



Fort Mill History Museum

NEWS

Volume 3, Issue 1
January-February 2017

www.fmhm.org

Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Town of Fort Mill observed its 9th Annual Martin Luther King Holiday Observance on Monday, January 16 at Jerusalem Baptist Church's Life Center.

MLK Committee Chair and History Museum Board Member Rudy Sanders welcomed the crowd and introduced Mayor Guynn Savage, who voiced the support of the town.

The theme of the day was expressed by Willie Ratchford, keynote speaker, who addressed the audience on "*Leadership, The Movement and Service*," based on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement that "*Everybody can be great because everybody can serve.*"

Mr. Ratchford is the Executive Director of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee.

Dr. Ronal King, Associate Pastor of Jerusalem Baptist Church and Feed the Hungry Program also spoke of service with his remarks, "Today is not a day off, it's a day to serve."

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Speaker Willie Ratchford

Reflections of the Old Days at Nims Lake



Its glory days gone, Nims Lake sits placidly, its banks surrounded by encroaching houses. But for a time, just for a time, it was the happening place in Fort Mill.

In the 1920s, brothers Fred and Kenneth Nims dredged out a low area on the Nims farm to build a farm pond. In the early 1940s, one of the Nims family decided to turn the lake area into a place for the public to swim, fish, camp and dance.

He built a bath house, a dance hall, a pier into the lake and several floats, one with a three-story diving tower.

For the little rural town of Fort Mill, it was like Carowinds and the Recreation Complex in one.

People from all over came to camp and locals crowded the lake to swim and fish on hot summer days.

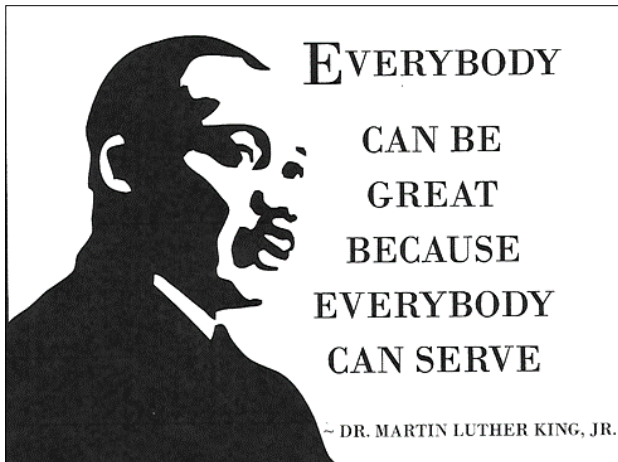
At night, the atmosphere changed as the lights came on in the dance pavilion and the sounds of the big bands drew dancers out on the floor. It was all the fun a person could have for 25 cents admission.

As the late Bob Hill told it, Frank Epps, a local high school boy and star football player, would borrow a mule and wagon from the family farm and fill the wagon with hay. High school boys and girls would climb aboard and the ride to Nims Lake would begin.

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Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Holiday About Service

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The Fort Mill History Museum participated with the readings of student essay winners on the meaning of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday observance.

Underlining the idea of service and leadership, the committee invited the audience to serve their community in a number of areas: the George Fish Memorial Cleanup, Fort Mill Church of God Food Bank, Feed the Hungry, Fort Mill Care Center and the Fort Mill Optimist Club, among others.

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

At Nims Lake

Continued from page one

Cars were scarce for teenagers so Frank Epps’ wagon was sitting room only. Still, boys will be boys and they welcomed a little snuggle time with the young ladies on trips to and from the lake. An afternoon of swimming was followed by a quick change in the bath house and the dancing began.

As so many boys went off to World War II, the complexion of

the lake changed. The swimmers were often women with children and the dances were less crowded due to a shortage of men.

As the soldier boys came home for leave, the lake was the place to take the patient girls who waited for them. Only after the fighting ended overseas did the crowds return to the dance floor.



No cars....Frank Epps and Bob Hill with a favorite mule hitched up in front of what was then Fort Mill High School.



Every returning soldier had to have his very own victory dance.

The 1950s spelled the end for swims in the lake as communities built public swimming pools and dances moved indoors other locations with lodges and clubhouses. The buildings at the lake eventually collapsed on themselves and nature reclaimed the lake edge.

Most of the dancers are no longer with us, but the tales they told resonate through our family stories.

From October 1961

KANAWHA CHAPTER, D. A. R. and YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Present program of dedication for
HISTORIC FORT MILL MARKER
at Spratt Home Site, Nation Ford Road, Fort Mill, S. C., October 29, 1961

Presiding . . Harper S. Gault, chairman
York County Historical Commission.

Invocation . . Rev. J. E. Wayland,
pastor Unity Presbyterian Church of
Fort Mill.

Music . . Fort Mill High School Band,
under direction of Prof. Keebler Mills.

Greetings . . Mrs. Perry Dye,
regent Kanawha Chapter, D. A. R., of
Fort Mill.

Historical Sketch . . Col. F. M. Mack,
vice chairman County Historical
Commission.

Response . . Mr. John M. Spratt,
direct descendant of Kanawha Spratt.

Closing remarks . . by the chairman.

Benediction . . Rev. J. E. Wayland.

Kanawha D. A. R. Chapter Officers:

Mrs. Perry Dye, regent; Mrs. V. J.
Crow, vice regent; Mrs. R. C. Brown,
secretary; Miss Mary Jo Drakeford,
treasurer.

York County Historical
Commission:

Harper S. Gault, Rock Hill,
chairman; Col. F. Murray Mack,
Fort Mill, vice chairman; Mrs. W. L.
Hill, Jr., Sharon, secretary-treasurer;
Mrs. C. Fred Laurence, Mrs. H.
Lorraine Simril, Rock Hill; John G.
Smith, York; W. Jeff Davis, Clover.

Historical Sketch

Thomas Spratt, II, called "Kanawha"
by his Catawba Indian friends, and
the first white settler in the Fort Mill
area, built his home near this spot
just about 200 years ago. His grand-
son, Thomas D. Spratt, in his
"Recollections of the Spratt Family",
states "My grandfather settled here
about the year 1763 as nearly as I can
come to the date."

Here also is the old graveyard where
many of the early Spratts and their
kin lie buried. And here, too, the
Catawba Indian and brave Revolution-
ary soldier, Peter Harris, was buried.
On his death bed, Harris requested
that he be buried near his friend and
benefactor, Kanawha Spratt.

On the knoll above this spot stood
the old Indian fort built by the Coloni-
al government at the request of the
Catawbas to protect their women and
children from the raiding northern
tribes. This fort was begun but not
completed by the governor of North
Carolina in 1757. Later, at the urgent
request of the Catawbas, the South
Carolina governor assumed the
responsibility of completing the fort,
although it is not definitely known
that it was actually completed - hence
the appearance on the marker of the
two dates, 1757-1760.

Near here, in the valley 100 yards
east of this spot, is what has been
referred to oftentimes as the "Spratt

Spring Lot". It was here that Lord
Cornwallis camped for several days
during the first week of October,

1760, on his withdrawal from the
"Hornet's Nest" of Charlotte
Town to the rich and fair village
of Winnsboro.

This road is called Nation Ford Road
and leads southward exactly two and
a half miles to the well known ford
of the same name crossing the
Catawba River. This is one of the
oldest trails in the Southeast, proba-
bly in America. It was variously
termed The Occoneechi Path, The
Virginia Path, Catawba Trading Path,
and Western Trading Path. It was
probably used for centuries by Indian
war parties, then successively by the
Spanish explorers, the English traders,
the pioneers and their ox carts, the
stage coaches, and later the railroads
followed this same trail.

Just a little less than 100 years ago,
Jefferson Davis, president of the
Confederacy, on his flight from
Richmond, traveled this road and
crossed the Catawba River at Nation
Ford April 27, 1865.

*(This Historical Sketch was apparently
composed by Col. Mack. It is a
concise but exceptional overview of the
importance of the Spratt home site.)*

This document was discovered in the
archives of Robert C. Hill, (1923-2016),
longtime Fort Mill businessman, community
leader, and historian.



*Cora Lyles' popular
column on "The
People of Paradise"
will return.*



Third Thursday: January 19th Ed Currie and the PuckerButt Pepper Company

“Smokin’” Ed Currie, owner of PuckerButt Pepper Company, delighted his audience at the Museum on January 19th when he spoke as a part of the **Third Thursday** program.

When PuckerButt Pepper Company opened its doors on Main Street in the summer of 2012, they really brought the heat. Ed Currie was soon to be known worldwide as the developer of the world’s hottest pepper, *Smokin’ Ed’s Carolina Reaper*. And this was no idle claim. *The Reaper* was declared the hottest pepper by no less an authority than *The Guinness Book of World Records*.

At over 2 million Scoville heat units, (the scale that quantifies a pepper’s concentration of capsaicin, the chemical that makes peppers **hot**), *The Reaper* rates *above* pepper spray, which tops out at 1,000,000 units. (The orange Habanero peppers score up to a tepid 200,000.)

The high-powered *Reaper* is not the only hot sauce offered by PuckerButt. Sauce varieties range from the pretty mild “*Peach Habanero*” (with a two-pepper heat rating) to the “*I Dare You, Stupid*” (with a five-pepper heat rating).

PuckerButt grows its peppers in Fort Mill but ships its blistering sauces all over the world.

Fort Mill residents can visit PuckerButt Pepper Company at 235-237 Main Street and support their local “REAPER!” Check out their inventory of official PUCKERPUTT hats and shirts as well.



The “Old” Peach Stand

PuckerButt is one of many Fort Mill businesses carries on the long tradition of growing exceptional produce locally and offering its “homegrown” products to the community. It was Elliot Springs who built the first **peach**

The original (Old) Peach Stand is still open on a seasonal basis across Highway 160 from the original site.

The New Peach Stand was built in the earlier location and is still

Continuing the tradition of buying local...

stand back in the 1930s. By the 1950s, Springs Farms was selling and shipping twenty-five varieties of peaches and nectarines.

LeAnne Burnett Morse Named FMHM’s New Executive Director

Beginning on January 1, 2017, LeAnne Burnett Morse assumed the responsibilities of the Fort Mill History Museum Executive Director from Ann Evans. Ann had previously notified the Board of Directors that it was her desire to leave the director's position at the end of 2016.

The museum is very fortunate to have a person with LeAnne's background, interest, and commitment to Fort Mill's history. An example of this commitment and involvement was on display recently with the dedication and premiere of the *Elizabeth Ford Living History Project*.

The Museum Board of Directors unanimously elected LeAnne to the Executive Director position at their November 22, 2016 meeting.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank Ann Evans for all that she has done for the museum and I am happy to announce that Ann was elected to the board effective January 1, 2017.

Rick Dammann,
Chair

referred to as “New” since it was completed around 1980. The New Peach Stand also sells peaches, nectarines, strawberries, and blackberries along with a wide selection of local produce and locally made products.

The New Peach Stand also offers homemade ice cream, baked goods and gift items from local sources.

The Garrison Webb Grist Mill

Or Why The “Mill” in “Fort Mill” Had Nothing To Do with Cotton.

In the 1760s, a group of settlers formed the Little York community around Steele Creek creating a need for the services any community requires. Most of the settlers were farmers who grew the corn and wheat that provided food for their families, feed for their livestock and possibly a little corn whisky.

According to Bill Steele, Natural Resources and Facilities Manager for the Anne Springs Close Greenway, one of the first needs for the area was a grist mill to grind the corn and wheat into meal and flour to make the bread, biscuits, cakes and cornbread that were so much a part of everyday life.

The first grist mill was built by Theodorick Webb and Isaac Garrison on land purchased from Thomas Spratt.

The only power sources available at the time were oxen and water. Mules had not come to the area at that time. Most grist mills were built near a water source and needed a reliable flow to keep the stones turning.

A lake was dredged below the mill using oxen and probably slave labor and filled from Steele Creek. To get the water to the mill, a run (man-made gully) was dug into the rocky ground 12 or so feet deep, 20 feet wide and around 50 yards long.



A small mill house supports the wheel and a series of gears turned the millstones to grind the grain.

While the original mill long ago rotted and disappeared, a replica was built in 2008 under the management of Billy Barron. What are reported to be two of the original stones are displayed near the mill house and can be seen by walkers.

When the town grew up and needed a new name, the old mill provided part the name of Fort Mill. The replica is a part of the Greenway and is often demonstrated to groups of adults and school children.

If you have questions about how and where to visit this replica of the grist mill, contact the ASC Greenway for information.

Third Thursday At the Museum

On the third Thursday of the month, the History Museum invites speakers to entertain and enlighten members and guests with presentations on history and other programs of local interest.

Join us for great programs on history and history in the making. Refreshments, too! Members free, guests \$10.00.

These events begin at 6:30 pm at the museum and seating is limited, so it's important to make your reservations ahead of time at our website.

Visit fmhm.org and look for the Events and RSVP tab.

Read about January's featured speaker, Ed Currie of PuckerButt Pepper Company, on page 4.



Let's Make this Photo a Puzzle. Yes, Fort Mill newcomers, we do get snow now and then. This photo, taken from the corner of Main Street and looking down Tom Hall Street is a photo full of things that are no more. Taken some time in the early 1970s, we believe. Here is the puzzle part. How many things can you spot in this photo that are no longer part of the Fort Mill landscape? (Photo, Mike Hill)

FMHM ANNUAL MEETING 2017

We are pleased to invite our members to the Annual Meeting of the Fort Mill History Museum.

The meeting will begin at 8:00 am on Thursday morning, January 26, at the Spratt Building on Main Street. A light breakfast will be served.

For your information, the Nominating Committee submits the following proposed slate of officers for the Board of Directors for the coming year.

Chairperson	Ann Y. Evans
Vice-Chairperson	Darlene Kerr
Secretary	Carol Dixon
Treasurer	Jason Ackerman

Please join us to hear reports of the activities of 2016, elect new officers, and kick off another exciting year at the Fort Mill History Museum!

Please let us know if you'll be joining us! RSVP to (803) 802-3646.

If you're
not already
a Museum
member,
join today!



It's easy.

Go to the FMHM website:
fmhm.org/membership/

Patron Membership \$35

Out-of-Towner Membership \$50

Contributor Membership \$100

Sustainer Membership \$250

Conservator Membership \$500

Benefactor Membership \$1000

Names and Faces... The Fort Mill Volunteer Band 1924

We have the names of these musical fellows, but they are difficult to match up with these faces from 1924. Can you help us identify the members of this volunteer band?



Claude Proctor,
Band Director
Keebler Mills
Neal Thomas
Dudy Borage (?)
Jack Brown
Pat Wright
Sherry Faile
Earl Broom
M. G. (Smoke) Rogers
Elliot Gordon
John Gordon
E.L. Case
Ernest Hope
Laurence Armstrong
Frank Bass
Grady Hope
Howard Bass
Earl Bass
Dutch Gordon
Charlie Hope
Ernest Stroud
Jarvis Starnes
Charlie Spinks
Sam Stevens
Ivey Spinks

Southern Recipes . . .

Food is at the core of the Southern family and our recipes, written or simply remembered, are valued throughout the generations. Here are two that reflect the times in which they evolved and the care taken with meal preparation.

Confederate Home Cooking

pp 16-17

By Patricia B. Mitchell, collected from The White House Cookbook, 1903

“Greens”

“About a peck of greens are enough for a mess for a family of six, such as dandelions, cowslips, burdock, chicory and other greens. All greens should be carefully examined, the tough ones thrown out, then be thoroughly washed through several waters until they are entirely free from sand.

The addition of a handful of salt to each pan of water used in washing the greens

will free them from insects and worms, especially if after the last watering they are allowed to stand in salted water for a half hour or longer. When ready to boil the greens, put them into a large pot half full of boiling water, with a handful of salt, and boil them steadily until the stalks are tender; this will be in from five to twenty minutes., according to the maturity of the greens; but remember that long-continued boiling wastes the tender substances of the leaves, and so diminishes both the bulk and the nourishment of the dish; for this reason it is best to cut away any tough stalks before beginning to cook the greens.

As soon as they tender drain them in a colander, chop them a little and return them to the fire long enough to season them with salt, pepper and butter; vinegar may be added if it is liked; the greens should be served as soon as they are hot.

“All kinds of greens can be cooked in this manner.”

From the **Golden Age Cookbook**, created by the Fort Mill Senior Citizens Club. (No date of publication, maybe 1980?)

BEST HOMEMADE BISCUITS

2 cups self rising flour
2 tsp confectioners sugar
1/3 cup buttermilk
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 cup Crisco

Mix together all dry ingredients. Add Crisco, then cut with fork, add buttermilk and mix quickly. When mix begins to stick to fork as you stir it around the bowl, take it out and place on a dough sheet. Don not knead, instead roll dough with your hands for about 5 minutes. Then roll out about 1/2 inch thickness. Use a 3 1/2” cutter and you should get about 10 biscuits. Preheat oven to 400°. Prepare pan greased with a little Crisco and a little flour. Melt some margarine and dip each biscuit into the margarine (both sides). Bake for 10 to 15 minutes.

— Polly Collins, Fort Mill, SC



Do You Know?

These lovely ladies have posed for a moment somewhere in Whiteville Park (Oak Street?) around 1963. They are probably third graders and are definitely attending Carothers Elementary at this time.

Was this a birthday party?
A gang presence from long ago?

Who took the photo?

If you can name these young ladies or have any additional information about this photo, please email:

cherylehill@hotmail.com.

***Don't forget to visit the
J. B. Mills Gift Shop***

***Browse through the Gift Shop
for great gifts and mementos
for all ages.***



***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 29715

Contact us for membership
information:

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.*

ADMISSION RATES

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!

