



Fort Defiance

Chronicle



Fall

October 2025

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

828-758-1671

fortdefiancenc@gmail.com

historicfortdefiancenc.org

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3rd Annual Celtic Music Festival

October 11, 2025

Join us at Fort Defiance to celebrate traditional music through the sounds of **Puddingstone** and other local performers. The event begins at **11:00 am and ends at 5:00 pm**, The event will also feature food and beverages and other local vendors. Join us for a day of fun-filled music and celebration! **Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.**

Admission is free for children 5 and under. Tickets include admission for house tours.

3rd Annual Celtic Music Festival
Featuring
Puddingstone
Terry Edwards
Celtic Sessions
Hickory Music Factory String Band
St. Joseph Irish Step Dancers

Location: Fort Defiance
1792 Fort Defiance Drive
Lenoir, NC 28645

Vendors: Caldwell County Heritage Museum, Katherine McKee, NC Dept of Natural & Cultural Resources, Ranger William Caldwell with the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail and Lenoir's Rangers

11:00 am - 5:00 pm

Food: Huckleberry & Vine Lemonade Smolder & Smoke Food Truck

Lenoir Rangers—October 25 & 26
10:00 am to 3:00 pm



The **Lenoir Rangers** are returning to Fort Defiance for live demonstrations, including musket firing, drill demonstrations, musket ball making, period fishing kit, militia kit and 18th century cooking. The event is **FREE** with exception of a tour of the historic home. Standard fees apply adults \$7.00, children 6-14 \$5.00 and age 5 and under are free

Dula Family Tour



On August 23rd, Fort Defiance welcomed Dr. Leslie McKesson and descendants of the Dula Family for a private tour. Visitors gathered under the picnic shelter for a brief introduction, in which Dr. McKesson discussed the complex racial dynamics of North Carolina in the 17th and 18th centuries and gave an overview of her personal research and ties to Fort Defiance. Visitors also had the opportunity to attend a tour of the home, and hear Dr. McKesson give an in-depth lecture about her research currently on display.

The tour concluded with a walk around the grounds, and a trip out to the Champion Beach Tree. There, Dr. Leslie McKesson gave a live reading of her poem “Do You Know My People?” centered around the lives of the Enslaved who once lived at Fort Defiance.



Caldwell Early College High School Visit

83 students from Caldwell Early College High School arrived at Fort Defiance bright and early on September 19th for a tour of the historic building and grounds. In addition to learning about Lenoir Family history, students saw a live demonstration of



the woodworking and craftsmanship that goes into the production of fiddles from Bob and Roberta Kogut. Finally, students walked the grounds with Mickey Parsons, Hunter Cook, and Brian Heath from the U.S Foresty Service, who discussed native Western North Carolinian Agriculture.



Died

At Lenoir, Caldwell County, N. C., on the 4th of July last, at 2 o'clock, P. M., Mrs. MARTHA M. JONES, wife of Dr. L. G. Jones, and daughter of the late Gen. Edmund Jones.

To all who had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Mrs. Jones, this intelligence will be afflict- ing; for few, very few, ever possessed in so high a de- gree all those qualities of the heart, mind and disposi- tion, which endear one generous and noble soul to an- other.

To the rarest combination of personal comeliness, grace, and chasteness of address, was added that of beauty and vigor of intellect, of *decision and firmness of character*, rarely found in those who, in so high a degree possess all the gentle, affectionate, and captiva- ting graces, peculiar to the highest order of her sex.— Most truly was she an ornament to her sex,—a star of purest ray.

To say that her numerous friends have lost much, is most true—that society is robbed of one of its purest and most brilliant lights, is equally so: but her immediate family—her husband and interesting children, oh! language fails to speak their loss—their deep grief their utterly irreparable loss. For she was truly the bright sun of her household, the fond, the devoted, the beautiful, the accomplished mother and wife—the ad- mired, the cherished, the revered idol of a fond hus- band, who feels, in all its bitterness, that desolation of the heart which admits not of cure. Alas! how soon is brightest sunshine succeeded by deepest shade; how suddenly, how unexpectedly have fair and happy skies been o'er cast with darkest gloom. Ever shall dwell in the hearts of thy loved ones, in images of living light, thy captivating loveliness, and transcendent virtues!— Peace, peace to thy lovely, thy sacred ashes, and bliss unspeakable to that angel spirit which was ever too pure for Earth, and more fit to adorn the courts of heaven, than the halls it has so often graced below.

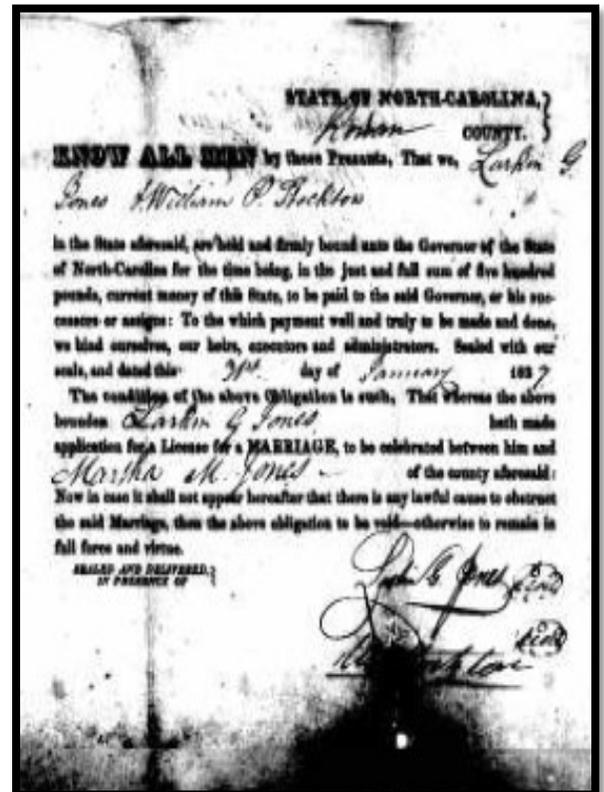
Martha M. Jones

Martha M. Jones was born May 9th 1809, to General Edmund Jones and his wife Ann Lenoir. As a young girl Martha was raised at Palmyra, a plantation just miles away from Fort Defiance, her grandfather General William Lenoir's estate. Martha grew up in Happy Valley, before eventually relocating and marrying Dr. Larkin G. Jones in 1827. Over the next two decades the couple would live in Wilkesboro, Lenoir, and Charlotte, while Larkin continued to work as a doctor, and Martha raised six children.

Though little record exists to inform the understanding of Martha's character, newspapers throughout Western North Carolina detailed her involvement with large social gatherings, and her

friendly demeanor. In an article of the May 1839 edition of the Western Carolinian, a Salisbury based newspaper, discussed the town's May Day celebration, including a May

Day Queen pageant. During the event Martha delivered a speech, with "such a modest air and earnest pathos" that it almost made the audience "forget the affair was sportive and not serious." Martha's passing was a loss not only to her immediate family but to her community. The Carolina Watchman devoted an entire section to her obituary, stating that society had lost "one of its purest and most brilliant lights". The Watchman continues "Alas! How soon is brightest sunshine succeeded by deepest shade: how suddenly, how unexpectedly have fair and happy skies been o'er cast with darkest gloom."

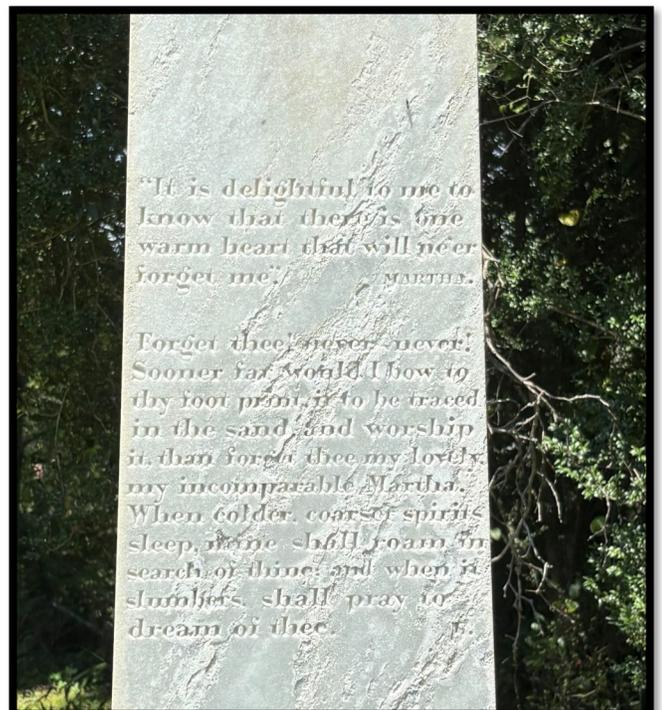




Martha returned to Happy Valley to be laid to rest and still holds the largest and most ornate marker in the Lenoir Family Cemetery. In addition to its size, the marker features some of the most poetic and meaningful inscriptions, including the quote “May thy slumbers be calm and sweet as the smile which death sealed upon thy lovely visage was placid and serene; as thy person was transcendently beautiful—as thy mind was intelligent— as thy heart was kind and warm— as thy soul was generous and noble— as thy guileless life was pure and honorable. Beautiful was thy soul—lit face, Perfection thy form. Grace was governed every motion, and intelligence lent its charm.” It is evident that Martha’s kindness and charm far surpass her time on Earth.

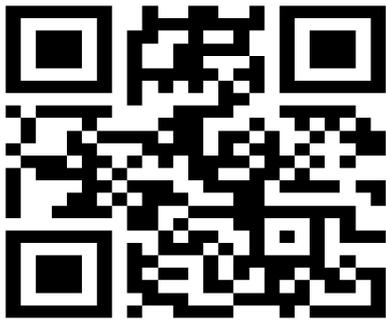
Martha’s gravestone is the most eye-catching feature of the family cemetery. Its vary shape is heavily inspired by spirituality and symbolism. As the only obelisk present in the family cemetery, Martha’s gravestone is the first to catch one’s eye. Though most noticeable for its height, obelisks are most renowned for their deeper meaning. Obelisks are a widely recognized for their symbolism of connection between the earthly world and the heavens.

Their height is largely believed to be an attempt to help the soul ascend to the afterlife by reaching past one realm to the next. Obelisks in Christian burials are also used to reflect the strength found through faith, and one’s unrelenting quest to reach Heaven and reunite with Christ. The elaborate striction and inscriptions on Martha’s gravestone demonstrate both her ties to her faith and her deep and loving connection with those she left behind.





**BECOME
A MEMBER**



By becoming a member, or renewing an existing membership, it helps 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.

Thank You
**FOR YOUR
SUPPORT**

Board Highlights

The Board of Directors met on September 4, 2025. Members present were Monty Minton, Ike Forster, Tina Triplett, Sandra Watts, Doug Davis, Bob Kogut, Kayleigh Corey, and Steve Rauchfuss.

216 visitors toured the house in June, July, and August.

Sandra Watts gave an overview of special events and activities since the last board meeting.

83 Caldwell County Early College, students and 230 Caldwell County 4th graders are expected to visit the site in September.

Mark Coltrain, an oral historian with ASU, will be the guest speaker at the annual membership meeting.

Bob Kogut discussed the preparations for the 3rd Annual Celtic Music Festival to be held on October 11th.

Rendezvous Mountain and Tucker's Barn DAR will be helping decorate the house for the Christmas Season.

A grant from the Stevens Family Foundation was received.

The Fort will close on December 15th for the winter season and reopen February 7th.

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
Joel Reese
Katherine Bravo
Reba Whittington
Oscar Dobereiner
Jeanne Dairaghi

Militia/Family

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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
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Monty & Brenda Combs
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William F. & Denise F. Howard
Margaret & Rick Martine
Congresswomen 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
George A. 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

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



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