. Crozier."

⁹⁸ *Ibid*; Sanborn Digital Maps, Sheet I Maryland, Chestertown [Kent County], October 1908, accessed 7th May, 2013, <http://libraryres.washcoll.edu:2250/md/3588/dateid-000004.htm?CCSI=2867n>; and Elizabeth Clary, *Constructing A Community: The African-American Community in Kent County, from Reconstruction to the Present*, unpublished thesis at Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland, 27.

⁹⁹ Sanborn Digital Maps, Sheet II Maryland, Chestertown [Kent County], October 1908, accessed 7th May, 2013, <http://libraryres.washcoll.edu:2250/md/3588/dateid-000004.htm?CCSI=2867n>.

Chestertown, along with the industries of the town. It is also of note that the houses themselves were likely of poor quality: unlike in other areas of Chestertown, not all of the houses have access to piped water, indicative of a poor community, and it is possible that the Crozier household was without running water, given this.¹⁰⁰

The employment habits of the family have also changed, although it is apparent that the economic status of the family has not. Oscar is now employed as a servant, with his wife and daughter both employed as laundresses. Oscar's grandchildren are listed as having no profession: this is probably because they were too young to be at school or in work.¹⁰¹ His son-in-law, James E. Rigby, is self-employed as a barber in Chestertown.¹⁰² What is noticeable is that his son-in-law and daughter are not living together: it is possible that the son-in-law's employment as a self-employed barber meant his income was insufficient to sustain an independent household: the sheltering of his family in his grandparent's household is possibly an example of the determination of African-Americans to keep their families together and to enjoy an institution which they had not been able to enjoy under slavery: that of an independent family life.¹⁰³

Oscar himself became post-commander of the Charles Sumner post in 1904 when there were twenty members of the post. The fact that he was promoted to what was a relatively large post of the G.A.R. by the standards of rural towns suggests that Oscar had become well-established in the town and was trusted sufficiently by his community to become what would have been an important leader of his community.¹⁰⁴ This is an example of how the veterans of the US Civil War, especially African-Americans,

¹⁰⁰ Sandborn Digital Maps, Sheet II Maryland, Chestertown [Kent County].

¹⁰¹ "United States Census 1910, Oscar J. Crozier."

¹⁰² "United States Census 1910, James E. Rigby," Year: 1910; Census Place: Chestertown, Kent, Maryland; Roll: T624_566; Page: 5B; Enumeration District: 0056; FHL microfilm: 1374579, Ancestry.com.

¹⁰³ Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*, 69.

¹⁰⁴ Barbara Gammon, notes on *Roster of the G.A.R., Department of Maryland, 1882 – 1929*, Library of Congress, compiled 2000, Kent County Arts Council, 2.

became an important part of their community, a phenomena which was observed across the United States.¹⁰⁵

The main part of the Crozier family was located on West Queens Street in a neighbourhood that was made up entirely of African-American households: eleven in all containing a total of 35 individuals.¹⁰⁶ Their employment patterns is similar to that of the community in which Oscar had lived in 1900, being made up mostly of domestic workers: out of the 22 who have employment, 15 are employed in domestic work.¹⁰⁷ Given the location of the community near the High Street, it is likely that they worked in the white community providing domestic services to the white households.¹⁰⁸ There are 13 people who are listed as not having a profession, which could indicate a very high-level of unemployment and a corresponding impoverishment of the community. However, out of these 13, only 3 are within 'working age' which has been arbitrarily defined as from 18 to 65, which would suggest an unemployment rate of 9%, which is relatively high.¹⁰⁹ It is of note that domestic work is still almost as dominant as it was in 1900, with 68% of the workers employed in domestic work in 1910 as opposed to 71% in 1900. This would suggest that for Oscar, the communities and neighbourhoods in which he inhabits are similar in their economic structures and suggests that it was not completely atypical to find communities made up largely of domestic workers.

The nature of the jobs to be found in the neighbourhood on West Queens Street offers an indication of the prosperity of the work, with the work being mostly domestic, working class labour. The fact that they worked in the domestic sphere would indicate an element of stability: they had jobs although they were, of course, economically dependent on their presumably white employers for their economic

¹⁰⁵ Berlin, Reidy and Rowland, *Freedom*, 767.

¹⁰⁶ "United States Census 1910, Oscar J. Crozier."

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*; and Appendix II.

¹⁰⁸ Sanborn Digital Maps, Sheet I Maryland, Chestertown [Kent County], October 1908, accessed 8th May, 2013, <http://libraryres.washcoll.edu:2250/image/view?state=md&reelid=reel07&lcid=3588&imagename=00016&mapname=Chestertown Oct. 1908, Sheet 1&CCSI=2867n>.

¹⁰⁹ Appendix II.

future: they were economically subordinate to them. Furthermore, only one of the wives is listed as keeping a house: that is not working. Given the priorities of the African-American community, and the dream of many African-American men to earn enough so that their wife could occupy the traditional sphere open to them, this would be indicative of their dreams being unfulfilled: in 1910 the American dream still remained far-away for the African-American community.¹¹⁰

The Cannon Street neighbourhood is a much larger community, stretching across much of the length of Chestertown rather than the West Queens Street community which occupies the end of one of the streets perpendicular to Cannon Street. The community is made up of 28 households and 91 individuals, mostly African-American although interestingly there are ten households at one end of the street which are white households: there is a clear dividing line between the African-American and white communities, a physical line which was almost certainly matched by a conceptual line separating the two.¹¹¹

Examining the employment of the community, there evidence of a much more diverse socio-economic community which not only includes African-American working class but also white working class in addition to a very few white-collar workers and professionals in both communities.¹¹² Although domestic employment once again forms the largest share of employees, with 22 out of 91 members of the community, 24% of the workforce, employed in domestic work, it does not quite dominate in the same way that it does in either West Queens Street or East Front Street.¹¹³ This is a demonstration that it was possible for African-Americans to escape the economic entrapment which has been discussed elsewhere and become a manager or a farmer, but this instant seems very rare: the majority of those in employment not in domestic work are either working as labourers or another working-class activity.

¹¹⁰ "United States Census 1910, Oscar J. Crozier."

¹¹¹ "United States Census 1910, James Rigby."

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Appendix III.

What is also of note is that despite the efforts of the white community, generally, to keep the African-American community as close to a situation of slavery as possible, this community proves that they were not entirely successful in these endeavours, with there being about 10% of the street employed in white-collar employment.¹¹⁴

The other striking characteristic of the Cannon Street community is that out of the 91 individuals, eleven are without employment or profession, and are of working age: this is to mean that as far as can be ascertained from the census, about 10% of the street's inhabitants should be in employment, yet are not.¹¹⁵ This is demonstrative, once again, that the African-American community, even a community as diverse and seemingly prosperous as the Cannon Street community remained, generally, impoverished. The unemployment rate is of a similar magnitude to that of the West Queens Street community, which as discussed was so clearly an impoverished community: it is likely that James Rigby lived in poor conditions in this community along with many of the rest of his peers.

Whilst the economic situation of African-Americans in 1910, in Chestertown, remains poor, their community also remained strong and vibrant. The Grand Army of the Republic, and the Charles Sumner Post, was still an important part of the Chestertown community, with the GAR celebrating its fortieth anniversary in 1906 with a grand parade with battalions from all over Maryland congregating: this included the Charles Sumner post.¹¹⁶ At this parade, it was calculated that the GAR had 2,500 members: indicative of a strong organisation, although one whose numbers were likely to be fading rapidly as the veterans aged.¹¹⁷

Within the Chestertown community, the Charles Sumner post was an important part of the African-American community, with Memorial Day still being annually celebrated. It is clear that by the 20th

¹¹⁴ Appendix III.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ "The Enterprise," May 30 1906, collection at Miller Library.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

century, the white community seems to have accepted that Memorial Day was a day which the Charles Sumner post marked and the African-American community marked: the day had been fitted into Maryland's segregated society: whilst the press observes that Memorial Day was "fittingly observed," there is a clear implication that the observation was exclusively by the African-American community, not the white community. This is perhaps an indication that the memories and some of the bitterness associated with Emancipation were beginning to fade from the memories of the white community.¹¹⁸

Although the African-American veterans of the Civil War were beginning to die in quite large numbers, with there being noticeably fewer veterans from about 1907 onwards, the GAR, if anything seems to be getting more active and stronger than less active and weaker: this, it could be argued, was the result of the activity of the local African-American community.¹¹⁹ The actual Charles Sumner Post was not built until 1908 and resembles a substantial outlay of money and time, something which one would presume had not happened in a community which was both metaphorically and literally dying.¹²⁰ In addition, the money to build the hall was not paid for: it was borrowed, with a mortgage for \$1,500, a large sum of money, being taken out by the GAR to pay for the construction costs.¹²¹ The fact that the African-American community was willing to borrow this money is an indication of their confidence that the community will continue to use the hall into the future and will be able to pay back the mortgage. In addition, the fact that they were able to borrow such a large sum of money is indicative of the strength of the community: clearly whoever was handing over the money for the mortgage was sufficiently confident in the African-American community to be confident of having the money re-paid.

Although the African-American community, it is clear, was a strong and vibrant community, and there is some indication that the shock of Emancipation was beginning to lessen, the relationships between the

¹¹⁸ "Chestertown Transcript," June 2, 1906, collection at Miller Library.

¹¹⁹ "Memorial Services," *Enterprise*, May 29th 1907, collection at Miller Library.

¹²⁰ "Charles Sumner Post #25, Grand Army of the Republic."

¹²¹ "Mortgage Deed," 8th May, 1908, *Notes on Charles Sumner Post*, collection at Miller Library.

two communities is still clearly tense, with violence being a regular occurrence. This can be observed through the reporting of an encounter between a Mr. Deford, a white farmer, and a Wesley Broadway, an African-American veteran, who was leading the Memorial Day parade. The *Chestertown Transcript* reports on how Deford was returning to his farm along Quaker Neck road when he encountered the Memorial Day parade heading out to the African-American cemetery, and accordingly tried to overtake the parade. It could be argued that this action in itself reflects a lack of respect for the African-American proceedings, an approach which was taken by Broadway who prevented him from passing. This is clearly against what at least the white community thought was the norm and proper: this was described as an “indignity” by the *Transcript*, although it clearly suggests that some members of the African-American community were not cowed completely by the expected reaction of the white community.

The fact that Deford was not armed is something commented on by the *Transcript*, suggesting that it was fortunate for Broadway that he was unarmed: this would suggest that a breach of what was considered racial etiquette by an African-American would usually result in a violent response from the white individual who had been affronted. Despite the fact that Broadway was not murdered by Deford, there is an implication that both judicial and extra-judicial consequences will be faced: Deford, it is reported, returned to town to file charges whilst the reaction of the other African-Americans, of which seems to be derived from fear, is perhaps an indication that there will be reprisals from the white community.¹²²

The 1910 census is the last federal documentation in which Oscar appears: he will die in 1915 from what is described as a “cardiac asthma” whilst the remainder of his family moved to Baltimore at some point in the 1920s, possibly after the death of James Rigby, who disappears from the records in 1920.¹²³

¹²² “A Daring Hold-up,” *Chestertown Transcript*, June 1st 1909, collection at Miller Library.

¹²³ Special Collections. (U.S. Colored Troops Pension File Collection) Oscar J. Crozier, MSA SC 4126, 27; “United States Census, Mary E. Crozier,” Year: 1930; Census Place: *Baltimore, Baltimore (Independent City)*,

However, his life from his enlistment to his death in 1915 covers an enormously important aspect of American history, and especially the history of African-Americans and race relations in the United States. From the hope and pride of his service in the 54th Massachusetts to his shaming as a murderer in 1867, following by a life of entrapment and poverty in the Jim Crow South, the story of Oscar Crozier reflects the roller-coaster ride of the African-American community in the fifty years after the Civil War.

Appendices

Appendix I

Employment	Number Employed
Wagoner	2
Cook *	4
Home Girl *	1
Hostler	1
At School	4
Washing and Ironing *	6
Farm Labourer	1
Child	7
Labourer	1
Waiting *	1

*= employed as a domestic help

Source: "United States Census, 1900, Oscar J. Crozier."

Appendix II

Employment	Number Employed
Labourer	3
Servant*	4
Laundress*	8
None	13
Cook*	2
Wagon Driver	2
Home	1
Dreyman	1
Chambermaid	1

*= employed as a domestic help

Source: "United States Census, 1910, Oscar J. Crozier."

Appendix III

Employment	Number Employed
Unknown	1
None	35

Labourer	6
Cook*	4
Salesman	2
Printer	1
Waitress*	1
Servant*	4
Laundress*	6
Barber	2
Seamstress*	3
Sexton	1
Wagon Driver	1
Dreyman	1
Porter	1
Own Income	2
Farmer	1
Manager	1
Dress-maker	1
Carriage	1
Blacksmith	1

*= employed as a domestic help

Source: "United States Census, 1910, James E. Rigby."

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