

personality

Through THE Lens

Chris Haugh captures the
essence of Frederick on film.

Christopher "Chris" Haugh, production services manager of Frederick's origination channel 10 at Frederick Cablevision, thinks it's great that his career has allowed him to merge his two favorite subjects: audio-visual communication and history. "I guess I'm a communications and history geek," laughs the bespectacled 30-year-old. "I've had a passion for those two subjects since I was little."

In charge of a staff of 30 to 40 part-time and full-time employees, Haugh has the distinction of creating and producing two of the first comprehensive histories of Frederick for television: "Frederick Town," and "Up for the Meadows: A History of Black Americans in Frederick County."

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By Phyllis Porter ▼ Photo by Lisa Helfert





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Mirroring the documentary style of Ken Burns, whose works include "The Civil War" shown on PBS, Haugh uses an intricate mix of motion on historic still photos, video mood scenes, such as a scene of a black cemetery in the opening of "Up from the Meadows," and interviews with local historians to tell the story of Frederick's past.

"Frederick Town," an account of the people and events in Frederick City's history, premiered on September 10, 1995—coinciding with the City's 250th anniversary weekend celebration. The film has won Haugh several awards including the 1995 Historical Preservation Award from the Historical Society of Frederick County, The Telly Award, and the 1995-96 Public Relations Award from the Maryland, Delaware, and D.C. Cable Television Association.

"As a white man I'll never be able to fully understand the black experience, but people like Ms. Snowden helped me to paint a picture of the struggles and achievements of the black people of Frederick County."

Haugh's second documentary, "Up from the Meadows," premiered in May of this year. "I used the words 'up from the meadows' in the title to indicate the way the slaves and freed men in Frederick County worked themselves up from the meadows, up from the fields, to start their own communities and carve out a life for themselves," says Haugh.

Haugh attributes the success of both his documentaries to the local historians he interviewed. "Paul and Rita Gordon, for instance," says Haugh, "gave 'Frederick Town' an unique interpretation of how Frederick developed with their knowledge of Jewish history in the community. By the same token, Kathleen Snowden, whose grandfather was a slave in Frederick County, gave a distinct perception to 'Up from the Meadows.' As a white man I'll never be able to fully understand the black experience, but people like Ms. Snowden

helped me to paint a picture of the struggles and achievements of the black people of Frederick County. I'm really grateful to the black historians for sharing their stories with me. Without them 'Up from the Meadows' could have not been produced."

Haugh hopes to air his third documentary next fall. It will include a history of the geography, geology, and animals of early Frederick County as well as Native Americans, and the first settlers in the area. "Maybe I'll discover there were dinosaurs in Frederick County," chuckles Haugh.

Originally from Delaware, Haugh moved to Frederick when he was eight. After graduating from Governor Thomas Johnson High School in 1985, he attended the University of Delaware, majored in visual communications, and took many history courses. He graduated in the spring of 1989 with a bachelor's degree in communications and began his career at Frederick Cablevision in November as a part-time camera operator. Quickly climbing the ladder, he obtained his present position in 1991. He is a member of the Historical Society of Frederick County, and president of the Francis Scott Key Lions Club. Haugh is also an adjunct instructor of video production at Frederick Community College.

Married in July 1996, Haugh and his wife Shawn reside in the historic district of downtown Frederick with their new pound puppy, Tilghman. "Tilghman is kinda of funny looking," says Haugh with a grin. "He's an interesting mixture—he has the bouncy body of a Jack Russell with the floppy ears of a Basset hound. We named him after Tilghman's Island on the Eastern Shore where we became engaged.

"Shawn and I love Frederick. It's neat that my position has given me the opportunity share my two loves—audio-visual communication and history with the community. It is my hope that my work at channel 10 will serve my neighbors well, and that my documentaries act as a catalyst—to encourage Fredericktonians and others to preserve their family histories for future generations."

In response to popular demand, both "Frederick Town," and "Up from the Meadows," is sold on video cassette at Frederick Cablevision. Call 301-662-6822 for details. ▼

Phyllis Porter is a frequent contributor to the magazine.



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