



Fort Defiance

Chronicle



Winter

December 2025

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

828-758-1671

fortdefiancenc@gmail.com

historicfortdefiancenc.org

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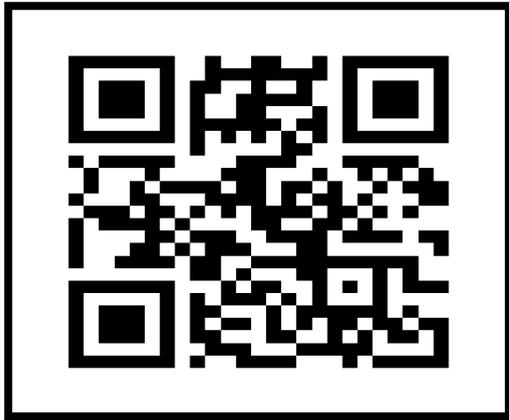
Barbara Freiman

Molly Switzer



Colonial Christmas

Please join us for the annual Colonial Christmas at Fort Defiance Saturday, December 13, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 pm. Enjoy tours of the decorated historic home, alongside a bonfire, was-sail, refreshments, and Christmas cheer and will conclude with the burning of the holly at 2:00 pm. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children; those 5 and under are free.



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 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 to show support. Continued patronage is essential to the success of Fort Defiance!



2025 Annual Members Meeting



Mark Coltrain

Friends of Fort Defiance were invited to attend the Annual Members' Meeting on September 27th. Guests heard updates from the President of the Board, Sandra Watts, who recounted the latest events and projects at Fort Defiance. including a summary of all major restoration and preservation efforts over the last five years. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and suggestions. Audience members also heard from guest speaker Mark Coltrain, an oral historian at Appalachian State Library's Special Collections, who provided insights into the complexity of local and family history and advised on best practices for collecting oral history and genealogy. JD's BBQ catered the food. Board members Steve Rauchfuss, Ike Forester, Bill Karr, Nell Fisher, Tina Triplett, Doug Davis, and Bob Kogut were present for the meeting

Living History Days

Several interpreters and Fort Defiance volunteers greeted 200 middle school students from East Burke Middle School in October for a Living History Day. Students had the opportunity to explore 18th-century life firsthand throughout the day, including demonstrations of 18th-century currency, toys, music, and survival skills, as well as a lecture on the region's most common flora and wildlife.



Dennis Voelker
Interpreter



Fort Defiance also hosted over 200 fourth graders, parents, and chaperons in late September. These students traveled from Happy Valley, Lower Creek, Davenport, Boomer Ferguson, and Sawmills Elementary Schools. Students arrived at 9:30 am and were greeted by nearly 15 interpreters who taught them about life on the frontier in the 18th century. Though it rained for nearly the entire day, students still enjoyed the planned activity indoors and braved the downpour with high energy. Hosting school groups is one of the Fort's top priorities, and we appreciate all the resolute volunteers and interpreters who make days like this possible. This event was held in partnership with the Wilkes/Surry Overmountain Victory Trail Association. The Fort is hopeful for even more events like this in the future as we continue towards our mission of encouraging younger generations to love and understand our local history.



Clint Byers
Interpreter

Annual Celtic Festival



Fort Defiance featured its third annual Celtic Festival on October 11th. Over 200 guests arrived to hear music from Puddingstone, Celtic Sessions, and others. Guided tours were offered by Jacob Wallace, and food was catered by Nino's Tacos, and Huckleberry & Vine Lemonade. Festivities also included multiple booths of local interest, including the Caldwell County Heritage Museum, the Tucker's Barn chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Cultural Resources Department headquartered in Raleigh. The Fort personnel were delighted to have seen such a wonderful turnout, and are thankful for all the volunteers, performers, and visitors that made it possible. We are confident that the 4th Annual Celtic Festival will be just as lively, as we continue celebrating the tradition of music and festivities that brightened the frontier.



Seasons Greetings!

The holiday season always evokes sentimental feelings of gratitude and reflection. These feelings transcend geography and time alike. In the following letter, recorded in Thomas Hicker-son's *Happy Valley*, William Ballard Lenoir writes to his father, Major General William Lenoir, on December 27th, 1834. By this time, William Ballard had already moved to Tennessee and was living some 200 miles away from Fort Defiance.

"It being Christmas time, times of merriment in my youthful days, it was natural for me to think more of times past and absent and far distant friends than common. And for several days I think not very many minutes at a time have passed without my thoughts having turned to the place of my nativity, and to those who are near and dear to me and who will ever be recollected with a grateful remembrance. But times have changed and we change with them. Not long since I was one of the boys that used to delight in squirrel hunting, shooting at a mark, etc. You were then looked on as rather in the days of the aged, whose eyesight was not sufficiently good to rank you with your boys as marksman. I am now looked on as you were then," Signed William B. Lenoir.

Named for his father, it is clear William Ballard was caught up in the same Christmas feelings we now enjoy in modern times. Christmas is a time to reflect, share in the good memories of youth, and relish the closeness of loved ones, brought together to celebrate the end of the year, good fortune, and those who make the world around us meaningful. In this season, correspondence between loved ones becomes more common, retrospective, and sentimental. Below is a Christmas recipe for plum pudding, one of the most common Christmas desserts in the 18th century. This recipe was first recorded in Selina Louisa Avery Lenoir's cookbook, but surely remained a Christmas staple of the Lenoir family, as they gathered to celebrate the holiday season.



Plum Pudding

The same proportions of flour and suet (animal fat), and half the quantity of fruit, with spice, lemon, a glass of wine or not, and one egg, and milk, will make an excellent pudding, if long boiled

The Lenoir Rangers Return

Fort Defiance hosted the Lenoir Rangers on October 25th and 26th, traveling from Morganton, to spend two nights camping on the Fort's grounds. Reenactors mustered each morning for live demonstrations of military drills, musket ball making, and to discuss the hardships of life on the frontier and on the battlefield. Visitors had opportunities to watch these live demonstrations, learn from the reenactors, and actually practice their own drills.



Board Highlights

- ◆ Board of directors present at the meeting: Monty Minton, Doug Davis, Steve Rauchfuss, Tina Triplett, Kayleigh Corey, Sandra Watts, Bob Kogut and Ike Forester.
- ◆ Sandra Watts gave the site directors report. Since the last board meeting approximately 800 Caldwell and Burke Counties students visited the site. The Fort will close on December 14th and reopen on February 6, 2026. Attendance is slow during this period and will allow time for maintenance and upgrades if needed.
- ◆ Fort Defiance is in discussions with ASU to do an agrological dig at the site of the actual stockade. Grant opportunities will be sought to cover the expense.
- ◆ Bob Kogut gave an update on the success of the 3rd Annual Celtic Festival.
- ◆ The collection of Lenoir Family books have been moved to a climate controlled area. The process of cleaning and proper storage is under discussion.
- ◆ Tucker's Barn and Rendezvous Mountain Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution have volunteered to help decorate the house for the Christmas event. Decorating will begin December 2, 2025.

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

Mary Bohlen
Nell Fisher
Jennie G. Deal
Joel Reese
Katherine Bravo
Reba Whittington
Oscar Dobereiner
Jeanne Dairaghi

Militia/Family

Lucy McCarl
Joey Lee Holsclaw &
Lissa Taylor Holsclaw
Betty Buss
Jeff & Rita Jones
Liza Plaster
Kelly Coffey
Frank Shufford
Karen Barlow
Charlotte Travland
Nathan Hunt Gwyn III
Pam Helton
Steve & Jean Branch
Roger & Sharon Underwood
Britton King
Lynn Lathrop

Lieutenant

William H. LeNoir, Jr.
Irv Eurto
Alvin & Adrienne Johnston
Rosalind Zackery

Captain/Patron

Kim Browning
Tina Triplett
Larry & Barbara Pendry
Myra A. Dickson
Joe & Francis Delk
Jerry N. Brooks
Monty & Brenda Combs
Jane Johnston Smith
Douglas L. Pegram
William F. & Denise F. Howard
Margaret & Rick Martine
Virginia Foxx
Jim & Judith Thompson
Jean Lenoir
Lee Taylor
Steve McCord
Patrick & Kay Crouch
Valerie Connor
Mary Kincaid

John Beall

Sheila and Drum Lloyd

In Memory of Charles Lenoir

Mitchell Gwyn
Lillian Gwyn
Graham Snow

Colonel/ Sponsor

General/ Benefactor

Brenda Bernhardt
Barbara Freiman
Samuel & Sandra Ramsey
C. Yorke Lawson
G. Alex Bernhardt, Sr.
James Pennell

Specified Donations—Thank You

Blue Ridge Energy Foundation
Bernhardt Furniture Foundation
Lenoir Service League
Stevens Family Foundation

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.

_____ 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 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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