



The Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center and former Lucy F. Simms School, 1938-1965; named for Harrisonburg educator who taught 1,800 students between 1877-1934; home of the *Celebrating Simms* exhibit



Empty walls of the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center,
Fall 2015



Fall 2015 interns help process archival donations to the Shenandoah Valley Black Heritage Project, founded by Robin Lyttle



Fall 2015 interns Brett Seekford and Hannah Jones identify photographs with the help of Jennifer Vickers at a memory party hosted by the Shenandoah Valley Black Heritage Project

Arithmetic.

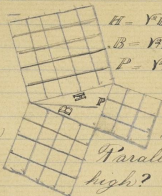
$$H^2 = B^2 + P^2. \text{ Hence}$$

$$B^2 = H^2 - P^2. \text{ Hence}$$

$$P^2 = H^2 - B^2. \text{ Hence}$$

Problem.

What is the
the lower corner
corner of a
3 ft. wide & 3 ft



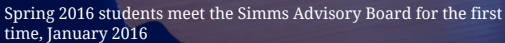
$$H = \sqrt{B^2 + P^2}$$

$$B = \sqrt{H^2 - P^2}$$

$$P = \sqrt{H^2 - B^2}$$

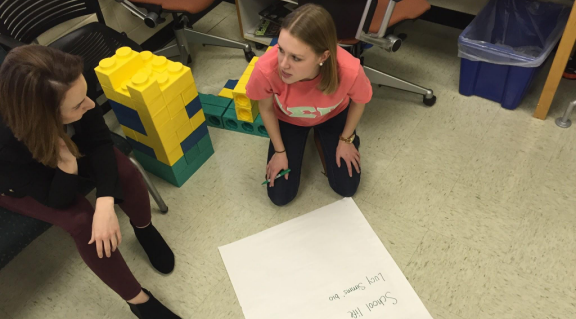
Distance between
and the opposite
Parallelepiped 4 ft long,
high?



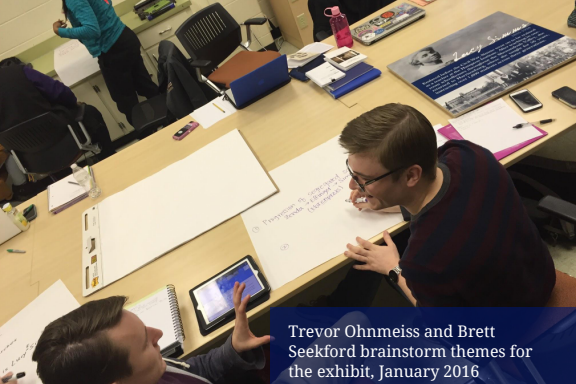




Raiy Pattinson, Ashley Short, and Kailyn Harris-Gilliam brainstorm themes for the exhibit, January 2016



Lindsey Campbell and Anne Hardrick brainstorm themes for the exhibit, January 2016



Trevor Ohnmeiss and Brett Seekford brainstorm themes for the exhibit, January 2016

Community

Striving for excellence / Progress

Black scholarship

Spirituality

Simple living

"One day at a time"

Black traditions

looking to the future

Changes over time

make do w/ what you have

Black pedagogy/methods

individual anecdotes

"The way it is, not the way it was"

entertainment

Survival

liberation through education

"It takes a village"

Ownership / self reliance

Relationships

The fruits of student brainstorming, January 2016

- ④.
 - ↳ Com
 - bana
- ①. Historical
 - ↳ cont
- ③. School ex
 - ↳ basketba
 - plays
 - Mayd
- ⑤. Community
 - ↳ maps
 - statist
- ⑥. Education
 - ↳ bus ro
 - class p



Students decide on six themes for the exhibit and divide into teams, January 2016



Teams brainstorm with professors Sawin and Reich, Feb. 2016



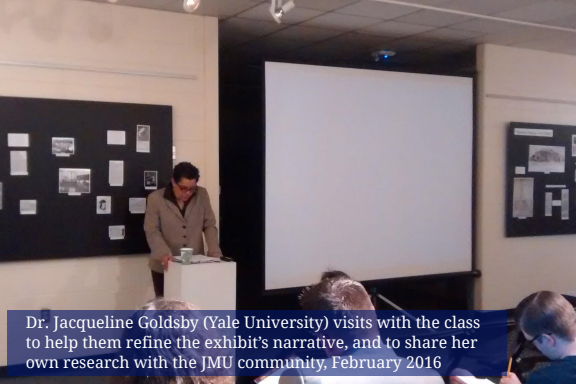
Students (l-r) Trevor Ohnmeiss, Emily Nava, and Lindsey Campbell discuss exhibit themes with Dr. Steven Reich, Feb. 2016



Kailyn Harris-Gilliam and Anne Hardrick talking with Eastern Mennonite University History professor, Dr. Mark Sawin, Feb. 2016



Students and advisory board meet at the Institute for Visual Studies at JMU to examine early drafts of the exhibit panels, February 2016



Dr. Jacqueline Goldsby (Yale University) visits with the class to help them refine the exhibit's narrative, and to share her own research with the JMU community, February 2016



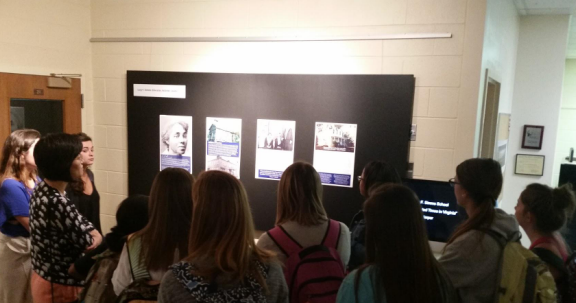
Dr. Godfrey and some students meet with community members for another memory party to help fill gaps in the exhibit, February 2016



After much revision, students and advisory board meet at the Simms Center to examine near final drafts of the exhibit panels, March 2016



Students examine mini panels at the soft opening of the exhibit at the Institute for Visual Studies at James Madison University, 20 April 2016



JMU students from the Education Department come to check out the soft opening of the exhibit at the Institute for Visual Studies at James Madison University, 20 April 2016



Mollie Godfrey and Robin Lyttle discuss panel layout at the Simms Center for Continuing Education, April 2016



Planning the official exhibit opening at the Lucy F. Simms Center (l-r):
Micah Hodges, Dr. Mollie Godfrey, Brett Seekford, Emily Nava



Handing out flyers for the event (l-r): Katie McVicar, Raiy Pattinson, Emily Nava, Deana Forbes

Photo by Mike Miriello ('09M) /
James Madison University



Students (l-r) Paige Evans and Deana Forbes prepare for guests before the opening at the Simms Center for Continuing Education, 25 April 2016



Some of the 500 companion booklets printed for the opening of the exhibit; after the opening, we printed 500 more featuring community responses to the event, available for free at the Lucy F. Simms Center

Photo by Mike Miriello ('09M) /
James Madison University



Pages from the companion booklet for the Celebrating Simms exhibit
opening, 25 April 2016

Photo by Mike Miriello ('09M) /
James Madison University



Students prepare the main hall for the exhibit opening at the Lucy F.
Simms Center for Continuing Education, April 25, 2016

Photo by Mike Miriello ('09M) /
James Madison University



Professors Sean McCarthy and Mollie Godfrey discuss the exhibit with
student Micah Hodges, April 25, 2016

Photo by Mike Miriello ('09M) /
James Madison University

Student Micah Hodges admires his group's
work on the wall, 25 April 2016



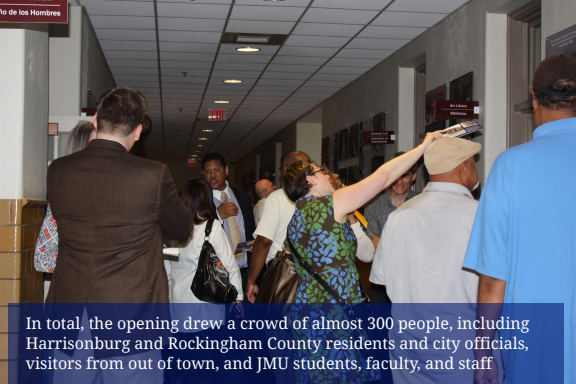
Photo by Mike Miriello ('09M) /
James Madison University

Major contributor Doris Harper Allen is among
the first to arrive, 25 April 2016

Photo by Mike Miriello ('09M) /
James Madison University

A photograph showing an older woman, Doris Harper Allen, wearing a purple shirt and a beaded necklace, gesturing with her right hand while speaking to three students. The students, Deana Forbes, Brett Seekford, and Hannah Jones, are standing in a hallway with yellow brick walls and various posters. Deana is wearing a blue and white striped shirt, Brett is in a dark suit, and Hannah is in a patterned dress. The background shows a hallway with more posters and a person in a blue shirt in the distance.

Doris Harper Allen discussing the exhibit with students Deana Forbes,
Brett Seekford, and Hannah Jones, 25 April 2016



In total, the opening drew a crowd of almost 300 people, including Harrisonburg and Rockingham County residents and city officials, visitors from out of town, and JMU students, faculty, and staff



More than 100 JMU students attended the opening as part of their classwork or to support their friends, 25 April 2016



The opening featured video clips from collaborator Billo Harper's documentary, *The Legacy of the Lucy F. Simms School*



Project associate Billo Harper and student Trevor Ohnmeiss record a video interview with former Simms student Colton Banks at the exhibit opening, 25 April 2016



Life After the Bell

The Cary G. Smith School was about more than just academic achievement. There were many exciting after school programs for students that enriched the community as a whole.

Ebony Players

According to Doris Harper Allen, the Ebony Players were organized, produced, and directed by Theodore (Buddy) Toliver in 1940. These girls were known for performing musical skits, most notably their production of the Ziegfeld Follies. Their costumes were made through the Home Economics department, and included white aprons, oed bantanas, and black t-shirts.

Operettas

Operettas were a rich tradition for many years at the school. The students put on productions varying from the Pied Piper of Hamelin to Peter Rabbit. Parents, as well as members of the Newton community, would come together to make elaborate costumes for the actors. Mary Anderson Fairfax said the community cared so deeply about these productions that they would "pack the auditorium and people would even sit in the hall."

Attendees find familiar faces in the panels at the exhibit opening, 25 April 2016



Reverend Harold L. Brown, Sr., a former Simms student, opened the exhibit celebration with a blessing, 25 April 2016



Contributors, community members, and
JMU students also shared words of
thanks and songs, 25 April 25 2016



The students let loose with project associate Billo Harper after the exhibit, 25 April 2016



Professor Mollie Godfrey and students Kailyn Harris-Gilliam, Hannah Jones, Brett Seekford, and Raiy Pattinson installing the exhibit at Harrisonburg High School, 2 May 2016



Students Brett Seekford and Hannah Jones admiring the “Celebrating Simms” exhibit at Harrisonburg High School, 2 May 2016



The students on the steps of the Lucy F. Simms School