



# Fort Mill History Museum

## NEWS

Volume 2, Issue 12  
November & December 2016

www.fmhm.org

### Fort Mill Schools Choose First Hall of Fame Members

A school system does not excel year after year without a strong mix of outstanding administrators, teachers, staff, students and school board members. As the district grows beyond its small-town boundaries where everyone knows everyone, it is important that we recognize the people who led us to our enviable position in state and national education.

The Fort Mill Board of Education has inaugurated a **Hall of Fame** to recognize those who have made the district that it is today.

The first inductees into the Hall of Fame are as follows:

**Francis Murray Mack, Sr.**  
**Alfred Oscar "A.O." Jones**  
**Harold (Mac) McCallum**  
**Phoebe McCallum**  
**J.H. "Hoss" Nesbitt**

The first class of the Fort Mill School District Hall of Fame was selected by a nominating committee composed of Superintendent Chuck Epps, Mayor Guynn Savage, School Board Chairman Pat White, former County Councilman Jeff Updike, and History Museum Board Member Mike Hill. Rufus (Rudy) Sanders, History Museum Board Member, has agreed to serve on the nominating committee for next year.

*For more on the District's first "Hall of Famers," please turn to page 4.*

### Homes for the Holidays

## The FMHM Historic Homes Tour 2016



Springfield Plantation, built in the 1790's

Once again, as the holidays near, the History Museum will offer the Tour of Historic Homes in Fort Mill. Stops on the tour will include Springfield, the White Homestead, Colonel Springs' office and the Wilson House. The tour, which will be held on December 10th, offers six tour times to choose from.

Visit the History Museum website (FMHM.org) or call the museum at 803.802.3646 to reserve your tickets for this popular event. Tickets for this year's tour of homes are \$50 per person.

The tour begins at Springfield, a beautiful antebellum home built by John Springs in the 1790's and remodeled in the 1850's by Andrew Baxter Springs.

Originally the centerpiece of a 3200 acre plantation, the home hosted one of the last Confederate Cabinet Meetings.

From Springfield the tour moves to the White Homestead, built in 1831 for William Elliott White. The Homestead was later the home of Elliot White Springs, World War I flying ace, internationally known writer and owner of Springs Mills. The home is full of wonderful objects and stories and is always a favorite among visitors.

The next attraction is not a home but the office of Colonel Elliott White Springs, housed in the building that once held the Springs executive offices.

*Continued on page 3*

# The Fort Mill History Museum is Proud to Announce The Elizabeth Ford Living History Project

A standing-room-only crowd attended the premier showing of **The Elizabeth Ford Living History Project** at the Spratt Building on November 15. On this evening, the History Museum introduced the first of many planned videos of interviews with prominent Fort Mill citizens.

The interviews vividly recall Fort Mill's past and the lives lived here

been released until now. Thanks to Elizabeth's love for Fort Mill and her dedication to preserving its history, generations to come will be able to share this rare and exclusive insight into our past."

Building on Elizabeth Ford's amazing work, LeAnne Burnett Morse has combined her love for history and her expertise in video production to bring Elizabeth Ford's dream to life and create an extensive archive of first-person narrative history for Fort Mill.

Morse previewed the first of a series of videos to a delighted audience at the Spratt Building Check with the Museum for opportunities to view these important video documents of Fort Mill's rich history.

The Living History Project Features Interviews With:

Jim Ardrey  
Bill Bradford  
William Bradford, Jr.  
Anne Springs Close  
Anna Dixon  
Elizabeth Ford  
Henry Hammonds  
Oscar Jones  
Bayles Mack  
Tommy Merritt  
Louise Pettus  
John Sanders  
Ronnie Spratt  
Bill Stroup



LeAnne Burnett Morse (left) and Elizabeth Ford (right) at the premier of "The Elizabeth Ford Living History

Support for this project is provided by the Arts Council of York County Small Grants Program, the John and Susan Bennett Memorial Arts Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation of SC, and the SC Arts Commission, which received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

as it grew from a sleepy Southern town into the fast-growing community it is today.

LeAnne Burnett Morse, a member of the Museum Board and owner of Bluestocking Media, explained how this ongoing initiative for video history began.

"Elizabeth Ervin Ford is a lifelong resident of Fort Mill, a 1961 graduate of Fort Mill High School, and a driving force behind the creation of the Fort Mill History Museum.

She began conducting on-camera interviews with longtime residents in 2008. The interviews had not



"The Living History Project," an ongoing series, premiered to a packed house in November. Excerpts are available on the FMHM website ([www.FMHM.org](http://www.FMHM.org)).



# The 2016 Christmas Ornament: *Snow on the Bandstand*



A snow-covered bandstand for 2016

This year's ornament joins many other town scenes available at the museum gift shop in wood, brass, and pewter. There are also many town buildings depicted in scenic standups so that you can build your own hometown on your mantle.

New for the 2016 Christmas season, the museum gift shop has cuddly teddy bears and other stuffed animals for special little ones.



The ASC Greenway Dairy Barn, in brass.

The History Museum is proud to introduce its 2016 Fort Mill Christmas Ornament, **The Bandstand**. Available now at the Museum, the ornament depicts the town's centerpiece with a dusting of snow.

(For those who have recently arrived from colder climes, a "dusting" here is called a blizzard.)



Come by the J.B. Mill's Gift Shop (located inside the museum) to find the perfect gifts for the holidays .

Don't forget to choose one of our Fort Mill ornaments for the Christmas tree in your home. (They also make wonderful gifts!)

## FM HISTORY MUSEUM HOME TOUR 2016

Continued from page 1

The Colonel's office, which features windows inspired by the viewing room of the Hindenburg airship and a meeting table that rises from the floor, reflects the unique individuality of Elliot White Springs.



An interior shot taken at Springfield, decorated for the holidays.

As a special treat, several former "**Miss Springmaids**" will be on hand to talk about their experiences working as ambassadors for Springs Mills. They were often the inspiration for the world famous "Springmaid" advertising campaigns of that era.

Their tales of what it was like to be Springmaids in in the late 1940's and 1950's are delightful to hear.

This year's tour will conclude at the historic Wilson House, which stood on Main Street in the mid-1800's and was later moved to Clebourne Street as the business district on Main Street grew.



A festive shot taken at the White Homestead.

Wilson House is now the home of the Fort Mill History Museum. Visitors will be able to tour the museum and visit the J.B. Mills Gift Shop to find a special memento of the visit or do a little Christmas shopping.

# FIRST INDUCTEES CHOSEN FOR THE FORT MILL SCHOOLS HALL OF FAME

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**Francis Murray Mack, Sr.** was born in 1887 in Fort Mill, attended Davidson College and graduated from Cornell University, where he studied and excelled in French, Latin, and mathematics.



Col. Mack

Mr. Mack returned to Fort Mill after his service in the WWI and became Superintendent of Fort Mill Schools from 1921 to 1938. After serving the school district as Superintendent, Mr. Mack fought in World War II in 1946-1947 and was military governor of Taegu, Korea. After returning home from WWII, Col. Mack took up farming and was active in the choir at Unity Presbyterian Church well into his eighties.

**Alfred Oscar "A.O." Jones** was a native of Fort Mill, born in 1899. He received his early education in Fort Mill, graduating from Fort Mill High School in 1916 when there were only eleven grades. He went on to receive a bachelor's degree from Presbyterian College, despite his college career being interrupted when he joined the Army to serve in World War I. He later received a master's degree from University of South Carolina and did post graduate work at Columbia University.



A.O. Jones

Mr. Jones' service to the district spanned forty-three years. He began his career in Fort Mill Schools in 1921, first as a teacher. Soon after, he was named principal of Fort Mill

High School, a position he assumed in addition to his teaching duties. From 1941 to 1964, Mr. Jones served the district as superintendent. He retired in 1964.

**Harold (Mac) McCallum**, a native of Camden, SC, graduated from Berry College with a Bachelor of Science degree and then received a graduate degree from the University of South Carolina. His career with Fort Mill Schools spanned twenty-eight years, beginning with a position as agriculture teacher at Fort Mill High School.

Mr. McCallum later served as principal of Fort Mill Junior High and is credited with helping to successfully integrate Fort Mill's School District.

Mac McCallum was honored as Teacher of the Year and received many honors from the community for work in various civic activities. He was named Fort Mill Man of the Year and Fort Mill Area Chamber of Commerce Civic Volunteer of the Year.

**Phoebe McCallum**, of Tigerville, SC, graduated from Winthrop in 1939. The wife of "Mac" McCallum, Mrs. McCallum taught typing at Fort Mill High School for twenty-five years and was proud to say that she never missed a day of teaching.



Phoebe McCallum

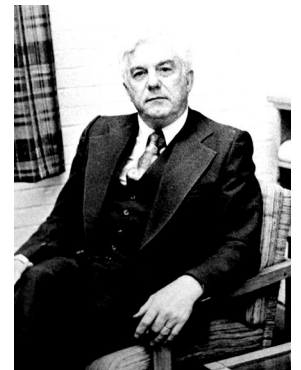
In addition to her teaching duties, Mrs. McCallum was the advisor for the school newspaper, **The Loudspeaker**.

Mrs. MacCallum was also an active member of the community. She was a member of St. John's United Methodist Church for more than fifty years, a lifetime member of the Fort Mill Area Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Fort Mill Women's Club for more than fifty years.

**J.H. "Hoss" Nesbitt** was born in Troutman, NC in 1923. He earned a bachelor's degree from Erskine College and a master's degree from Furman University. He taught at Piedmont High School as a teacher and coach before arriving in Fort Mill in 1952 to become the principal of Fort Mill High School.

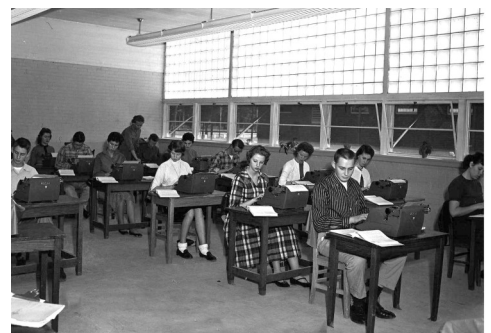
After a brief tenure as Superintendent of Marlboro County Schools, Mr. Nesbitt returned to Fort Mill in 1966 to take over as Superintendent of the Fort Mill School District where he remained for nearly twenty years.

He helped successfully lead integration in the Fort Mill School District.



J. H. "Hoss" Nesbitt

After retirement from the district, Mr. Nesbitt served on the Fort Mill Town Council and served two terms in the South Carolina House of Representatives.



It's hard to find a graduate who attended FMHS in the 1960's or 1970's who does not remember Typing Class with Mrs. MacCallum.



# Veteran's Day: Fort Mill's African American Soldiers

Fort Mill's African American citizens have responded to the call to serve and protect at war time in every major conflict even before the incorporation of the Township. Our history books have not told their stories. Their contributions have been treated as minor and even insignificant, but each and every role they played was important.

Isaiah Brown, William Reid, Robert Spratt and Jake Strait were four of Fort Mill's World War I veterans who served in Pioneer Infantry regiments. Isaiah Brown and Jake Strait both reported for duty to Camp Sevier in Greenville, S.C. on September 25, 1918. William Reid served from July 28, 1918 until June 19, 1919. Robert Spratt worked with the American Trust Company in Charlotte, N.C. at the time he registered for the draft on June 5, 1918.

Emmett J. Scott served as a Special Adviser of Black Affairs to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker during President Woodrow Wilson's administration. He wrote that Pioneers march at the head of each battalion to clear a passage for it through woods or other obstructions, improve roads, make bridges and generally do any minor engineering or construction work necessary.

George C. Sherman and Tom Watts served in the Transportation Corps. The Transportation Corps was a military branch that was created to manage the increasing modes of transportation the war machine required. George C. Sherman served from September 29, 1917 until July 16, 1919. Tom Watts served from Sept 11, 1917 until April 26, 1919.

Thomas Spratt served with Company H the 304<sup>th</sup> Stevedore Regiment QMC. Boyzie (Fonzie) Wright and Tom Wright both served in the 321<sup>st</sup> Labor Battalion. They reported for duty at Camp Jackson, S.C. on April 28, 1918. Emmett J. Scott wrote that the supply of service work of the Stevedore Regiments and Labor Battalions and their unremitting toil at the French ports at Brest, St. Nazaire, Bordeaux, Havre and Marseilles won the highest praise from all who have had an opportunity to judge the efficiency of their work.

Simon White was inducted into service at Camp Jackson, S.C. on July 16, 1918. He served in 339<sup>th</sup> Service Battalion QMC, Company A and was discharged on August 26, 1919.

Solomon Spratt was inducted into service at Camp Jackson, S.C. on June 17, 1918. He served as a Private in the Army and was discharged on August 26, 1919. Camp Jackson is now known as Fort Jackson.

The 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division was an all-black division. It departed for France in June 1918 and was assigned to a quiet sector of the front lines. Before leaving for France in 1918, the buffalo was selected as the divisional insignia due to the "Buffalo Soldiers" nickname that was given to African American cavalrymen by Native Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was due to their tightly curled hair and the buffalo hides they wore.

This name became a badge of honor as the buffalo was a respected animal among the Native Americans. The term was used during the Civil War and the insignia during World I and II. They were also known simply as "The Buffaloes". The division did see some combat service in the Meuse-Argonne offensive on September 24, 1918. It returned to the United States and was demobilized in March 1919.

Jule White served in the 92<sup>nd</sup> 367<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment 155<sup>th</sup> Depot Brigade from October 30, 1917 to March 8, 1919. He was inducted into service at an Army camp located in Farrell, PA.

Walter White served in the 92<sup>nd</sup> 367<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment 156<sup>th</sup> Depot Brigade from June 21, 1918 to December 6, 1918.

The Depot Brigades received and organized recruits and provided them with uniforms, equipment and initial military training. They sent the new recruits to France to fight on the front lines. The Depot Brigades also received soldiers returning home at the end of the war and completed their out processing and discharges. The 155<sup>th</sup> Depot Brigade shipped out of Camp Lee, VA and the



156<sup>th</sup> Depot Brigade shipped out of Camp Jackson, S.C.

Allen White also served in the 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. He was inducted into service on June 29, 1918 and was stationed at a camp that was set up on the grounds of South Carolina Colored Agricultural and Mechanical College in Orangeburg, S.C. It was reported that the camp had 240 men as of July 1, 1918 whose ranks included auto mechanics, truck drivers, tractor operators, concrete workers, blacksmiths and those with expertise in bench woodworking.

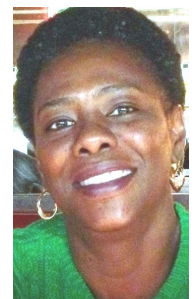
These men risked their lives for our country. They proudly represented our State and served our country with honor. Their graves can be found in cemeteries spread throughout the Township. Theirs is the story of the unsung hero. They are gone, but certainly not forgotten.

A special thanks to Rudy Sanders who surveyed the cemeteries in 2015 and recorded the information found on their tombstones.

## 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 the York County Genealogical & Historical Society.



# “Coon” Harris Hovers Over Fort Mill History

This year, Fort Mill’s Fall Festival included a Scarecrow contest, encouraging local businesses and organizations to place creative scarecrows all around Main Street and White Street. The Fort Mill History Museum chose one of the town’s most colorful characters as its scarecrow.

In 1923, airplanes were all the rage, having made their impact in World War I. Fort Mill had a most unusual pioneer of flight. W. F. (Coon) Harris (so nicknamed because of the coonskin cap he wore constantly) decided to bring his own brand of aviation to Fort Mill.

Harris and his wife Dixie owned and operated the Palmetto Hotel on Confederate St. near where Fort Mill City Hall building is now located. Coon was said to be fascinated with flying and would spend hours looking skyward, studying the flight of birds. Harris used his observations

to craft a pair of wings, using a crow’s wing as a model.

Harris was convinced his wings would work, though he did ask a young J. B. Mills to make the first flight.. Mills refused and the sixty-five year-old Coon Harris decided to make the inaugural flight himself.

Across from the hotel, a runway was built leading up to a six-foot ramp. The only safety measure was a pile of hay placed beneath the platform. At the appointed day and time, Coon Harris appeared. Resplendent in a suit of red long-underwear, tennis shoes, and his homemade wings, Coon Harris made his appearance wearing a foot-long beak projecting from his forehead.

Local physician D. J. B. Elliott warned Harris that he was not a young man and might hurt himself. Coon replied, “I’m gonna fly. I may go all the way to Rock Hill before I land.”

Ignoring the many skeptics who gathered to watch the spectacle, Coon ran up the ramp flapping the wings furiously. He launched himself into the air and dropped straight down into the pile of straw.

Unruffled (as it were), Coon picked himself and tried to fly a few more times before he finally explained to the crowd that the wings would need some adjustment.

Harris died a few years later (natural causes) and the wings never appeared again. His flight, however, remains one of the amazing stories based on true events that make up the lore of a small town.

## *No Foolin’* About J.B. Mills...

Bill Bradford’s popular column *No Foolin’* appeared weekly in the **Fort Mill Times** and no one captured the flavor of this particular town in those particular times like Mr. Bradford.

Here is one excerpt from *No Foolin’* by Mr. Bradford that ran in the **Fort Mill Times** on July 1, 1971, with a glimpse of what one of the community’s most colorful individuals was all about. . .

“...And today is the first day of July. It means that J. B. Mills, Fort Mill weather prophet and television star, has only one month before he starts counting the August fogs again. And as you must know by now, J. B. claims that the number of foggy mornings in August is an infallible gauge of the number of snows we will have during the winter. And more than that — the density of the individual fog regulates the depth of the snow.

J. B. claims a much higher degree of accuracy than the weather people who make a living out of missing forecasts. He says that the change in name from the U.S. Weather Bureau to the National Weather Service didn’t improve their performance a bit...”

*Fort Mill Times, July 1, 1971, page 1, written by Mr. Bill Bradford.*

### Mark Your Calendars for December’s Holiday Events:

December 1, 7:00 PM:  
Downtown Tree Lighting  
Ceremony

December 3: Fort Mill  
Christmas Parade

December 10: FMHM’s  
Tour of Homes



The History Museum chose “Coon” Harris as their character for the scarecrow challenge in October.



## Local Artist Creates The Bandstand in Miniature



Among the Museum's newest acquisitions is this miniature of the town's iconic Bandstand painted by longtime Fort Mill resident Cameron Rogers.

At one time, artist Cameron Rogers's work could be seen on any walk down Main Street. Before the time when vinyl logos were designed by computers and stuck on windows, store names and logos were hand-painted on windows and storefronts.

Chances are, if you looked store windows in Fort Mill

in the 60's, the sign on those windows was designed and painted by Cameron.

Folks around who want a one-of-a-kind sign still call on Rogers to put his special touch on it. He currently has two of his works at the museum.

In the main display room, currently decorated with the theme "*Bobby Socks and Soda Shops*," Cameron's painting of Fort Mill in the '60s can be seen above the soda fountain. The Bandstand model is also in display in the Museum.



## FMHM Membership Challenge

**Museum Members...**the museum is asking each member to recruit two new members between now and January 31<sup>st</sup>. With your help, we can triple our membership and create opportunities for the museum to continue to develop rich and rewarding programs to preserve and share Fort Mill's history.

If your friends join online at the **contributor level**, they will receive a choice of any one of our exclusive Christmas Ornaments (see ornament article in this issue). For those who join at the **conservator level** (\$500) they will receive an ornament AND two tickets to our Historic Homes Tour scheduled for December 10. Remember, membership and donation dollars are tax deductible. Current members will also receive the benefits if they renew at those levels.

Email [info@fmhm.org](mailto:info@fmhm.org) if you have any questions and go to <http://fmhm.org/membership/>

## Use Amazon *Smile* to Benefit the Museum & Its Programs



If you are an **Amazon** shopper, you can support the museum with **Amazon Smile**, which donates a portion of your purchase cost to your selected non-profit or charity.

**So far the program has donated over 32 million dollars to organizations like ours.**

Make sure your **Smile** dollars go to support the mission of the Fort Mill History Museum.

Just go to:

[www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)

Type "**Fort Mill History Museum**" when prompted and that's all there is to it. Now, when you make a purchase through Amazon, remember to start the order at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and these contributions will be automatic.

Please pass the word to your friends and neighbors and help support the preservation of Fort Mill history for future generations.

## Support Our Non-Profit Historical Preservation and Outreach

Please remember the Fort Mill History Museum as you consider your end of the year charitable contributions.

There is still time in 2016 to join the museum or make a contribution. Your financial help can further our efforts to preserve local history and reach out to our schools and community.

The History Museum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions, membership dues and sponsorships are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.



## Do You Know?

The 1954 Christmas Parade in Fort Mill looked a little different from the ones we see these days. Can you get your bearings and name this spot along the parade route?

### October's "Do You Know?"



The Griffin brothers (pictured above) proudly served the U.S. during WWII; in this photo they represent the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Email Mike Hill at [michaelcasehill@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelcasehill@yahoo.com) if you remember this particular parade route. Extra points if you were IN this parade and have any other photos taken at the parade that day. (There are several landmarks and businesses here that disappeared long ago.)

### *The J. B. Mills Gift Shop*

is a wonderful place to buy holiday gifts reflecting Fort Mill's history.



*See page three for great gift ideas this holiday season!*

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

### Join us at the Museum!



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

Contact us for membership information:

Phone: (803) 802-3646  
Email: [Info@FMHM.org](mailto:Info@FMHM.org)  
[www.fmhm.org](http://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.*

### Admission Rates at The Fort Mill History Museum

#### ADULTS

WALK- IN GROUPS OF  
THREE OR MORE,  
\$3.00 EACH;  
\$7.00 MAXIMUM

SCHOOL CHILDREN  
K-12: \$1.00

COLLEGE STUDENTS &  
MILITARY PERSONNEL  
WITH ID: \$1.00

CHILDREN UNDER 5:  
FREE!

Museum Members Free!

