



# Fort Defiance

## Chronicle



Spring

April 2026

### Lenoir's Rangers Spring Muster

#### Fort Defiance

P.O. Box 686

Lenoir, NC 28645

828-758-1671

fortdefiancenc@gmail.com

historicfortdefiancenc.org

Webmaster Ben Triplett

#### Board Of Directors

Sandra Watts

##### President

Tina Triplett

##### Vice President

Nell Fisher

##### Secretary

Ike Forester

##### Treasurer

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Monty Minton

Kayleigh Corey

##### Site Director

Cassandra Douglas

##### Newsletter

##### Committee

Sandra Watts

Kelly Coffey

Barbara Freiman

Molly Switzer



On Saturday, April 11, and Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Lenoir's Rangers will be holding their annual spring muster. In honor of the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the United States, Visitors will learn what role the Overmountain Victory patriots played, and the importance of the Overmountain Victory Trail. Demonstrations will be held throughout the day, including black powder demonstrations, drilling, 18th-century camp life, and open-fire cooking, among others. Items will be available for purchase in the gift shop. Also on the grounds will be the Dragonfly Trader with various 18th century items for sale.

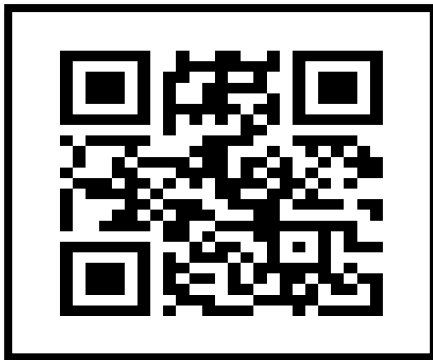
This is a **FREE** event. Guided house tours will be offered throughout the day at the regular admission fee: adults \$7.00, children 6-14 \$5.00, and children 5 and under are free. Donations are always appreciated.

Picnic shelter and picnic tables are available so bring a lunch and spend the day.



**TIME TO RENEW  
YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP**

By becoming a member, or renewing an existing membership, you help keep the story of General William Lenoir and Fort Defiance alive. Memberships allow the site to provide visitors and school groups with a unique experience. The site can also continue its goal to preserve, research and enhance the land, buildings and artifacts of Fort Defiance. **Memberships are for a one-year period from January 1 through December 31.** For more information on becoming a member, see page 7 of this newsletter, then take a moment to fill out the portion at the bottom and send a check payable to **Fort Defiance** to Fort Defiance Inc, P.O. Box 686, Lenoir, NC 28645, or pay by using the QR Code or visiting the website at [www.historicfortdefiancenc.org](http://www.historicfortdefiancenc.org) to show your support. Continued patronage is essential to the success of Fort Defiance!



Like any non-profit organization, volunteers are a vital part of the success of the organization. A variety of volunteer roles are needed. Activities such as everyday tasks for volunteers who only want to help with special occasions. Do you enjoy dressing up in 18th-century clothing? We have a place for you. But do not worry, you do not have to dress up to volunteer. There are volunteer opportunities for everyone! Ask, and we can find a place for you!

**Volunteer opportunities:**

Dressing in costume for events, becoming a Docent, helping run the Visitors Center, stocking the gift shop, doing grounds work, cleaning the historic house, researching, educating, hosting group events, and helping to create the newsletters.

For more information about volunteering or to learn how to get involved, please contact us at [fortdefiancenc@gmail.com](mailto:fortdefiancenc@gmail.com), fill out the volunteer form on the website [www//historicfortdefiancenc.org](http://www//historicfortdefiancenc.org) or call Fort Defiance at (828) 758-1671.



## Carolina Watchman

## Necessity of Land

Salisbury, North Carolina

Dec 27, 1839

## VALUABLE LANDS FOR SALE

By virtue of an order of the Court of Equity lately held for the County of Wilkes. I shall offer for sale, on the 1st day of January next, on the premises. Several valuable

### Tracts of Land

In Wilkes County, N.C.—The several Tracts lay all adjoining—and joining the Fort Defiance Tract, the residence of the late Gen. Wm. Lenoir, dec.—Containing by estimation, upwards

### 1000 ACRES

Laying on both sides of the Yadkin River, a large portion of which is first rate bottom land, and will make one or two

### SPLENDID FARMS

These lands are situated in one of the most healthy, fertile, and respectable neighborhoods in the Western part of the State; and well worthy the notice of any person desirous of making a permanent settlement in this State. The lands are extensively productive in all the grains, and it is believed, would be first rate for Tobacco, and the grasses.

Twelve months credit will be given, the purchaser giving bond with approved security. Persons desirous to purchase, would do well to examine the lands before the day of sale. Immediate possession will be given.

Reference may be had to Col. Thomas Lenoir, or Gen. Edmond Jones, whose lands lay adjoining the above named lands.

Land has served as a pivotal force inspiring immigration to the Americas for centuries. By the mid-19th century, land sales had become a formalized process, involving detailed surveying, appraisal, and a notary public for the sale. The left-hand column details an ad for land sale throughout Wilkesboro and the surrounding areas. The ad details the location and agricultural value of the lands.

The Lenoir family, who had first established ownership of land throughout the Yadkin Valley in the late 18th century, had become prominent landowners and planters. Despite no price listed, the lands had most likely been cultivated for generations and would be valuable to buyers interested in planting. According to William K. Boyd's *History of North Carolina*, over 90% of North Carolina was rural in 1860. While all land was still desirable, lands that had previously been cleared and established for planting were most desirable. One acre of farmland could sell for \$1.00-\$3.00, depending on location, access to water, and fertility.

While it is unknown who ultimately purchased the land advertised, it is clear that its prime location and fertility would have made it highly desirable for those looking to produce the staple crops that supported local economies.

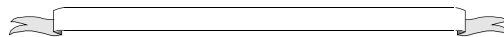
## The Lenoir Topic

Lenoir, North Carolina

Nov 2, 1887

### Along the Yadkin Valley

When one winds up the well planned and constructed new grade that leads through the Indian Grave Gap, into the Happy Valley of the Yadkin in Caldwell Co., and comes to that point on the hill where the whole view of "The Valley" with the picturesque Ripshin Mts. For a background, bursts upon them, they cannot help being struck with the imposing scene. The silvery river, moving serpent like through those fertile bottoms, with the palatial residences dotting the more elevated plateaus here and there on either side, and then the gradual rise of the foothills to the two ranges of mountains that run parallel with and overshadow the valley from the North and South; all impress the traveler with the fact that Nature has carved and painted this as one of her own peculiarly chosen spots. Then let the traveler descend from this point and see how man has taken advantage of the offerings of nature. First he will see the old Edmund Jones homestead, Clover Hill, beautifully secluded among its huge oaks and spruce pines and now the property of Col. James C. Horton, who at the age of 71 is still energetic in the cultivation of the soil. Then across a broad and productive bottom, is the Foundation, well known in the social records of the Valley; and then, just below, Mr. Nathan Gwyn is rapidly galvanizing the General Leventhorp farm. But grandest of all is Palmyra, nearing her gables above the beautifully kept grounds. Where Mr. S. L. Patterson, the proprietor, graces the castle-like mansion with the dignity of an ancient lord. But on the other side of the river, the eye of the agriculturalist can feast on the sight of model farming. The Steele boys, "native and to the manor born," are leading the front ranks in progressive machinery farming. Just a mile below, on the same side, wrapped in historic interest, stands Fort Defiance, surrounded by the extensive and productive lands of the owner, R. T. Lenoir. This quaint and curious house of Revolutionary lore has lately been modernized to suit the inhabitants. The "Happy Valley" proper is said to close at the late Phineas Horton's and Maj. Bower's, the home of solicitor Bower, with its attractions, and the garden-like farm of the Maj's makes a fit period for it. The stranger will be struck with the fairest portions of Caldwell, as he passes though, over its well kept roads, and then think it a splendid place to live. And when travels on down the still beautiful river and valley, and stops for a while and listens to the sage of Riverside as he sits, like the ancient philosopher surrounded by his select students, bequeathing to them logical words of legal knowledge in that clear and forcible manner which the life long students alone can do, the way-ar-er is bound to be impressed with the conclusion, that one of the best filled legal brains in the State is living in our midst. A few miles lower the traveler reaches Wilkes county and if he is an observant creature, he notices at Mr. Hartley's the best kept farm in the county; but Mr. H. is really a native of Caldwell, and she claims to have trained him to till the soils so well.



All reprints from the News Topic or personal letters are printed in the original form with no changes or corrections.

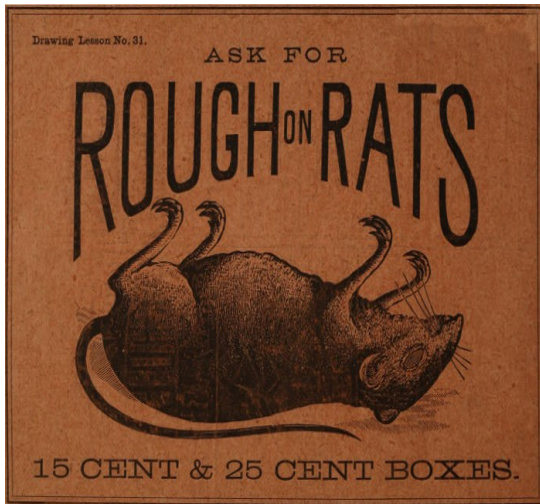
## Unrest in the Valley

### The Lenoir Topic

Lenoir, NC

Aug 1, 1883

#### A Mad Accident



Last Friday night Mr. and Mrs. N. H. Gwyn. Of Granite Falls, were bereaved by death from poison of their little son Richard, aged about 3 years, In the absence of the family, at Icard some member of the family had placed upon the mantle piece of one of the rooms a mixture of molasses and "Rough on Rats" for the purpose of killing cockroaches. When Mr. Gwyn's family returned the poison was not removed and by some means little Richard got hold of it Friday evening and ate some of it. Medical aid was sent for but the little fellow died in great agony within five hours after taking the poison.

The little child was buried Sunday at the Fort Defiance burying ground on the Yadkin near the residence of Mr. Gwyn's brother in law, Mr. Rufus T. Lenoir.

Lenoir, NC

### The Lenoir Topic

March 17, 1881

There seems to be an organized band of burglars operating in the Yadkin Valley. One Tuesday night of last week they broke into the work shop of a Mr. Melton, living near Fort Defiance and stole an auger and some other tools. On the following night, they entered Major D. E. Bower's smoke house by boring, and secured about 150 pounds of bacon as their booty. An unsuccessful attempt to enter the store house of Messrs. Gwyn, Harper and Co., at Patterson, was made on Thursday night, last. A sharp lookout should be kept for these ingenious gentry, so that they may be provided with more suitable employment.

## For a Fresh Cut

Rob. Epperson Sen. Says he cut his foot very bad with an axe and a man that was with him dug up some wild indigo root & pounded it fine with his ax, in the meantime, Epperson kept spitting on it & it remained too dried & he pissed on it & applied it to the cut & soon cured it.

## Cure for the head ach– Geo. Tucker 13 Aug 1824

Bath your feet in weak Lye, to wit through some hot ashes into water & set with your feet therein (B it cured him)

## Board Highlights

The board of directors met on March 12, 2026 at 5:30 in the Visitor Center at Fort Defiance. Attending members were Ike Forester, Monty Minton, Tina Triplett, Steve Rauchfuss, Nell Fisher and Sandra Watts. Also attending was Site Director Cassandra Douglas.

- ◆ Minutes of the last meeting along with the treasurers report were reviewed and approved as presented.
- ◆ Site Director Cassandra Douglas gave a brief summary of activities that occurred from December 2025 through February 2026.
- ◆ Ike Forester gave an update on the digitization of the Lenoir Family Papers that he donated to Appalachian State University. Once this has been completed, ASU will donate a copy of the digitized documents to the Fort.
- ◆ Sandra Watts updated the group on repairs that had to be made to the well and additional upgrades pertaining to the water supply still in need of repair. The board voted to make these upgrades.
- ◆ Monty Minton agreed to assist in finding an electrician to make repairs and upgrades to the electrical system to the main house along with repairs to plaster damage on the second floor. He also agreed to assist with the building of new shelving needed in the Visitor Center.
- Sandra Watts reported groups were already setting dates to visit the site. Jacob Crews, Education Coordinator of Historic Bethabara Park in Winston Salem would be bringing approximately 20 of their staff members to tour the site. He stated the staff would be training with a heavy focus on the saga of Kings Mountain and its outcome since 300-400 Loyalist prisoners were held there between October and November 1780.
- In April there will be a weekend of Living History with the Lenoir's Rangers, two school groups have booked appointments for April and May. A car club of about 20 vintage cars will visit on Saturday, May 2,.

# FRIENDS OF FORT DEFIANCE

Your support is vitally important to the operation of Fort Defiance. **THANK YOU!** The following members have joined for **2025**:

Please Renew now for 2026

## Patriot/Individual

Mark Coltrain  
Orrin Robbins  
Karen Barlow  
Wanda Prince  
Richmond Bernhardt  
Katherine Bravo

Douglas Pegram  
Al & Adrienne Johnston  
Tina Triplett  
Dana M. Brown  
Jim & Judy Thompson  
Charles Forester  
Joe & Frances Delk  
Lee Taylor  
Lewis & Charlotte Travland  
Frank McMillan  
Laura Sheaffer

## Militia/Family

Lissa Holsclaw  
Kelly Coffey  
Steve & Jean Branch  
Sharon Underwood

## Colonel/ Sponsor

Tom Tighe

## Lieutenant

Ellen Cowen & Keith Seramur  
Britton King  
Lucy McCarl

## General/ Benefactor

Brenda Bernhardt  
James Pennell  
Barbara Frieman  
Anne Harper Bernhardt

## Specified Donations—Thank You

Broyhill Family Foundation  
Bernhardt Furniture Foundation  
Stevens Family Foundation

## Captain/Patron

Jennie G. Deal  
Al & Adrienne Johnston  
Dr. Myra A. Dickson  
Monty & Brenda Combs  
Cindy Day  
Jerry Brooks  
Thomas Allen & Virginia Foxx

Please become a "Friend of Fort Defiance". Memberships are available for individuals, families, and corporations who are looking to support local history and tourism. Each level of membership comes with perks when visiting Fort Defiance. For example, free admission when visiting on regular days of operation, discounts for special event admission, discounts in the gift shop and discounts on ground rentals. Each member will receive a membership card and a copy of the bi-monthly newsletter via mail or email.

Fort Defiance, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization . Anyone wanting to become a member of the "Friends of Fort Defiance" should send a check made payable to Fort Defiance, Inc. and mail it along with the membership form to Fort Defiance, Inc., P. O. Box 686, Lenoir, NC 28645. Payments can also be made by credit card on the Site's website, [www.historicfortdefiancenc.org](http://www.historicfortdefiancenc.org).

_____ Patriot/Individual	\$20-39
_____ Militia/Family <small>Family is defined as two parents and their dependent children.</small>	\$40-74
_____ Lieutenant/Supporter	\$75-99

_____ Captain/Patron	\$100-499
_____ Colonel/Sponsor	\$500-999
_____ General/Benefactor	\$1000-up

**Contact Fort Defiance at [fortdefiancenc@gmail.com](mailto:fortdefiancenc@gmail.com) or call 828-758-1671.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

## **Please Come Visit Soon!**

Fort Defiance is located 1.8 miles East of the former Patterson School on Hwy 268.

### **Hours of Operation**

April-October Thursday - Saturday 10 AM-4 PM Sunday 1 PM - 4 PM

November-March Saturday & Sunday 10 AM - 4 PM

### **Admission**

\$7 per Adult

\$5 for children (Ages 6 -15)

Children 5 and under free

**Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Instagram.**

To schedule a group of 10 or more, please call for an appointment.



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Postage & Fees Paid  
Fort Defiance Inc.  
Permit No. 28, 28645

Fort Defiance  
P.O. Box 686  
Lenoir, NC 28645