

Pop Pop's Journey

Charles Edward Slade was born on October 5, 1936 in Johnson County, Georgia. He grew up in Dublin, Georgia and graduated with a class of only nine members from Brewton High School in May 1955. After graduating he moved to Atlanta, Georgia and began working immediately. Currently Charles still lives in the Atlanta area 52 years later. Charles is known to me as Pop Pop.

His first job in September 1955 was with the Atlanta Paper Company where he earned .84 per hour. He was on night shift and worked 12 hours a day, he only worked there for 2 to 3 months. He wanted to better himself so he went to the State of Georgia and filled out an application for employment.

In November 1955 he was hired with Lockheed Aircraft in Marietta, Georgia starting out at \$1.36 per hour. After only 3 months of employment his pay increased to \$2.12 per hour as an aircraft installer. He was employed with them for 2 ½ years before he was laid off due to the down sizing of the company. At that time he was able to draw unemployment. This would only last for two weeks and was in the amount of \$15.00 per week. Then the state of Georgia sent him to Owens-Brockway Glass Container to apply for a job.

Charles accepted the job offered to him in October 1957 by Owens-Brockway Glass Container, he was married and had a child on the way by then. He had to support his family so they could live. He lived in Hapeville, Georgia at that time and lived only one mile away from the job. When you have no skills or higher education going into a job you can't start off at the top.

His first job with Owens was sweeping floors. He was making \$1.26 per hour as a sweeper on a rotating schedule. He worked about 12 hours a day, the first eight was mandatory

and the remainder was his choice. He worked hard to prove he didn't need to be sweeping floors so he was moved to lehr attendant. His pay increased to \$1.36 per hour with the new job responsibilities. His duty as a lehr attendant was stacking boxes. Shortly after that he was moved to the checker position. The checker position was counting the boxes that the lehr attendant had stacked. In 1961 he was moved to a crew leader, which was a position where he was in charge of other employees. He stayed in the crew leader position for six years before choosing to go into the mechanical field in 1967. The apprenticeship program for the mechanical field took four years to complete. Once he finished the apprenticeship program he became a general mechanic for 2 years being moved to day shift. In 1984 he became a crew leader over the mechanics. He held this job until 1997 earning \$18.00 per hour. In October 1997 he was awarded foreman and was placed on salary at that time. He retired in the foreman position in 2000 with a salary of \$44,500 per year.

As you can see he went through many jobs at Owens-Brockway Glass Container, let's see how he continued to improve his skills and get promoted up through the company. In the beginning he was taught by the employees of the company. He received what they called on the job training and self training. As he continued moving up in the company, the training got harder, but he kept going. He learned to work with multiple mechanical tools such as; tow motors, eye lifts, scissor lifts just to name a few. He learned to weld, use blacksmith tools and electrical tools. He was also taught how to read blueprints to perform some of the jobs. Charles was eager to learn all he could to move up in the company and better himself.

Over the years, technology and automation changed the way the company was run. When he started working for Owens-Brockway in 1957, the company had 1300 employees and when he retired in 2000 it employed only 250 employees. However, the volume of business

tripled over the years. In the beginning they made 25 bottles per minute and it increased to 700 bottles per minute.

During the 43 years, 1 month and 11 days of his employment at Owens-Brockway Glass Container Charles had perfect attendance; he was only off during his scheduled time and vacation. All through these years he met many different people and came away with quiet a few good friends. Charles still remembers all the fun they had away from work. They loved to play all the sports, but to name a few golf, fishing, basketball, baseball, and hunting. They really enjoyed spending time together outside of the work place.

He continues to see and communicate with a few of his friends today. He still remembers a couple of funny stories that make him laugh even now. Here is the first one, one day Charles and some of his friends were hunting in the woods and they all got lost. To hear him say it “that was a trip”. The other funny story he told me about was a fishing trip the guys took to Panama City Beach, Florida. They took this trip a couple of times and enjoyed the deep sea fishing, but most of all laughed at the guys that would get sick out on the boat. When someone was sick the others would like to make fun of them and punish them. Charles still remembers the enjoyable times he shared with the friends he made while working.

In closing, during Pop Pop’s 46 years of working he worked really hard and learned many things. He held several jobs at Owens, and used many different types of tools. He continues to use the skills he learned in his workshop at home today, just this week he taught me how to build a birdhouse, and we built a stool. I learned many things about my Pop Pop that will stay with me forever in my life. I Jonathan Slade interviewed Charles Edward Slade (Pop Pop) on February 23, 2007 and March 12, 2007 at his home in Covington, Georgia.
