



# Fort Mill History Museum

## NEWS

Volume 2, Issue 2  
January 2016

[www.fmhm.org](http://www.fmhm.org)

## Annual Membership Meeting Set for January 28



All members of the Fort Mill History Museum are invited to attend the annual membership meeting on January 28 from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. The meeting will be held at the Spratt Building located at 215 Main Street. The meeting agenda will include reports on the events of the past year, upcoming events, and the balance sheet/budget report.

The Spratt Building, where the meeting will be held, was constructed around 1911 and is a part of the group of buildings that make up the Fort Mill Downtown Historic District. The Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1992. The Spratt Building is the previous site of the Bank of Fort Mill.

As the museum enters the new year at its new home, the membership event is a great chance to meet the board members, both veterans and newcomers, to make suggestions regarding upcoming events and to mingle with other people who also value the history of Fort Mill and seek to preserve it.

Coffee and light refreshments will be served at the meeting.

## Collections: The Red Shirts by Heather Otis

The FMHM object of the month takes us back to 1876. South Carolina was still recovering from the effects of the Civil War, and many white Southerners were openly opposing rule by a Republican Reconstruction government made up of African Americans, Northerners, and natives that cooperated with the federal troops occupying the state.

When a group of York County citizens suggested that former Confederate general Wade Hampton III run for governor, Democrats rapidly began to organize. Military clubs immediately offered their support to Hampton and adopted red shirts as a symbol of resistance to Republican rule. Thus South Carolina's Red Shirts were born.

Red Shirt companies showed support through means like parades, newspaper ads, and rallies. However, most also employed intimidation tactics, ballot stuffing, and even violence to ensure that citizens voted for the Democrats

or not at all, resulting in the most fraudulent election in South Carolina history.

For young men like 20 year-old David A. Lee from Fort Mill, donning a red shirt was a way to compensate for being unable to support the Southern cause in the Civil War.

He kept the red shirt until his death in the 1930s, willing it to his favorite granddaughter, Mildred Adair.

Given the age and sensitive nature of the original 1876 Red Shirt uniform, it is rare for one to wind up in a museum, and we are lucky to house such a historically significant object in our collection.





The White Homestead

## First FMHM Home Tour a Great Success

On December 4, the Fort Mill History Museum sponsored a **Christmas Home Tour** featuring several notable Fort Mill houses and landmarks. The event exceeded expectations as all tickets were sold and over 230 participants took part.

The event, which was a fundraiser for the museum, included a tour of the White Homestead led by Anne Springs Close. Mrs. Close told several stories about growing up in the home and about her father, Colonel Elliott White Springs. Colonel Springs was a noted author, WW1 flying Ace and industrialist.

Visitors also toured the Elizabeth Mills Mack train car led by the owner Bayles Mack; the Mack-Belk House, led by Libby Justice; and the Wilson House, now the home of the Fort Mill History Museum.

Two tours, led by David Ward, also visited the Executive Office of Col. Springs in the Pilot Plant building.

After such a resounding success, the museum hopes to make the tour an annual event and to add more Fort Mill points of interest.



The Wilson House on Clebourne Street, new home to the Fort Mill History Museum.

## GENEALOGY NOTES

by Cheryl Hill

cherylehill@hotmail.com

When researching family trees, you may find that subscription websites specifically designed to gather and organize your histories and family data are the best way to keep your focus and your objectives clear. In the last twenty or so years, most genealogists have put aside their piles of notebooks and index cards and gone online to record their findings and expand their research. The largest and most popular genealogy site is probably *Ancestry.com*.

An additional feature of online genealogy is the opportunity to preserve images of photos, personal and official documents, maps and old letters, all of which are inclined to be lost or destroyed. These can easily be scanned to websites like *Ancestry.com* and organized for safekeeping.

However, sites like *Ancestry.com* can attract criticism because, since users can add facts and general information from their own research to the collections, errors and inconsistencies are found in abundance. Other people's hard work, online or not, can be brilliant, partially correct or dead wrong, though individual contributions to these sites are generally clearly marked accordingly.

So we still must investigate sources, weigh evidence, compare notes, question family lore, and make educated guesses. Fortunately, sites like *Ancestry.com* include message boards that can connect you with other researchers; fact vs fiction can make for lively discussion among distant cousins and may lead to eventual resolution.

It is vital to be wary of assuming the validity of family trees and member records found anywhere online unless primary sources are clearly indicated and accessible.

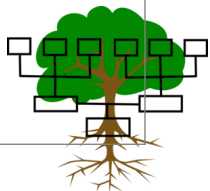
The truth is out there, but even in this technological age, human error is, too.

If sites like *Ancestry.com* seem overwhelming or expensive, particularly in the beginning of your project, take a look at links like these, which provide fascinating facts and stories without the commitment:

<http://www.ychistory.org/>

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~scyork/>

<http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/york/nryork.htm>



In the center of this photo, C. M. Reynolds presents awards to several Fort Mill football players.

Pete, as he was called by adults (and never to his face, by students), coached football for Fort Mill in the 50's and 60's until he was appointed Principal of Central School, Fort Mill's original middle school. It was located on Tom Hall Street where the post office currently stands.

Reynolds was literally an old school educator who was both loved and feared by his students. (Students who got into fights could choose either to continue the fight with boxing gloves or take a paddling from Mr. Reynolds.)

Can anyone tell us the names of the students and the year the photo was taken?

Let us know by emailing [michaelcasehill@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelcasehill@yahoo.com).

## BECOME A VOLUNTEER

The Fort Mill History Museum is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and sharing of Fort Mill's history. The interest and abilities of Fort Mill citizens are required daily to achieve our mission and goals.

Volunteers have been an integral part of getting the museum open and we continue to need volunteers to help in the following areas.

- Office
- Artifact collections
- Research
- Exhibits
- Special events
- Docents/tour guides both within museum and at historic sites in Fort Mill area (training provided)



Photo by Pete Armstrong

## Prominent Citizens of Fort Mill:

### *Cleveland A. (Cleve) Lytle*

Gary Sterne's book, *The Cover-up at Omaha Beach: D-Day, the US Rangers and the Untold Story of Maisy Battery*, published in 2014, includes an important episode involving Major **Cleve Lytle**, who was a Fort Mill native.

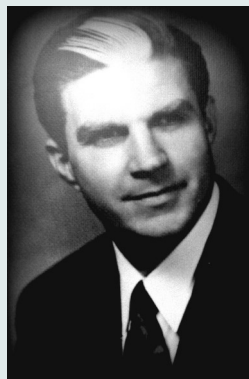
Major Lytle was chosen to lead three companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion on D Day in the assault on a large gun placement on Pointe Du Hoc (between Utah and Omaha Beach).

However, the Free French Forces reported that the battery had been removed.

Lytle adamantly argued that the assault was

unnecessary and, as a consequence, was relieved of his command by his superior, Commander Rudder.

As it turned out, according to author Gary Sterne, Lytle's information was correct and there was serious loss of American lives in an effort to capture a site with no gun emplacements.



Cleve Lytle as Mayor

Lytle transferred to the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division where he earned the Distinguished Service Cross for rescuing two soldiers under extreme machine gun and mortar fire.

Returning to Fort Mill, Lytle became a prominent attorney and served as Mayor in 1966-67.

# Let it Snow

With the sunny December and downright short-sleeve Christmas this year, it is hard to imagine that Fort Mill ever has the winter wonderland of song and story.

Not so! From time to time the weather gets cold and a rogue weather system turns the usually sunny South into a heaven for children and a nightmare for drivers.

The photo at right is one such time in the mid seventies. After several days of snow and freezing weather, streets in the Whiteville Park section became layered with ice and snow and every child of every age dug the rusty sled out of storage and converged on the perfect sledding hill of Lockman Street.

At the top of the hill are the parents, drinking coffee and hot cocoa and pushing sleds. Sledders on the left and right are struggling up the icy slope and in the center, brave kids stacked up to four deep, have the run of their lives.

While there were houses on the left and right of Lockman Street, they cannot be seen in this photo.



Photo: Mike Hill



Join us at the  
Fort Mill History Museum!

107 Clebourne Street  
P. O. Box 1047  
Fort Mill, SC 29716-1047

Phone: (803) 802-3646  
[Info@FMHM.org](mailto:Info@FMHM.org)

Hours:  
10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
Wed through Sat

## Admission Rates

Adults 19 and up \$5.00  
Children 7 to 18 \$2.00  
Children under 6 Free  
Museum Members Free  
NARM Participant

## J. B. Mills Gift Shop

Be sure to come by our gift shop for items related to Fort Mill.

There are several copies of *Warbirds, The Diary of an American Airman*, by Colonel Elliott White Springs.

The book about WWI pilots in France was published to rave reviews when it appeared in 1927.

The early silent movie *Wings* was loosely based on this book.

The gift shop also has other books by local authors as well as Fort Mill mementos of many kinds.

## Museum Membership

New membership opportunities for yearly membership are as follows:

<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$35.00</b>
<b>Out of Towner</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Contributor</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Sustainer</b>	<b>\$250.00</b>
<b>Conservator</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>Benefactor</b>	<b>\$1000.00</b>

Take part in the activities of Fort Mill's history museum. Join, volunteer, and visit!

If you have any comments, suggestions or corrections regarding this newsletter,

address them to :

[michaelcasehill@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelcasehill@yahoo.com)

Editors

Michael and Cheryl Hill