



# Fort Defiance

## Chronicle



Spring Issue

April 2025

### 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

Bill Karr

Bob Kogut

Stephen Rauchfuss

Doug Davis

Monty Minton

John Church

Kayleigh Corey

### Newsletter

### Committee

Sandra Watts

Kelly Coffey

Barbara Freiman

Rendezvous Mountain, Tuckers Barn and Carolina Emerald  
Chapters of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution  
cordially invite you to

*Tea with William Lenoir  
and Friends  
Historic Fort Defiance*

SATURDAY 04.19.25 2:00 PM

Enjoy a delightful tea while  
General William Lenoir and Friends reminisce about how the  
Battles of Lexington and Concord changed their lives forever.  
Includes a self-guided tour of house and grounds.

This event is FREE and open to the public.  
Colonial attire or festive hat encouraged.  
Seating is limited. Please text 336-469-3986  
or call 828-758-1671 to reserve your seat by April 1st.

1792 Fort Defiance Drive, Lenoir, North Carolina

AMERICA  
250  
NC

This project was produced with assistance from the America250 North Carolina initiative,  
administered by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.  
Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material  
are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the State of North Carolina.

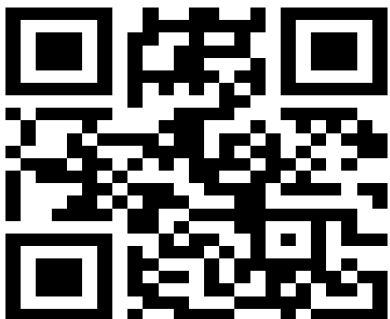
### Lenoir Family Documents Donated to Appalachian State

A large collection of Lenoir family documents has been donated to Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. Ike Forester has collected, organized, and archived these documents over many years, and hopefully, this donation will ensure that they are available for future generations to research.

These papers consist of thousands of original Lenoir and related families' letters, journals, pictures, and diaries dated from 1763 through 1945. The papers will now be in the Belk Library at ASU, Special Collections Research Center, Isaac G. Forester Collection. They will be maintained using proper archival methods and stored securely. ASU is currently cataloging these documents. When this has been completed, digitized copies of the documents will be created. Fort Defiance, Inc. will be provided with one of these copies. Digitized copies, and in some cases, the original documents, will be available to the public for research at the Belk Library upon appointment.

Some of the many special documents located in this collection include General William Lenoir's "Book of Forms," in which Lenoir made notes about numerous items of interest to him from 1767 through his death in 1839, William Lenoir's hand-written account of his military service beginning with the Indian Campaigns and the Civil War Journal of Walter Waightstill Lenoir. Anyone interested in obtaining a listing of these documents, as compiled by Ike, can contact him at [mycocpa@aol.com](mailto:mycocpa@aol.com). He would welcome sharing these with anyone interested.

**BECOME  
A MEMBER**



By becoming a member, or renewing an existing membership helps 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** at 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 support. Continued patronage is essential to the success of Fort Defiance.

*Thank You*  
**FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT**



### ASU Public History Class Visits Fort Defiance



Fort Defiance partnered with the class of Andrea Burns, Associate Professor with the Department of History at Appalachian State University's Public History Class in the fall of 2024. The class was to write a proposal for educational programming ideas. Proposal ideas could vary, but all would be grounded in a basic concept: a usable and adaptable activity for Fort Defiance staff, volunteers, audiences, and/or associated NC educators with the following elements:

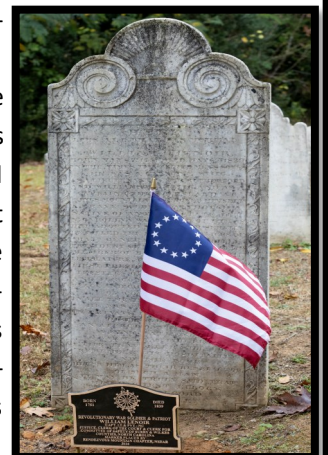
- A descriptive outline of the proposed activity and explanation of corresponding curriculum standards (if relevant)
- Provide a descriptive explanation of how the activity connects to current scholarship in museum learning, public history education, learning theory, etc.
- discussion of how the activity may fit in with current or future interpretive programs and content at Fort Defiance
- a bibliography for teachers and/or docents
- a list of required supplemental materials for teachers, docents, and/or participants during their visit.

### The Last Days of William Lenoir

William Lenoir was born May 8, 1751, in Brunswick County, Va. In the "Many Faces of Fort Defiance" by Maurice York, it is stated in 1837 by William Lenoir's daughter-in-law that "General Lenoir's health is not only good for his age but more uniformly so than most of the young people of these degenerate days." In 1838, his health had a rapid decline, and he was subject to fits of sickness or attacks with periods of improvement that punctuated them. In May of 1839, his daughter Mary Davenport writes to her brother in Tennessee, William Ballard Lenoir. She states "Father at this time lies very low and from all appearance cannot survive but a very short time, he appears to be entirely in his senses, and I think has little or no desire to live any longer in this world, and I believe has a hope beyond the grave. Although he appears to have the things of time very much at heart, I believe it proceeds from a desire to do what he thinks is his duty and the good of those who are left behind. I think it very probable that before this reaches its place of destination, he will bid adieu to all the suffering of this world and (if so, I hope) be where the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary soul shall be at rest.

William Lenoir died at Fort Defiance on May 6, 1839. His son, Thomas Lenoir, was charged with handling his estate. Thomas wrote to a friend, former Governor David Lowry Swain, and asked him to write the epitaph for the General's tombstone.

"Here lies all that was mortal of William Lenoir. In the times that tried men's souls, he was a genuine Whig." As a lieutenant under Rutherford and Williams in 1776 and as a captain under Cleveland at King's Mountain, he proved himself a brave soldier. Although a native of another State, yet North Carolina was proud of him as her adopted son. In her service, he filled the several offices of Major-General of the Militia, President of the Council of State, member of both houses of the Legislature, Speaker of the Senate, First President of the Board of Trustees of the University, and for 60 years Justice of the Peace, and Chairman of the Court of Common Pleas. In all these high public trusts, he was found faithful. In private life he was no less distinguished as an affectionate husband, a kind father and a warm-hearted friend. The traveler will long remember his hospitality, and the poor bless him as their benefactor. Of such a man it may truly be said that his highest eulogy is the record of his deeds."



**Buff The Cat**

In the February newsletter, there was an article written about Rufus Theodore Lenoir III also known as "Teddy." The following letter was written by Teddy's grandmother Sarah Leonora Gwyn Lenoir wife of Rufus T. Lenoir, Sr. This letter was taken from the book entitled Echoes of Happy Valley by Thomas Felix Hickerson. This is a great story to read to children and grandchildren.

Letter to Rufus T. Lenoir III (in Georgia) from "Buff" the cat. Buff's "Secretary" was Mrs. R. T. Lenoir, Sr.

Fort Defiance, February 4, 1904

My dear Master Teddy.

I was lying on the rug in the sitting room this morning. Had been playing with a pen holder I found on the floor and still had it between my paws when your Gran. (Mrs. R. T. Lenoir, Sr.) came in. When she saw me, she laughed and said, "Buff do you want me to write to Teddy for you?" I turned over on my back, took a long stretch, opened my mouth as wide as I could and said, Mew! I can't write very well, you know. I am still rolling about on the floor – my paws over my eyes peeping and winking at her when she says, "what next," I mew and then she goes on and tells you what I want her to say next. I did not think I could miss you so much. I went about the house looking for you and calling you, for days after you left. Then your Grandpa said "Buff, Teddy is not here, he has gone to see his other Gran." One day I wanted to see some children so much that I concluded to go over to your uncle Walters.

Virginia saw me as soon as I jumped on the porch, and she said, "Why here's Buff!" and took me up and carried me in the house. Soon all the others came running in. Joyce said, the first thing, "Buff do you miss Teddy?", and I slid out of Virginia's lap and rolled over and over and over and said Mew, just as pitiful as I could and Richard said, "Just listen to Buff, he said yes," and then little Hallie tried to take me up but I was too heavy and she commenced to cry, little Walter told her to sit down on the rug and he spread out her dress and put me in her lap. She laughed and patted me and called me "Pitty Buff" and tried to kiss me. Even little Ballard reached out his little fat hands and wanted me and laughed and crowed. I let them all play with me a long time, I thought and was trying to think how I could slip away without hurting their feelings when a little wren flew into the room and all the children wanted to catch it. I did too but thought I had better take that chance to leave. Before I got out of sight, I heard them calling me, but I did not look back. On the way I saw a big, saucy Rabbit sitting on the side of the road with his ears raised and looking like he was tickled to death – but I did not catch him. Can you guess the reason? Because I couldn't. They treat me pretty well since you left. When I'm hungry I follow your Gran, and she then remembers her promise to you and says, "Martha feed Buff." One day when Martha went into the dining room to carry the dishes, I thought I would get up on the table and see if I could find a bite to eat. When I heard her coming, I jumped down as easily as I could and was sitting by the fire, washing my face when she came in. She said, "Buff, you look like you had been up to some mischief," I wanted to laugh so bad that I almost coughed.

I get into trouble now and then. Your Gran had to scold me a little the other day. I saw a little bird hopping about in the chip box and before I had time to think, I was up in the box and had the little thing. It screamed and jerked away leaving a bunch of feathers in my mouth. Your Gran said "Buff, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" and I was, but I did not tell her the reason. Do you remember that you made Shep run after me, one time, and afterwards told me that you just wanted to see how fast I could run? I want to tell you that I am in hopes he will never do so again. The other night I came in after supper and I was hungry and saw no chance of getting any. I concluded, cold as it was, I would go out to the crib and see if I could not find something to eat. In prowling around I found Shep and Ben fast asleep in the shucks. I crept in between them and tried to sleep, but Ben kept dreaming that he was running and came very near to kicking me out of bed. I crawled over Shep, and he actually raised his foot and let me into his arms. I slept all night, and your Grandpa found us that way next morning. I must tell you something more and then stop or will not have much to tell you next time. I could not tell you this but know so well how you can sympathize with me. Do you remember how the yellow hen fluttered all over you, last summer, because you took up one of her little chicks just to feel how soft it was? She got you down and you said would have killed you if your Mamma had not come when she did. Well, that same hen has a whole lot of little fluffy, downy chicks. She was in the wood house yesterday. I was passing by and thought I would just see if I could put my paw on a little white, fat one that was away from the rest. First thing I knew that old hen was thrashing me all over the wood house. When she allowed me to use my legs, I left about as fast as a bullet leaves a gun. My nerves were in such a condition that I could not sleep a wink last night, although Martha declares that I was fast asleep when she passed me; that four mice were skipping about and making all sorts of fun of me – daring each other to kiss me, and she actually saw the biggest one kiss me twice and I did not wake. Did you ever!

I have several things I want to tell you that I had better not write and I hope you will have some to tell me when you come, which I hope will be soon.

I am aways.

Your Buff

PS: Martha said she was going to slip my picture in this letter but has no picture of mine, don't you notice her. You know Martha.



### Caldwell County Early College



On March 7, approximately 80 Caldwell County Early College students visited Fort Defiance as a part of their American History studies. On site to help was Micky Parsons retiree of the NC Forestry Service, along with Phillip Blaylock also with the NC Forestry Service, Sandra Watts, Nell Fisher and Bill Karr, Fort Defiance board members. The students ate lunch on the grounds and then departed to visit the Western North Carolina Sculpture Center.

### New Signage



A new Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail sign has been installed in front of the Visitor Center. On September 27, 2014, the site was recognized by the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service as a Certified Protected Segment of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, authorized by the National Trails System.

### Board Highlights

The board of directors met Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 5:30 at Fort Defiance. Board members in attendance were Monty Minton, Ike Forrester, Tina Triplett, Doug Davis, John Church, Steve Rauchfuss, Nell Fisher, Bill Karr and Sandra Watts.

Site Report: Friends of Fort Defiance membership as of March 2, 2025 is at 32. Sandra Watts discussed the upcoming grants that are available. She also discussed the number of events that have been scheduled so far for 2025. School groups that have signed up to visit are Caldwell County Early College Friday, March 7th, 5th grade students from Baton Elementary Wednesday March 13th, 6th grade students from Kings Creek Elementary School April 1st and Caldwell County Heritage Museum Friday, May 9th. The Caldwell County Senior Center will be visiting on May 15th.

Tina Triplett discussed the changes to the website.

Sandra Watts and Tina Triplett gave a report on the upcoming installation and presentation of art work done by Israel Solomon. The event is scheduled for March 29th at 11:00 am. Press releases were mailed to all members and individuals who donated money for the project and information pertaining to the event has been updated on the website. The event is open to the public.

The visitor center has a new sign, courtesy of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. Fyre Sign will install it in a couple of weeks.

The annual membership meeting date has been set for September 24, 2025 at 12:30.

The Third Annual Celtic Festival has been schedule for October 11th. Puddingstone has agreed to play again this year.

# FRIENDS OF FORT DEFIANCE

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

## Patriot/Individual

Mary Bohlen  
Nell Fisher  
Jennie G. Deal

Myra A. Dickerson

Joe & Francis Delk

Jerry N. Brooks

Monty & Brenda Combs

Jane Johnston Smith

Douglas L. Pegram

William F. & Denise F. Howard

Alvin Johnston

Margaret & Rick Martine

Virginia Foxx

Jim & Judith Thompson

Jean Lenoir

Lee Taylor

Steve McCord

Patrick & Kay Crouch

## 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

## Colonel/ Sponsor

## General/ Benefactor

Brenda Bernhardt  
Barbara Freiman

## Specified Donations—Thank You

Blue Ridge Energy Foundation

## Lieutenant

## Captain/Patron

Kim Browning  
Tina Triplett  
Larry & Barbara Pendry

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 \$40-74

Family is defined as two parents and their dependent children.

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 past 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.



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

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