

Fort Defiance

Chronicle

Fall Issue

October 2020

Fort Defiance
P.O. Box 686
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-758-1671

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President's Message

As if running a 501c3 non-profit does not have enough challenges all by itself, it is even more difficult during a pandemic. The site was closed for several months which gave us the opportunity to look at places we could make improvements. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a few of the things that have been accomplished as well as things in progress.

Thanks to a grant from the Hogan Foundation, Fort Defiance will be installing a new gate to the entrance. It will be positioned further up the drive than the existing gate and will enhance the entrance to the historic house. Another grant from Alex and Anne Bernhardt allowed us to upgrade our computer system.

Fort Defiance is in the process of re-establishing our membership program "Friends of Fort Defiance". The membership program will help with the continued restoration, preservation, and perpetuation of the site. Your assistance helps promote living history encampments, workshops, school visitations, and other educational programs and activities. Each member will receive a copy of the bi-monthly newsletter which can be emailed or mailed to your home address. Membership brochures have been printed and are available at the Visitor Center or can be printed from our web site www.historicfortdefiancenc.org.

As we head into our winter hours of operation, we have started to focus on re-

pairs to the structures on the property. These structures are the original 1792 smoke house, the summer kitchen, the picnic shelter, and the 18th century home of William Lenoir.

Because Fort Defiance is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, it was necessary to reach out to the Western Office of Archives and History. On August 26, a meeting took place with Jennifer Cathey, Restoration Specialist with the State Historic Preservation Office of the NC Department of Cultural Resources in Asheville. Her role is to provide us with general historic preservation, building repair and restoration advice.

While waiting on her assessment, the process of obtaining quotes for some of the structural issues has begun. Some of the repairs will include roofing, painting, and repairing the siding, just to mention a few. While it is a lofty goal, the repairs are necessary for the survival of the site and would allow Fort Defiance to continue to shine as a beacon in the valley for years to come and to continue to teach the history of the area and life in the 18th and 19th century.

While the year 2020 has had its own set of challenges, the Board of Directors is committed to the challenges ahead and they are hopeful that within the next few months, our visitors and members will see improvements being made.

~Sandra Watts

Calling All History Lovers!

People with a love for history or who have a special skill are needed as volunteers at Fort Defiance. Opportunities are available for all ages and abilities. Dressing in 18th century clothing is optional although expected if working during events with the public. Clothing can be provided. Volunteer activities include but are not limited to cleaning, clerical, and being a docent. A new volunteer process will be starting soon as well as a training day. If interested, contact Kristen Robbins, Director, via email at fortdefiancenc@gmail.com or Phone 828-758-1761.



State Historic Preservation

What should one expect when working with a historic site that is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places? When Fort Defiance was being restored in the 1960-70's, those who were working with the project, wisely consulted the State Historical Preservation Office for their advice. Fortunately, William Lenoir wrote detailed plans for the building of his home that have survived through the years. As a result, the restoration has the reputation for being extremely authentic to the original structure which was built from 1788-1792. It is the goal to restore the site as close as one can to the original structure or at least comparable to the period of the site.

As is true with any structure, repairs are necessary from time to time. To maintain the National Registry status, any repairs must be in keeping with the intent of the original structure. Jennifer Cathey, from the Western Office of the State Historic Preservation Office, visited the site in August at the request of the Board of Directors. Her report suggested needed repairs and gave information about how to go about achieving the results.

The guidelines take into consideration such things as the type of wood for the shingles. Will it be western red cedar, Alaskan cedar, yellow cedar, cypress, oak or something else? How wide and thick do they need to be? How will the shingles be attached to the roof — nails or staples? What is the grade of the shingle? What type flashing will be used around the chimneys?

In addition to replacing the shingles, repairs to the siding, molding as well as painting are needed. This is just a sample of the many things that need to be considered before the process can begin.

Because repairs of this nature are a big investment of the highest priority, verifying all these details along with many others is necessary to get the most accurate and durable material. Consulting with the restoration specialist will insure the board makes the correct decisions.

In Loving Memory Of

Becky Forester

October 12, 1961— November 10, 2019

You may not be aware of the passing of Fort Defiance's Executive Director Becky Forester (many of you may have known her as Becky Phillips). Becky lost her battle with cancer November 10, 2019.

Becky began volunteering at the Fort in 1985 after she discovered it while driving through the country one afternoon. She was, as she put it, "blown away by the history and the clothing and textiles". She had a contagious love for historical clothing and frequently spoke to groups on the subject. Most of the docent's apparel at the Fort today were handmade by Becky.

She became the first full-time executive director at the Fort in 1995 and served in that position until she found her replacement shortly before her death. The Fort was always on her mind and in her heart. She had me calculating payroll and gathering bills for the new Director, Kristen while she was laying in her ICU bed on our final trip to the hospital. Becky literally was Fort Defiance for decades. She was the only contact so many visitors and groups dealt with and in her words did everything from "mow the grass to write the grants". She organized, cooked for, and planned special events and repaired the plumbing. When the huge hemlock tree fell in the "Lover's Nook" of the back yard she called me for help. When I arrived, she was armed with her chainsaw and was already well into the clean-up by herself. I don't think it would be wrong to say that without her dedication and love of the Fort the site most likely would have been closed many years ago. She did recruit a loyal following of volunteers and reenactors but on a day to day basis of

operating the site she was a one-woman whirlwind. I think it is safe to say that the Fort will never again see anyone so dedicated and capable as Becky. It is impossible to describe how much she will be missed.



~ Ike Forester

Now Offering Memberships

The Fort Defiance Board of Directors is pleased to announce memberships for individuals, families, and corporations who are looking to support local history in their community. Each level of membership will come 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 grounds rentals. Each member will receive a card to show they are a supporter of Fort Defiance and a copy of the bi-monthly newsletter via mail or email. Members may attend the October

Board meeting.

For levels of membership see the membership form on the back of the newsletter.

Anyone wanting to become a member should send membership dues in payment to Fort Defiance P.O. box 686 Lenoir, NC, 28645. For more information or questions contact Kristen Robbins at fortdefiancenc@gmail.com or call 828-7581671

Receipts from Cornelia Isabella Christian Lenoir 1856 Cook Book

Bread Pudding

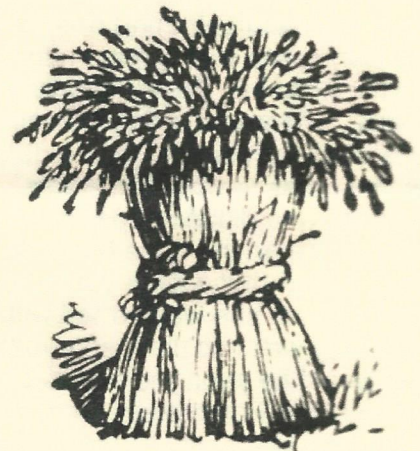
Take 1 pint of breadcrumbs and 1 quart new milk, scald them together about 2 hours before you make the pudding. 5 eggs, a lump of butter size of an egg, sugar to your taste. Bake in a pan and eat with a sauce made of butter, sugar, and spice.

Soft Gingerbread

2 large spoonful (sic) of butter or lard (or half of each), melt it in a tin pan. Dissolve a large table-spoonful of pearl ash in a pint of sour cream; pour it in the melted butter, then pour in a pint of molasses, 1 desert spoonful of ginger; have your flour shifted to add to your mixture till you have a very soft dough. Roll it tolerably thick, and bake quickly (2 eggs may be added).

Corn Cake

We eat corn cakes everyday, and our "folks" have flattered us until we think, for a plain, wholesome kind, ours excel all others. We take six cups of good buttermilk, one egg, salt enough, and a table spoonful of saleratus; make it thin as batter for frying; beat quickly, and only long enough to make free from lumps; pour into a large battered bread pan, and bake half an hour. This is light with a nice tender crust, and plenty for a family of six. Stick a pin in here, you folks with the "weasel in your wheat," as Mother Partington would say.



Highlights

- It is that time of the year to remember the Over Mountain men and their contributions to history. On September 28, 1780 the Wilkes and Surry Militia encamp on the grounds of the present day Fort Defiance, the 1792 home of William Lenoir, now stands. Lenoir, a captain during the Revolutionary War, will helped to raise more than 200 men for the march to King's Mountain to defeat an arrogant Patrick Ferguson. He was wounded twice — in the battle; in his left arm and in his side. He would also have his queue (ponytail) shot from his head about where it was tied.
- Boy Scout troop 377 camped at the Fort the weekend of October 2-4. They removed the roof and cleaned the area around the picnic shelter with plans to replace the roof in the future
- An arborist will be coming this fall to access the condition of the Chestnut tree.

Membership Application

Please Detach this piece from the newsletter and check a membership level.

Patriot / Individual \$20

Militia / Family \$40

This membership is for a family, a family is described by parents and dependent children.

Lieutenant / Supporter \$ 75

Captain / Patron \$100

Colonel / Sponsor \$500

General / Benefactor \$ 1000

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number () - _____

Email Address _____

Please Come Visit Soon.

Fort Defiance is located past the former Patterson School on Hwy 268.

Hours of Operation

March-October Thursday - Saturday 10 AM-4 PM
Sunday 10 AM - 4 PM

November-March Saturday & Sunday 10 AM - 4 PM

Admission

\$7 per Adult

\$5 for children (Ages 6 -15)

Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Instagram.

Holiday Hours

The site will be closed the weekends of November 28th and 29th for Thanksgiving and December 25th, 26th and 27th for Christmas.

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



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Fort Defiance Inc.
Permit No. 28, 28645**