



Fort Mill History Museum NEWS

Volume 2, Issue 4
March 2016

www.fmhm.org

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Women Go To War World War II

Many women today serve bravely in the US Military, but during World War II, women were not expected to serve on active duty. Many did serve, however, in a variety of roles, from nurses who were stationed in Europe near enemy lines to female pilots who flew in the newly created **Women Airforce Service Pilots**, nicknamed **WASP**.

While WASP flyers were not allowed to fly combat missions, they shuttled planes all over the US to wherever they were needed.

Nurses were in critical demand overseas because of the extensive injuries suffered by soldiers in battle. Many brave women served in areas near the front lines to assist in keeping wounded soldiers alive.

Women also volunteered to fill in the gaps in the US created when men became soldiers and were sent overseas.

Other women took on more traditional men's roles with the military.

(continued on page 2)



FORT MILL WOMEN IN THE MILLS

Women made up a significant portion of the workforce in the Fort Mill Manufacturing Company from the beginning of its operation in the late 1880's. Later the FM Manufacturing Plant consolidated with mills in Lancaster and Chester under the "Springs Mills" organization. This photo, from 1919, was taken during the same time that Congress was wrestling with the controversy over women's suffrage. *(Photo taken from **The Springs Story: Our First 100 Years** by Louise Pettus; originally contributed by Mr. Tom Bass.)*

August 18, 1920:

The 19th Amendment Is Ratified.

The Women of the United States Are Granted
The Right to Vote.

The Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, ratified on August 18, 1920, by the necessary number of states, prohibits any United States citizen from being denied the right to vote on the basis of sex. The amendment was the ultimate goal of the women's suffrage movement in the United States, which fought at both state and national levels to achieve the vote.



Author Aron Seaborn Speaks at Museum

"My Father's firm hand made me the man I am. I can't say whether he was right or wrong for doing what he done. I believe he done the best he know how to do.

To this day I don't hold nothing against my Daddy for doing that. I really do thank him."

Aron "Paul" Seaborn

On Thursday, February 25, Mr. Aron Seaborn spoke to a group at the Fort Mill History Museum about his incredible life. He also introduced his first book, ***The Mourner's Bench***, which tells of the difficulties and joys of growing up black in America.

When Aron "Paul" Seaborn was six, his father lost his job in Norfolk Va. the family moved to Enfield, NC and began the laborious life of sharecropping. Paul planned to start Elementary School but sharecropping includes lots of heavy labor and, for the boys in the family, work came before school.

At six years of age, Paul did a man's job of plowing with a mule, cropping tobacco and picking cotton. He could only go to school when there was no farm work to do. As a result, he fell so far behind that he did not learn to read or write.

While life was hard, Mr. Seaborn worked his way through drugs and the difficulty of finding work as an uneducated black man. Guided by his father's ethic of hard work, he worked his way into eventually owning his business.

At sixty-eight years of age, in a Sunday School class, Mr. Seaborn

WOMEN GO TO WAR: WW II

(continued from page 2)

Lillian Case, who grew up in Fort Mill, was one such woman. Lillian volunteered with the U.S. Marine Corps and was trained as a mechanic. She was part of a motor pool group that kept the vehicles working at Camp Lejuene in North Carolina.



Corporal Lillian Case

After the war, Ms. Case worked at Hinson Motor Company in

Fort Mill before getting her degree in nursing. She continued her career in nursing for the rest of her life.

Along with military volunteers, thousands of women worked in jobs in support of the war. They helped to build the planes, ships and tanks that were sent overseas and into battle.

In the Fort Mill area, many women went to work in the munitions factory in Charlotte, manufacturing rounds for artillery, tanks, and machine guns.

Many "Rosie the Riveter" jobs disappeared as men came home from the war and resumed their roles in mills and factories.

However, during this era, women appeared to gain a permanent foothold in what had so recently been a "man's world."

was asked to read aloud and his secret came out. Sister Wilson, his Sunday School teacher, dedicated herself to teaching Mr. Seaborn how to read.

Today, while he has retired from business, Mr. Seaborn continues to take classes at Adult Education and plans to do so until "God takes my last breath".



Writer Aron Seaborn (seated center) shares his experiences with members of the FMHM.

Mrs. J. R. Hope Writes Poem, Story About Town's Early Days

An interesting glimpse of Fort Mill's past comes in the form of a letter to the Fort Mill Times in the mid 1930's from Mrs. J. R. Hope. Mrs. Hope was 76 years old when she wrote this recollection of early Fort Mill.

My Old Home Town 58 Years Ago

"My mother moved here in 1888. The machinery (at the mill) hadn't started up. I helped start up some of the spinning frames. My oldest brother Luther Ritch, (now deceased), started up the third set of looms. I was 15 years old and Henry Ritch, my brother, was wearing dresses when we moved here.*

The mill was run with cord wood and we had waterboys that carried us water from wells in the village.

I spun and ran eight to ten sides. I spooled and reeled and ran speeders and worked in the cloth room. I did most everything but weave. I never did want to weave and I haven't forgot. I believe I can go back and do the same thing.

Fort Mill was a small town when I came here. There wasn't many dwelling houses. The Mills were in the name of Capt. Sam White. He sure was good to his employees. I knew his daughter, Miss Grace White, when she was just a young girl.** I don't know of any of the old families that



were here when we moved here. I am 76 years old and have been here 58 years."

Mrs. Hope also wrote a poem about living in Fort Mill. Due to space, we only include the last verse.

*"And when at last my time shall come,
and I am called to go,
My eyes are dim, my work is done
The light is burning low
And as I go to a higher place
I'll lay my burdens down
God bless the folks I leave behind
And save my dear old home town."*

Notes:

*In the 1800's, children of both sexes often wore long gown-like dresses until they were 5 or 6 years-old.

**Miss Grace White married Leroy Springs who later incorporated Springs Mills.

Ed. Note: Syntax and grammar were kept true to the original article in the Fort Mill Times

OUR THANKS TO JULIE ATKINS
BLAYLOCK FOR HER HELP WITH THIS
ARTICLE.

YCGHS MEETING

3:00 PM Sunday
March 20

Unity Presbyterian Church
303 Tom Hall Street
Fort Mill, SC 29715

AUTHOR
SCOTT SYFERT

The York County Genealogical & Historical Society has asked **Scott Syfert** of Charlotte to present an overview of events in our area that lead to the American Revolution.

Mr. Syfert is the author of "*The First American Declaration of Independence?*" which discusses the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence [May 20, 1775].

The society will meet in Unity's historic sanctuary, on the left of the church complex, to hear Mr. Syfert.

The meeting is free and open to the public.

Come and bring your friends.



Unity Presbyterian Church, Fort Mill:
Historic Sanctuary

Recognize The Special Women in Our History

The Fort Mill History Museum is paying tribute to all Fort Mill women whose commitment to community have proved invaluable to society.

If you know a special woman who has made an impact on your life or that of the Fort Mill community, please recognize her by completing the form below and returning it, along with **one photo**, to the Fort Mill History Museum, 107 Clebourne Street, Fort Mill, SC 29715 **by March 15, 2016**. You may also email it to Info@fmhm.org.

Please read the form carefully and provide all information required, including your signature. By signing the form, you give the museum permission to include your special woman in the second edition of our Women in History book.



Fort Mill Women in History

Information Requirements

Submission Due to the museum by **March 15, 2016**

Fort Mill History Museum
107 Clebourne Street
Fort Mill, SC 29715
803-802-3646
www.fmhm.org
Info@fmhm.org

Name of Woman: _____

Date of Birth: _____ If Deceased (DOD) _____

Years Fort Mill Resident: _____ *Include one photo with your submission.*

What impact did this woman have on your life or on that of the community?
(please use an additional page if necessary)

By signing below, I give the Fort Mill History Museum permission to publish the information herein and include in the next issue of the Fort Mill Women in History book. I expect no royalties from the sale of the book. All items become the property of the museum to be used by the museum (originals will be returned upon request).

Submitted by: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email: _____ Tel: _____

Join the Fort Mill History Museum!



Please print and complete this page.

Annual Membership with payment due each year.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Choose Level:	For:
Patron	35.00 <input type="radio"/>
Out of Towner	50.00 <input type="radio"/>
Contributor	100.00 <input type="radio"/>
Sustainer	250.00 <input type="radio"/>
Conservator	500.00 <input type="radio"/>
Benefactor	1000.00 <input type="radio"/>

Name (s) _____
Address _____
City _____
State: _____ Zip Code _____
Telephone _____
Email _____

AMOUNT PAID _____

Date Paid _____

Please send your check with this completed membership form to:

FORT MILL HISTORY MUSEUM
107 Clebourne Street
Fort Mill, SC 29715

Telephone: 803-802-3646
Email: Info@fmhm.org
www.fmhm.org

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

Please print member name (s) allowed in your selected category as listed below.

Choose Level:	For:
Leader	300.00 <input type="radio"/>
Partner	1000.00 <input type="radio"/>
Sponsor	3000.00 <input type="radio"/>

Name (s) for membership cards:

Business Name _____
Telephone _____
Fax _____
Email _____
Website _____

Note: Partner and Sponsor levels, please email logo artwork in EPS or Hi-Res JPEG format to Info@fmhm.org.

For complete information on the benefits of various levels of membership, please check our website.

Henry F. White was born in July 1845. He is one of the 10 men listed on the monument to the Faithful Slaves in Confederate Park. The monument inscription reads:

“Dedicated to the faithful slaves who, loyal to a sacred trust, toiled for the support of the army with matchless devotion and sterling fidelity guarded our defenseless homes, women and children during the struggle for the principles of our Confederate States of America”.

Henry accompanied William Elliott White’s son, Captain James Wilson White, into battle when Captain White served in the Confederate States Army during the Civil War. Captain White enlisted in the 1st South Carolina Calvary Regiment, Company H, York District as a 2nd Lieutenant. Henry served as his cook and personal servant for the duration of the War.

In her self-published book, *The Five White Brothers in the Confederate Army*, Cordelia White Phifer wrote:

His old slave and body servant, Henry White said, “Mars Jimmie and me went to the army the second year of the war.”

John Hope Franklin explained in his book *From Slavery to Freedom* that these [black] workers kept the quarters clean, washed clothes, groomed uniforms, polished swords...Some even took part in the fighting.

Henry served in the Army from February 1862 to April 13, 1865. He is one of 30 African-Americans from York County who applied for the Confederate old age pension. J. Sauney (J.S.) Kimbrell and Andrew (A.H.) Merritt served as witnesses to his application. It was approved in April 1923, but Henry died before he received the \$25 annual payment.

Henry also volunteered for the Fort Mill township militia in 1869. He married Minerva McKee White and is enumerated in the 1900 census with Patience McKee, his mother-in-law, George W. A. M. White, his nephew and Mary M. E. Patton, his granddaughter.

Henry F. White didn’t receive his pension, but the monument to Faithful Slaves stands as a testament to his loyalty to Captain James Wilson White, his service to the Confederate States Army and his commitment to the defense of the township of Fort Mill.

References:

Franklin, John Hope. (2009). *From Slavery to Freedom*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Phifer, Cordelia White. *They Say: The Five White Brothers in the Confederate Army*. *The Chester News*, February 23, 1950. York County Library Digital Collections. <https://dspace.ychistory.org/handle/11030/72698>

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

National Archives Federal Census Records



Monument to the Faithful Slaves, Confederate Park

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.

A Camera With History . . . By Mike Hill

Combat photographer Robert F. Nichols, a native of Fort Mill, served with the 509th Composite Group (part of the Air Corps) during World War II. On his assignments, he used the same Graflex *Speed Graphic* camera shown here.

The 509th Composite Group was created to develop the plans, pilots, planes and techniques for the ultimate weapon of World War II. This new group had one mission: to deliver the atomic bomb to targets at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Following the war, Master Sergeant Nichols, also called Pete, was stationed at Roswell, New Mexico in 1947 when the infamous “Roswell Incident” was reported. The incident, which kicked off the “Flying



Robert F. Nichols

Saucer” craze, was the alleged crash of an alien spacecraft near the base.

Since Mr. Nichols was a photographer assigned to the base, I would like to think that he may have used this camera to photograph whatever phenomena occurred near the base.

Nichols later served at SAC bases in Iceland and New Hampshire before retiring. He and his wife Trixie Doster Nichols traveled all over the world but always said there was no place like Fort Mill.

They returned home late in life and are buried in Unity Cemetery. The camera passed on to Trixie’s brother, Harry Doster.

As a collector of cameras, I was able to obtain this one from its owner several

years ago. It is one of the prizes of my collection on its own but the possibility that it was once used to photograph critical events which led to the atomic age or even the “Roswell Event” makes it even more interesting.

— Mike Hill

(Our thanks to Charlotte Doster Adkins for her help with this article.)



The Graflex *Speed Graphic* Camera was the dominant portable professional camera from the 1930’s through the end of the 1950’s and was widely used during WWII. This model, made from 1940 through 1946, used 3 1/4” x 4 1/4” plate film.



This statue, located across from Walter Elisha Park, depicts a young woman inspecting cloth. The sculptor, Bruno Lucchesi, created a total of seven statues for Springs. Each represents one of the tenets that made up the company’s “Springs of Achievement.” This statue represents Quality; it was dedicated in 1992.



Do You Know?

This photo of the **Fort Mill Women's Club** officers in 1951 should be recognizable to many long term residents. The photo was taken at the old Fort Mill Clubhouse.

If you can identify them (and you are the first to email me) you will receive a metal Fort Mill Christmas ornament from the museum gift shop.

(Hint: Two of these ladies may have taught you.)

Send your answers to:

Mike Hill, Editor
michaelcashill@yahoo.com

Visit the *J. B. Mills Gift Shop*

Be sure to visit our 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 of many kinds.



We have great gift ideas!
 Fort Mill History Museum

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

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

Admission Rates

Adult 19 and up - \$5.00
 Children 7 to 18 - \$2.00
 Children under 6 - Free
 Museum Members - Free

*FMHM is an NARM Participant.

Do You Have FEEDBACK?

Do you save comments, suggestions or corrections for the newsletter?

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

Newsletter Editors:
 Mike and Cheryl Hill