



Fort Mill History Museum

NEWS

Volume 2, Issue 7

June 2016

www.fmhm.org

Memorial Day Remembrance Held At Veterans Park

Fort Mill's fallen military were remembered on May 30th at Veterans Park as the town held its annual Memorial Day ceremony.

Mayor Guynn Savage presided over the program that honored brave Americans who lost their lives in service to their country. Their families were also remembered for their sacrifices.

Members of American Legion Post 43 posted the colors and Dale Moses of VFW Post 9138 led the Pledge of Allegiance. The National Anthem was sung by Jill Fuller, Music Director at Sugar Creek Elementary School.

The keynote speaker was John Pruitt, Director of the Fort Mill High School Band.

(next column)

Museum Fundraiser June 25 A Garden Party at the Historic White Homestead

Join the Fort Mill History Museum for an enjoyable fundraiser at the White Homestead on June 25, from 11:00 am until 1:00 PM.

Lunch will be served and featured guest speaker will be Peter Bonner, an American storyteller, actor, writer and historian who is best known for his creation of the "**Gone with the Wind**" Tour in Jonesboro, Georgia.

Mr. Bonner is also the founder of the **Saving Tara Project**, committed to restoring the façade of Tara used in the film production of **Gone with the Wind**.

Mr. Bonner will discuss the **Saving Tara Project** and the background and history of the classic book and film.

There will be pieces of the *Tara* façade on display and copies of Mr. Bonner's books will be available for purchase.

Tickets are \$45.00 each and must be purchased in advance at our website, www.fmhm.org.



Peter Bonner, featured speaker



Mr. Pruitt recounted the band's recent trip to the beaches of Normandy to honor the American soldiers who lost their lives there in World War II.

The D-Day invasion and resulting battles cost the lives of 29,000 Americans but the campaign helped turn the

tide of the war in Europe to the Allies' advantage.

The students walked the beaches and the American cemeteries where so many lives were lost. They were awed by the thousands of crosses and Stars of David stretching endlessly over the historic battlefields of France.

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On Memorial Day, FMHS Band Director John Pruitt speaks about the band's recent trip to Normandy.

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The experience brought home to these students the true cost of freedom paid by so many families in America.

After Mr. Pruitt concluded his speech, three “Gold Star” mothers were honored for the sacrifice of their sons during war.

The Ladies Auxiliary of American Legion Post 43 laid a red, white and blue wreath to bring the ceremony to a close.



The man waving in this photo is Paul Luckadoo. Mr. Luckadoo is the oldest member of Fort Mill's American Legion post. He was taken as a prisoner of war at Normandy.



Memorial Day is traditionally set aside for honoring and remembering the soldiers who died while serving in our country's armed forces. It is observed on the last Monday of May each year.

Veterans Day, celebrated annually on November 11th, *honors everyone who has served in the United States Armed Forces*, regardless of whether they perished in war or returned home.

Armed Forces Day is celebrated annually on the third Saturday of May. Armed Forces Week begins on the second Saturday of May and ends on the third Sunday of May, the day after Armed Forces Day.

Because of their unique training schedules, National Guard and Reserve units may celebrate Armed Forces Day/Week at any time in May.

Upcoming . . . At the Museum

Garden Party Fundraiser

June 25, 2016 @ 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Historic White Homestead

Fort Mill, SC 29715

Fort Mill History Days

September 23, 2016 – September 25, 2016

Walter Elisha Park

Fort Mill, SC 29715

Historic Homes Tour

December 10, 2016

Sites to be announced

People of Paradise: Lena Sherman Crockett

By Cora Dunlap Lyles

Lena Sherman Crockett was born around 1921 to George Ciaffa Sherman and Margaret Steele Sherman. Lena's father, George, was an African who immigrated to the United States from Liberia. He enlisted in the Army and served as a Private 1st Class in the 806th Company Transportation Corps during World War I. Lena married Pernell Crockett Sr. They lived on Doby Bridge Road.

Lena is fondly remembered for operating and maintaining the "colored" swimming pool in Paradise. The main entrance was on Joe Louis Street and was accessible from McGee Street, which was once a dirt road. The Greater Bethlehem Baptist Church now occupies the land. The pool was operated by Lena and her children Julia Ann "Judy" and Eric. The cost of admission was 15 cents. It served the Pine Ridge and Paradise communities.

Lena's son, Pernell "Buddy" Crockett Jr., was one of the first certified African-American lifeguards in Fort Mill. He and John L. Sanders III served as the first swimming pool lifeguards from the Paradise community. They both received lifeguard training and CPR certification from the Carroll Park swimming pool in Rock Hill. Buddy received additional training through the Red Cross.

As a result of their efforts, other young men and women from the Paradise and Ridge communities subsequently were able to train to become lifeguards.

The swimming pool became a safe place where African-American children would gather during the school summer break. It was a place to enjoy fellowship and have fun. It was also a place to learn a lifesaving skill – swimming.

Members of the Paradise and Pine Ridge communities swam in Avery Lake and Steele Creek prior to the construction of the pool. The swimming pool closed around 1975. The Leroy Springs Recreation Complex was built in the 1976 and became the place where all Fort Mill residents could go to swim.

Lena Sherman Crockett and her family will always be remembered for their community service and commitment to opening and maintaining the swimming pool. The pool will be remembered as a place that provided respite from the heat on sweltering hot summer days. It was an oasis and a safe haven where children could have fun with friends and create childhood memories that will never be forgotten.

About 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.



Lena Sherman Crockett

(Photo courtesy of Ashley Robb Crockett)

FEEDBACK?

Do you have stories, photos, comments, suggestions or corrections for the newsletter?

Share them with us!

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

Newsletter Editors:
Mike and Cheryl Hill

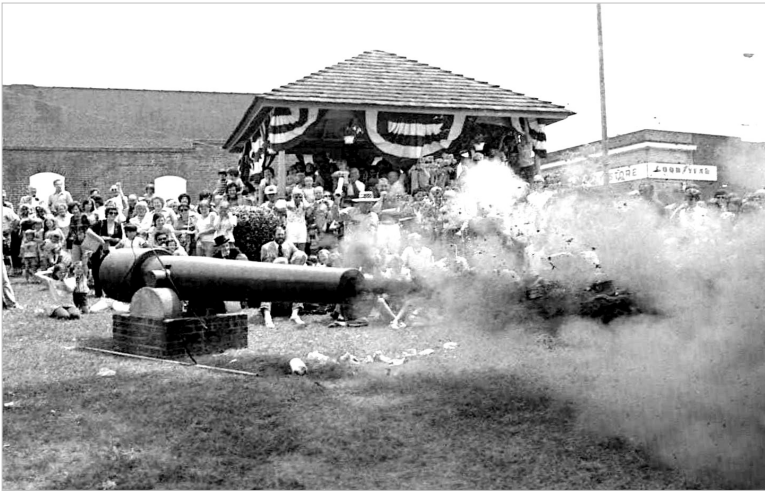
Summer Time ... Summer Scenes ... Summers Past ...



Springmaid Pier



Fort Mill Recreation Dept. Swimming Pool



Cannon fire on the 4th of July



Springmaid Beach



Fort Roc Drive In



The Original Peach stand

Springs of Achievement: Planning for the Future

Walter Elisha Park, North White Street, Fort Mill



The “Surveyor” statues, dedicated in 1996, are two more artistic illustrations of the core values which are central to Springs Industries and to any company, town or nation.

These statues depict a team of surveyors placed opposite each other in our Walter Elisha Park. Created by Italian sculptor Bruno Lucchesi, they reflect the vision to prepare for the future, a particularly relevant symbol of Fort Mill’s rapid growth.

WELLS FARGO GRANT FOR EDUCATION



Thanks very much to Wells Fargo Bank for their generous grant to the Fort Mill History Museum’s educational programs.

The museum sponsors such programs as “History Days”

and the “History Trunk” program to complement the curriculum of our local schools.



Enterprise IT Solutions

The Fort Mill History Museum would like to extend our gratitude to Enterprise IT Solutions for their tremendous work on our behalf at this year’s Strawberry Festival.

Support from sponsoring companies like Enterprise IT Solutions make the work of the Museum possible.

The Day “The Mick” Came to Town . . .

Memories of Mickey Mantle



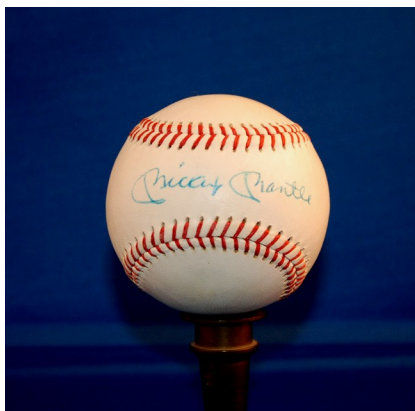
In the summer of 1972, Mickey Mantle was brought to Fort Mill by the Springs Recreation Department to present awards to the Springs League softball and baseball championship teams.

Mantle started the day with a tour through the Springs Executive

Building meeting employees and leaving them with mixed feelings. While some were awed just by his presence, others felt that Mantle was not crazy about being here.

After his tour, Mickey seems to have become more comfortable. He took on all comers in a “Long Drive Competition” at the golf course and there were only a few who could hit a longer drive. Later in the day, Mantle presented awards to the championship teams and the outstanding individual players. He signed baseballs and autographs throughout the day.

The Fort Mill Times published a photo of Mickey signing a ball for Hiram Shannon, son of Jim and Lee Shannon of Fort Mill. Linda Hallman Wooley and her brother Dennis remember that their father, Mayor Harry Hallman, ran back to his car to retrieve a softball and baseball for Mickey to sign for them. Many young people (young at the time) have cherished a Mickey Mantle signed baseball over the years.



Mike Hill's autographed baseball, courtesy of Mickey Mantle and enthusiastic parent Bob Hill.

Springs Mills, like other Southern Textile Manufacturers, sponsored baseball and softball teams. Individual plants would compete against each other and against teams from other towns. Textile leagues were popular throughout the South and produced many minor and major league players including the legendary “Shoeless Joe” Jackson.

Springs also brought other famous athletes to Fort Mill, including New York Giants star Willie Mays and Minnesota Vikings quarterback Fran Tarkenton. We would welcome any memories of these and other celebrity visits if readers would like to share them with the FMHM newsletter.

ANOTHER BIT OF HISTORY ON: The Names & Places of Things...

Fort Mill's **Nauvasse Trail** is a contemporary residential area filled with lovely homes and families.

But long before the first house appeared in this neighborhood, *Nauvassee* was the ancient name of the main village of the Catawba Indians. The village was located just south of Fort Mill on the Catawba trading path, an important inland route travelled by many Native American tribes, early European explorers, traders and settlers.

This well established road to the southern region of what would become the United States contributed greatly to the history and growth of this part of the country.

From:

Historic Sites Survey: York County
Catawba Regional Planning Council
Revised Printing June 1977

Brigadier General John Augustus DesPortes:

Fort Mill's Link to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the U-2 Incident and the SR-71 Blackbird

When President John Kennedy accused the Soviet Union of establishing a missile base in Cuba in 1962, he knew what he was talking about. The 4080th Recon wing of the Strategic Air Command, under the leadership of Brigadier General John (Jack) DesPortes, had proof.



The SR-71 Blackbird

President Kennedy later awarded the 4080th Recon Wing the first Oak Leaf to the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award saying that the 4080th

“contributed as much to the security of the United States as any unit in our history and any group of men in our history.”

ABC television produced a series named *Call to Glory* in 1984 that was based on General DesPortes and his command of the U-2 Wing during the Missile crisis.

General DesPortes oversaw the reconnaissance missions of the U-2 “spy” plane and later was commander of the 4200th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. This group was the only one in the air force to fly the SR-71 *Blackbird*, which is still the world’s record holder as the fastest and highest flying airplane.

John Augustus DesPortes was born in Fairfield County, SC, and he flew B-24’s during World War II. He was orphaned as a child and when he retired from the Air Force in 1972, he moved to Fort Mill to live with his aunt Lila DesPortes.

He lived in Fort Mill for the rest of his life and was often the guest speaker for clubs and organizations in the area. The DesPortes House, traditionally one of Fort Mill’s most beautiful homes, is located on Tom Hall Street behind Kimbrell’s Furniture and has been renovated in recent years.

General DesPortes passed away in January 2001. He is buried in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.



U-2 Spy Plane



Jack Desportes

Johnson telling him, in Johnson’s colorful vocabulary, *not to ever set foot in that plane again.*

— Mike Hill

According to General DesPortes, he once used his influence to gain access to the Blackbird and fly it, although it was against top secret regulations.

He was barely back on the ground when he received a call from President Lyndon

WWI Pilot Elliott White Springs Celebrated in Pop Culture

Fort Mill’s own warbird, Elliott White Springs, was among the pilots featured on a set of 144 “Sky Birds” chewing gum cards in the 1930’s.

Springs’ image was card #75; they were included in packages of the National Chicle Company’s “quality chewing gum.”

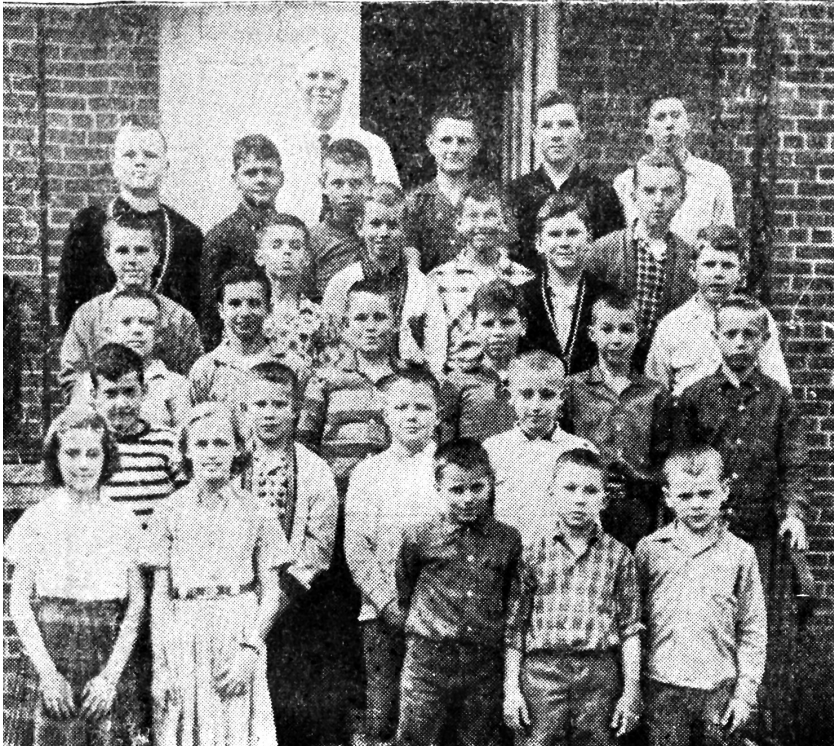
The reverse of the card reads as follows:

“Capt. Springs had 12 victories, came from South Carolina, a daring flier, well-known for being a good fellow. Col. Bishop taught him air fighting in England. In one day he shot down three planes; once attacked 5 Fokkers single-handed. Most daring, he earned the British Distinguished Flying Cross and the American Distinguished Service Cross.



National Chicle Company
Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.
Makers of Quality Chewing Gum
Copr.[sic] 1934”

Do You Know?



This Unity Presbyterian Church Youth Group picture was taken around 1961. The door behind them is the door to the old sanctuary and at the top is the Reverend Edward Wayland, who served for many years as minister.

Several of these guys and girls are still around the Fort Mill area. Can you pick them out?

Let us know who YOU know by emailing us at michaelcasehill@yahoo.com

In this FM Centennial photo, (L to R), are Bayles Mack, Cody Smith, and J.B. Mills.



Thank you to Brenda Honeycutt for these id's.

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 gift items.



MEMBERS RECEIVE A
10% DISCOUNT!

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.

To Join the Museum,
just go to our website:

www.FMHM.org

Choose the
Get Involved Tab.

Click on
"Become a Member"

Business and Individual
Memberships available.

If you have questions or
information for the newsletter,
please contact the editors,
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