



Fort Mill History Museum NEWS

Volume 2, Issue 10
September 2016

www.fmhm.org

From The Evening Herald, Sept. 1953

1953 Enrollment In Fort Mill Schools Totals 1,685



Fort Mill High School, 1953

On September 3, 1953, Fort Mill's public schools opened with a total enrollment of 1,685. This was an increase of fifty students over the previous year's enrollment, according to Supt. A. O. Jones.

The High School (grades 9-12) opened with 305 students. Principal: J.H. Nesbitt.

Central School (grades 5- 8) began the school year with 472 students. Principal: Donald F. Vorreyer.

Riverview School (grades 1-6) had a total of 139 students. Principal: George W. Hutto.

Fort Mill Elementary School (grades 1-4) opened the school year with 542 students. Principal: L. E. Carothers.

George Fish School (for all grades), had 249 African American students. Principal: J. A. Castle.

For the current school year (2016-2017), officials estimate that once enrollment is complete the FMSD will serve about 14,000 students.

Join Us for Fort Mill History Days At Walter Elisha Park

For three special days in September, the **Fort Mill History Museum** goes outdoors with a program of characters and artifacts guaranteed to bring the past alive.

On Sept. 23, 24 and 25, **History Days** will transform Walter Elisha Park into a window to Fort Mill's past, with a variety of demonstrations, displays, arts, music and history to inform and delight every member of the family.

These activities serve to continue the museum's community outreach, broadening the awareness of students and all Fort Mill residents with new insights into who we are.

Friday, September 23rd's *History Day* will be held exclusively for the Fort Mill School District's third graders as enrichment to their



Civil War Reenactors



Confederate Encampment: A Demonstration of Daily Life

classroom studies. Saturday and Sunday *History Days* are open to the public and admission is free.

Representatives from the Catawba nation (the earliest inhabitants of this area) will perform a series of culturally significant dances passed down from their ancestors.

A Catawba potter will demonstrate the time-honored techniques used

in making the beautiful fire-baked clay items that have been praised and sought after by collectors for years. (Pieces of Catawba pottery are on display at the *Smithsonian*.)

Visitors can also enjoy browsing through the Catawba Cultural Center Gift Shop which will also have a booth in the park.

Continued on page two

FMHM History Days

(continued from page 1)

There will be hosted displays of colonial tools and everyday objects brought down the Great Wagon Road by settlers or made in this area as needed to build homes, raise crops, and provide for families' survival in the early years of colonization.

In the 1800's, cotton was the chief crop of the area and cotton bales and cotton bolls will be included in a hands-on presentation about the crop and its effect on the lives of people in the South.

The Fort Mill area was a hotspot during both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Military reenactors from those eras will recreate the sights and sounds of life during difficult times. The reenactors are well-versed in their specific roles and are glad to answer questions from visitors.

The almost life-sized model of the *Hunley* will also be on display. The *Hunley*, a Confederate vessel, was the first combat submarine to sink another vessel. Unfortunately, the *Hunley* was also lost in the encounter with the Union navy.

Scottish dancers and folk/gospel singers will lend even more activity to the program, along with the specialized low country craft of sweet grass basket weaving.

Romans Delicious Dogs & Catering of Fort Mill will also be on site for visitors who work up an appetite.

Come out and enjoy, call your friends or even call the Museum and volunteer to help. We will see you there!



Woven Sweet Grass Baskets



Replica of the Hunley submarine

ALL PROCEEDS FROM HISTORY DAYS GO TO SUPPORT THE FORT MILL HISTORY MUSEUM.

It's A Great Time to Get Involved With the Fort Mill History Museum!

There are so many ways for you to support our mission!

Join the museum.

We offer memberships at every level: individuals, families, and businesses.

Sponsor activities.

We provide a number of opportunities for businesses of every size to support the museum and its community activities.

Volunteer.

We need help from the community at every stage of our operations, from working at the museum, assisting at special events or even guiding visitors through points of historical interest in our town.

To find out more about how you can lend a hand, call us at **803-802-3646** or go to our website:

www.fmhm.org

Other Upcoming Events in Fort Mill ...

Christmas Tree Lighting
December 1, 2016
Confederate Park

Fort Mill Christmas Parade
December 3, 2016
Downtown Fort Mill

Historic Homes Tour
December 10, 2016
(Sites to be announced)

A New Acquisition for FMHM: The Graflex Fingerprint Camera

This **Graflex Fingerprint Camera** was once used to transfer fingerprints from sticky tape to more readable photos. It allowed law enforcement to store photos more reliably and to enlarge the prints to compare them more easily.

Suspects dusted their fingers with powder and then rolled their fingers on cellophane tape to make the prints stand out. The print was then loaded in the camera and photographed. With technology changing so fast these days, it is amazing that the Graflex Fingerprint Camera remained the standard for over thirty years and was manufactured from 1918 to 1951.

The frame is wood covered in leather and is fitted with a Kodak Anastigmat lens f6.3 and four

flashlight-type bulbs to illuminate the fingerprint film from the back.

The camera was the property of Rock Hill Chief of Detectives F. W. Wolfe. The length of his service is unknown but he was listed in *The Directory of Identification Bureaus* of 1953.

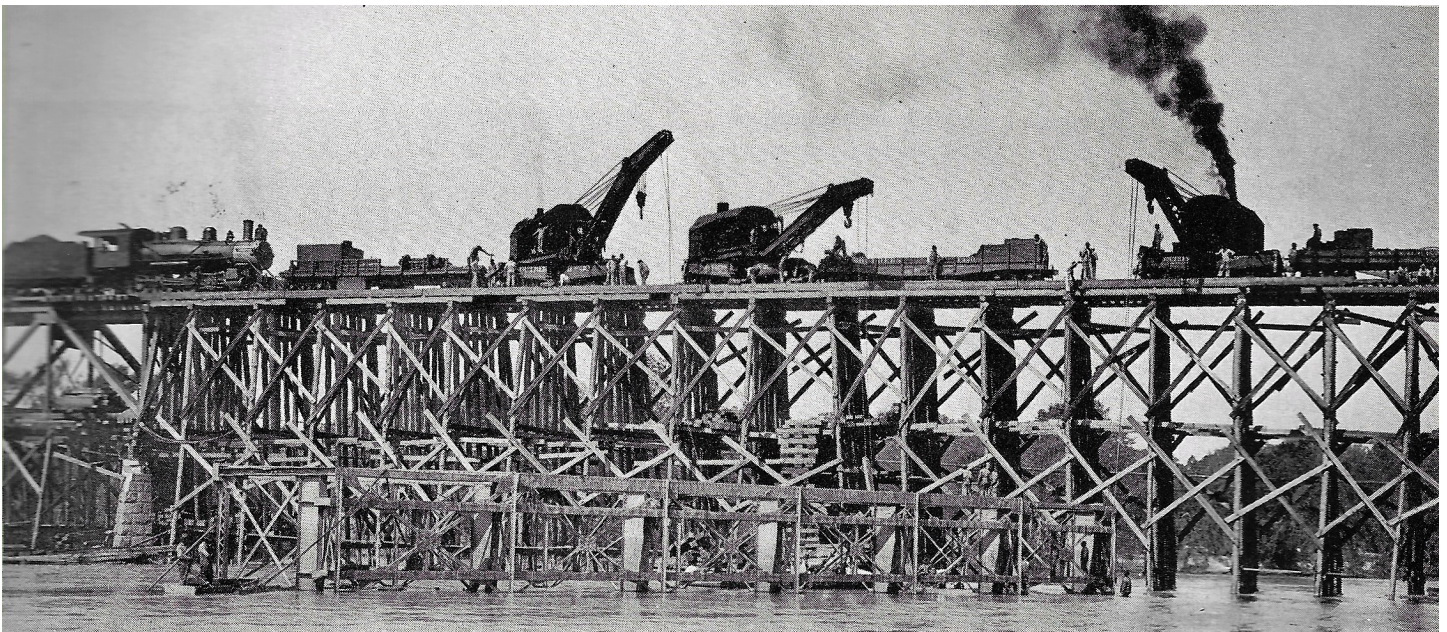
This unusual camera was a gift to the museum (along with several other items) from Lilian and Frieda Sutton, daughter and granddaughter of F. W. Wolfe.

You can see this amazing piece of photographic equipment at the **Fort Mill History Museum** on Clebourne Street.

— *Mike Hill*



Photographs by Mike Hill



Followup to last month's story on the flood of July, 1916:

Two hurricanes blasted northward out of the Gulf of Mexico in the summer of 1916, resulting in tremendous floods that destroyed 826 miles of the Southern Railway system. The Catawba bridge that connected Fort Mill and Rock Hill was one of the bridges washed away. Southern Railway construction crews are shown here on a temporary bridge, pulling steel spans from the river to place in a new permanent structure designed to replace the one destroyed by flood waters. (From **Ties: The Southern Railway System Magazine**, September 1955, p. 20.)

The Fort Mill School System: A Primer (Part One)



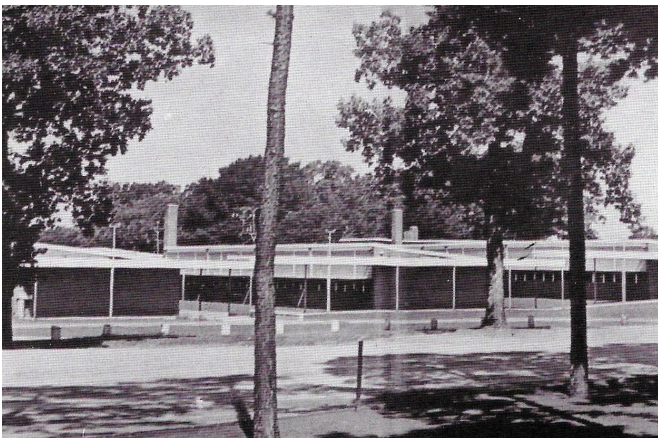
This photo, from J.B. Mills, is labeled "Fort Mill School 1921." Site is now occupied by the First Baptist Church parking lot. The first relatively modern school building, built around 1910, housed grades one through high school. Later used as FM Elementary which was renamed to honor Principal Lee Carothers. Held grades 1-4.



Carothers Elementary (the old FM School) after additional classrooms and an auditorium were added. (Grades 1-4) (Photo: Fort Mill Schools yearbook)



Fort Mill High School opened in 1930. (On Tom Hall Street where the Post Office is located today.) Became "Central School" in the early fifties when the new high school opened at Academy and Banks Streets. Grades 5-8. (Renamed "A.O. Jones" in memory of Supt. A.O. Jones, Jr. Underwent considerable expansion over the years. File photo: Fort Mill Schools).



This Fort Mill High School opened around 1953 on the corner of Academy and Banks Streets. Grades 9-12. Operated as FMHS until the mid-eighties when the new FMHS opened on Munn Road. Briefly held junior high students and then other academic and community outreach programs until scheduled for demolition in 2013. (File photo: Fort Mill Schools).



George Fish School opened in 1924 in the Paradise community, serving all grade levels. First school in town built specifically for African American students. Once FM Schools were integrated, George Fish was converted to a junior high school (grades 7-8) around 1968. Later demolished to make way for a Duke Power office complex which stands at this Steele Street location today.

The Centennial Edition of the Fort Mill Times, June 28, 1973, lists the following schools in the district along with their principals: Fort Mill High School, J.E. Walser; Fort Mill Jr. High, H.M. "Mac" MacCallum; A.O. Jones School, Robert Jones; Riverview School, R.E. Case; Carothers Elementary, James R. Shannon.

The first Riverview School will be included in the next issue. We need good photos of the building, particularly the exterior, to accompany this article. Please send scans of photos to michaelcasehill@yahoo.com to help us complete the review of Fort Mill Schools.

Fort Mill's Boy Scout Troop No. 1

When Lieutenant General Lord Baden-Powell returned to England as a hero from the Boer War, he wrote a number of books on military training. The most successful one was about reconnaissance and survival training for army scouts. The book was widely read by teenaged boys. Powell realized the interest and wrote a new book, *Scouting for Boys*. In 1910, he retired from the army and formed **The Boy Scouts Association**.

Scouting crossed the Atlantic to America almost immediately and by 1913, Fort Mill's first troop was organized. There were only two other troops in South Carolina chartered at the time and as Fort Mill was given Charter #1, there is good evidence it was the first troop in the state.

The Charter was granted by President Woodrow Wilson, former presidents William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt and signed by James West, America's first Chief Scout. Somewhere between 1935 and 1937, South Carolina changed the Troop number from 1 to Troop 38.

The Troop 1 scouts were an active group, camping in Kings Mountain and Piedmont Springs, but their crowning achievement was a two week camping trip to Chimney Rock, NC.

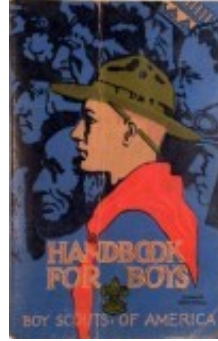
About the year 1913, wearing full scout uniforms, the troop hiked all the way, a round trip of about 250 miles. Two pioneer-type covered wagons carried the

tents, camping gear, food and cooking equipment. The hike took five days up and four days back. (Another source says ten days up and seven back.)

Many prominent Fort Mill families were represented in the troops roster. (See sidebar.)

Assistant Scoutmaster F. M. Mack was the only scout who walked the entire 250 miles. Other scouts would hitch short rides on the wagon. Several boys in the troop worried that he would brag about it and tried to catch him and tie him up on the wagon.

Mack was too fast for them and arrived back in Fort Mill several hundred yards ahead of the troop. It seems the scouts were right. Mack, later referred to by his military rank as Colonel Mack, was said to be very proud to talk about his accomplishment.



Boy Scout Handbook, 1931

The Historic Fort Mill Walking Tour

The History Museum has added a walking tour of the downtown historic district to its programs that highlight Fort Mill's past.

The tour includes twenty-eight sites in and around Main Street that are historically significant or just plain interesting. Included on the tour:

- The location of the walking bridge over the railroad tracks. This bridge was built in the 1850's by the railroad to allow pedestrian traffic to cross above trains stopped in the depot. The bridge reached from White Street to what would become Confederate Park; it was torn down in the 1950's.
- The site of the first Majestic Theater, located on Main Street. The second Majestic (new & improved?) was built on Confederate Street, right behind Main.)
- The oldest retail space on Main Street, built around 1860. The first occupant was Jones Drug Store; years later it was the Rexall Café & Pool Room.
- The Bandstand
- Confederate Park
- Many more points of interest.

Call and schedule your tour and you will be accompanied by a guide from the museum. Or pick up a "Walking Tour" brochure and travel at your own pace.

Call the museum at 803-803-3646 for more information and to plan a tour.



(J.B. Mills Collection)

Fort Mill Scouts Who Hiked to Chimney Rock:

Scoutmaster: William Carothers

Assistant Scoutmasters:

F. M. Mack
Wendell Barber

Scouts:

Alfred Jones, Heath Belk, Luther Belk, Clarence Link, Malcom Link, Charley Bennett, Robert Bennett, Baron Bennett, William (Jake) Ardrey, Robert Ervin (or Erwin), William Ervin (Or Erwin), Odell Kimbrell, Horace Kimbrell, John Gambell, Fitzhugh Gambell, Hefner Andrews, Hefner Heath, Roy Patterson, Ernest Patterson, Stephen Epps, John A. Boyd, Haile Ferguson, Herbert Baker, Douglas Nims, James Gaston, Carl Belk. A. O. Jones, Harry Radford, Joe Nims, Bennett Nims

Information from The Fort Mill Times, Feb. 2, 1959, and from a later editorial by William Bradford. Also thank you to Scouter Doug Chambers for his contribution to this article from his history of Boy Scout Troop 108.



Frederick Mack's Membership Card, Troop 1

Looking Back: Principal Lee Carothers & the Old Elementary School

The First Baptist Church parking lot occupies the place where the old elementary school stood. The school sat directly behind St. John's Methodist Church and had several names over the years. Originally it was Fort Mill School, which housed all grades and replaced the Fort Mill Academy. When a new facility was built to house high school students, the school became Fort Mill Elementary.

Eventually it would become Carothers Elementary, named after a long-term principal and community leader, F. Lee Carothers.



Lee Carothers and School Secretary
Nell Chambers.

Mr. Carothers was a genial but firm older gentleman when I attended the school. He looked very much like Winston Churchill (and to many students and teachers he was equally important).

A veteran of WWI, Mr. Carothers was a superior pistol shot. He and his wife both won many awards in marksmanship competitions.

As a leader of the Boy Scouts, Mr. Carothers helped boys develop the important life skills they would need to navigate a troubled world and helped them to develop the ethics and moral values that would be so valuable as they grew into manhood.

During those small town years, my father and I would often come by the school after hours and find Mr. Carothers bent over his desk planning for the next day or filling out the many reports required for principals.

After a story or two told with a mischievous smile, he went back to work and Dad and I would go across the hall to the library. Small and dark with the musty smell of old books, the library was nothing like the modern, well-lit places of today, but it was packed from floor to ceiling with books of every type.

Dad would help me choose a book and then sit in one of the small chairs and read me a chapter or two until I was sufficiently curious to read the rest.

As a fourth grader, I had the good fortune to be a member of the Safety Patrol. We would don our badges, Sam Brown vests and caps and help younger children cross the streets safely to and from school. The greatest thrill for me on any afternoon was to pass by Mr. Carothers' office and have him turn and talk to us.

He always seemed to be in a quandary about something and needed us to help him figure out the solution. Once he had a radiometer, one of those light bulb shaped

things with four blades, each painted with a black side and a white side. He could not understand why, when he put it in the window, the blades would spin but when he brought it to his desk, they would stop.

We all worked on the problem until, with a little prodding, we figured out that the blades would spin because of the heat reacting differently on the black and white sides of the blades.

We had no idea that he was teaching. We just thought we had helped him solve a problem. Lee Carothers didn't give answers, he gave mysteries; it was up to us to teach ourselves. The image of that perfect educator and his enraptured students sticks with me today.

— Mike Hill

CAN WE GET YOUR FEEDBACK?

Do you have stories,
photos, comments,
suggestions or corrections
for the newsletter?
Share them with us!

Please send your feedback
to Michael C. Hill at
michaelcasehill@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editors:
Mike and Cheryl Hill

People of Paradise: Bethlehem Baptist Church

by Cora Dunlap Lyles

Bethlehem Baptist Church was organized and founded in 1865 by Reverend Thomas H. Hall. The church membership at that time was composed of formerly enslaved people. They once worshipped in camp meeting services that were held under brush arbors. There was a need for a permanent location where the congregation could freely worship.

Church Trustees Handy White Sr., Anthony Adger and Rev. John Walcott Douglass responded to the call. They purchased the plot of land on Steele Street where the original brick building is located. It was once known as Rocky Road. They bought the land on January 7, 1895 from Samuel Elliott White for \$50.00.

Handy White Sr. eventually became a senior Deacon of the church. He also donated one acre of land on Banks Street for the church to use as a cemetery. It is known as the Old Bethlehem Church Cemetery or the Banks Street Cemetery. It has been used ever since by the members of both Bethlehem and Jerusalem Baptist Church.

Bethlehem Baptist Church played a very important role in the Paradise community and in the education of many African Americans in York County. Reverend Thomas H. Hall's son, Rev. Dr. Mansel P. Hall, served as a pastor in Fort Mill



Greater Bethlehem Baptist Church – Joe Louis Street

for ten years and is the founder of Friendship Normal and Industrial Institute in Rock Hill, which later became Friendship College.

Reverend E. A. Stewart began fundraising for a new brick building in 1921 as reported by the church Treasurer John Samuel Sanders, Sr. The church was rebuilt in 1943 under the leadership of Reverend W.S. Smith. Deacon Will Sibley used his skills as a carpenter and bricklayer to help lay the foundation.

Bishop Carwell Culp has served the church since 1974. Greater Bethlehem Baptist Church was created in 1990 as a result of his vision and mission. The church purchased the land on Joe Louis Street from the Town of Fort Mill where the old

swimming pool was located. The new facilities were completed in 1992.

The original building at 112 Steele Street was sold in 1994. It was bought by a private investor and now serves as housing condominiums. A marker in front of the building engraved with the name of Rev. King D. (K.D.) Hames of Gaffney, S.C., remains.

The new Greater Bethlehem Baptist Church is located at 601 Joe Louis Street. Services are held on Sundays at 10:30 AM. Bethlehem Baptist Church has provided continuous religious services including baptisms, weddings and funerals to the Paradise community for more than 150 years.



Bethlehem Baptist Church – Steele Street

Cora Dunlap Lyles:

Ms. Lyles is a former Fort Mill resident who currently resides in Maryland. She holds a BS in Information Systems Management and an MS in Information Technology from the University of Maryland.

Ms. Lyles is a member of the Fort Mill History Museum and of the York County Genealogical & Historical Society.



Do You Know?

These gentlemen, part of Fort Mill's "greatest generation," gathered at William R. (Bill) Bradford's 90th birthday party in 2006.

This group contains some of the educators, doctors, businessmen and civic leaders who helped make Fort Mill such a fine place to live.

The faces in this photo should be familiar to most of the folks who grew up in this community.

Can you name them?



(Photo courtesy of Gary and Carol Dixon.)

Please contact Mike or Cheryl Hill if you know the names of these local leaders.
Michaelcasehill@yahoo.com

Be sure to visit our
J. B. Mills Gift Shop
for great items related to
Fort Mill's history.

The museum shop has books
by local authors as well as Fort
Mill mementos and gifts.



***Museum members receive
a 10% discount on
gift shop merchandise!***

Join us at the
Fort Mill History Museum!



Fort Mill History Museum
107 Clebourne Street
Fort Mill, SC 29716

Contact us for membership
information or with questions:

Phone: (803) 802-3646
Email: Info@FMHM.org

www.fmhm.org

Hours of Operation:
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Wednesday thru Saturday

*Business and Individual
Memberships Available.*

*FMHM is an NARM Participant.

New Admission Rates at FMHM!

ADULTS: **\$3.00 EACH** FOR
WALK IN GROUPS OF
THREE OR MORE; **\$7.00**
MAXIMUM

SCHOOL CHILDREN
K-12: **\$1.00**

COLLEGE STUDENTS &
MILITARY PERSONNEL
WITH ID: **\$1.00**

CHILDREN UNDER 5:
FREE

***MUSEUM MEMBERS:
FREE***