



Fort Defiance

Chronicle



Spring Issue

April 2024

Fort Defiance

P.O. Box 686

Lenoir, NC 28645

828-758-1671

fortdefiancenc@gmail.com

historicfortdefiancenc.org

Board Of Directors

Sandra Watts

President

Nell Fisher

Secretary

Ike Forester

Treasurer

Bill Karr

Bob Kogut

Stephen Rauchfuss

Doug Davis

Tina Triplett

Monty Minton

John Fletcher Church

Site Director

Gabe Pipes

Newsletter

Committee

John Hawkins

Sandra Watts

Kelly Coffey

Barbara Freiman

"I Have a Trail to Tell"

Lunch & Learn at Fort Defiance

Saturday, June 8th, 12:00 pm



What do the odd, triangular signs around Lenoir and Fort Defiance mean?

Visit Fort Defiance on June 8th at 12:00 pm to find out!

Join Ranger William from the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail to learn not only about the American Revolution, but how this story from 1780 inspired the creation of the National Historic Trail! William will share more about the National Trail System and what it means for Fort Defiance and Lenoir, NC to have one of these National Historic Trail passing through town; all marked by these strange, brown and white signs.

This a free "Lunch and Learn" program hosted by For Defiance at the picnic shelter. Bring snacks, a lunch, and your curiosity to learn all about it!

Fort Defiance staff will be on hand to provide informative tours of the State Historic Home for a fee of \$7 for adults and \$5 for children.

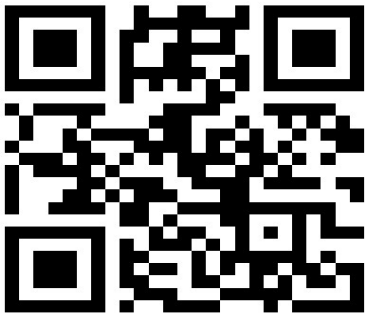


***World War II on the Homefront:
A Discussion with Michael Hardy
Lunch & Learn Scheduled for August 10th***

Visit Fort Defiance on August 10th at noon for a Lunch and Learn presented by local historian Michael C. Hardy. Mr. Hardy will lead a discussion focusing on the local homefront during World War II. Michael has written twenty-six books on topics primarily focusing on western North Carolina and the Civil War. His complete biography can be found at <https://www.michaelchardy.com/bio>.

Bring a bag lunch to the Fort Defiance picnic shelter for this free presentation to learn how the lifestyles of the "Greatest Generation" were affected by the war in Europe and the Pacific.

As always, staff will be on hand to provide tours of Fort Defiance for the typical admission fee of \$7 for adults and \$5 for children. The Lunch and Learn will go forward rain or shine so please be prepared for the elements.



2024 Memberships Are Due!

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 while visiting Fort Defiance. By renewing an existing membership or becoming a member the site can continue the goal of preserving and interpreting Fort Defiance's history. **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. Make check payable to **Fort Defiance** and mail it to **Fort Defiance, P.O. Box 686, Lenoir, NC 28645** or make payment by using the QR Code or by visiting the website at www.historicfortdefiancenc.org to show support. Your continued patronage is essential to the success of Fort Defiance. **Thank you!**

The Women of Fort Defiance: A Five Part Series

Beginning with this issue and through the remainder of this year, The Fort Defiance Chronicle will publish a series of articles investigating the lives of the women of Fort Defiance.

Ann Ballard Lenoir: Invisible Matriarch

By: Gabe Pipes

A patriotic heroine who died the 9th of October 1833, in the 83rd year of her age. She was the wife of Major General William Lenoir, a Revolutionary Patriot with whom she lived near Sixty Three Years in perfect tranquillity. For Prudence, Industry, Economy, and Benevolence, none could excel her. Let us all strive at God's command to meet her at Christ's right hand.

-Epitaph of Ann Lenoir

Ann Ballard Lenoir, the wife of Major General William Lenoir, was born October 9, 1833 in Halifax County, North Carolina and married William Lenoir in 1771. Unfortunately, other than the birthdates of her children and seldom references in William Lenoir's diaries few other verifiable facts exist about her life. Therefore, to truly understand her, one must make assumptions based on the few things that have been written about her.



Ann Lenoir's epitaph produces some interesting clues about her life. There is little doubt that her epitaph was written by those who knew her best, her husband and children. The first words identify her as a "patriotic heroine", no small accolade for a person of her time. While her husband was leading patrols in search of British-allied Cherokee warriors or on the march to King's Mountain, Ann Lenoir answered the Revolutionary call at home; leading her growing family on its early pathway to success and grasping the importance of the



fight and sacrifice needed for Independence. The perseverance required in this struggle must have been one of her principal characteristics. Prudence, industry, economy, and benevolence are all qualities that were requisite in supporting her husband's pursuit of success; and, according to her headstone, she excelled above all others at all of these qualities. One must assume that she always placed the needs of her husband and her children above her own.

Further knowledge of Ann Lenoir's later life is provided in William Lenoir's diary entry upon her death in 1833 (compiled by Laura Norwood in 1898 and preserved by Ike Forester). The General writes:

July 18th—'27 My wife Ann Lenoir got disabled by a fall at the cellar door, and on 11th Sept 1829 she again got hurt by a fall in the garden. She was thrown down by little Rufus Lenoir (N.B. a bee was after him). She never got able to walk again, but died the 9th Oct. 1833, about 1/2 after 8 o'clock in the morning. She retained her senses to the last and spoke distinctly and loud enough for me to hear about 8 minutes before her breath left her. She said she felt no particular pain anywhere, and died as if she went to sleep, without moving hand or feet, and was buried 10th in the evening in presence of a large congregation of people, with intention of having a funeral sermon at a future day.

General Lenoir further writes that their sixty-three years of life together were spent in "perfect tranquility". This description is quite the high, yet humble, praise for a woman that was married at the age of twenty, a mother at the age of twenty-one, would suffer through the death of a two-year old child, and have nine children by the age of thirty-eight; all while managing the property on her own for long periods of time. Although much of her life has been lost to history, she truly must have been the quiet force operating in the background in building the Lenoir legacy of western North Carolina.

How Continental Currency Became Worthless in the 1770s

By: Jim Brown-Continental Currency collector and student of the Revolutionary time period

By the summer of 1779 the slogan of “Not Worth A Continental” was born when something had no value. How did it get this far?

The Articles of Confederation, the governing law at that time, gave the government no power to tax. The government had to rely on contributions from each state. As one man said, why did they need the power to tax when they could get all the money they needed from a Philadelphia printing press? So they did just that.

This was not the only reason though. The British were operating a counterfeiting ring with the intent of destabilizing Continental Currency and the young government.

Late in 1776, the last royal governor of New York, William Tryon, had a counterfeiting operation aboard the *Duchess of Gordon*; however, the shipboard operation used paper that was thicker than the real Continental Currency so there was a notable difference.

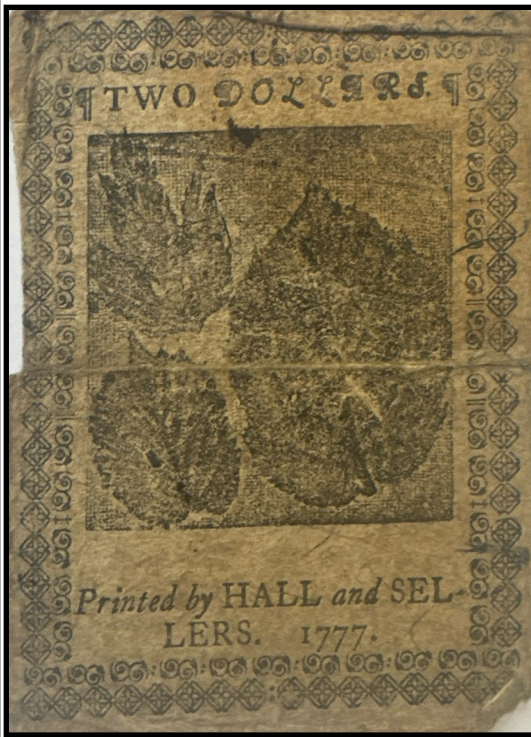
The paper used for the Continental Currency was produced by the Ivy Mills in Chester, Pa. It had mica flakes and blue fibers.

However, when the British captured Philadelphia in the summer of 1777 they procured from the print shop that printed the last Continental Currency and secured several reams of paper. Now with the actual paper, the British no longer had to use the thicker paper and could make exact copies of Continental Currency.

During 1778 and 1779 the British were counterfeiting Continental Currency and using conduits to circulate the fake notes. Two such men, John Blair and David Farnsworth of New Hampshire, were caught in Danbury, Conn., on Oct. 7, 1778, with \$10,007 in Continental Currency. Because the men were known Tories and by the large amount of extremely good counterfeit dollars they had with them, an effort was made to secure a confession and to find out where they got the notes. It turned out that both men were in the employ of British intelligence.

A little later, one of Washington’s spies, Robert Townsend (known as Culper Jr.), who was acting as a Loyalist, discovered that the British had a counterfeiting operation in New York. This was discovered by having conversations with various British officers and officials in Rivington’s Coffee Shop. Townsend used invisible ink (supplied by Washington) to notify Washington of the plot. Townsend would





write a letter of average correspondence and then between the lines used the invisible ink that Washington could read when he used a chemical on the paper.

About the same time, the British ship *Glencairn* was captured by the American frigate *Deane*. A sailor aboard the *Deane* noticed a wood crate being thrown overboard and fished it out of the water. In the crate were materials for counterfeiting Continental Currency.

Washington, in a lengthy letter to Congress, warned members of the danger, and on March 18, 1780, Congress was forced to recall all of its bills in circulation, effectively declaring bankruptcy to save itself.

About a year later, Benjamin Franklin secured a loan from the French and John Adams arranged a loan from the Dutch that helped rescue the country.

Board Highlights

A Fort Defiance Board Meeting was held March 13, 2023. Board members present were: Bob Kogut, Ike Forester, Nell Fisher, Bill Karr, Tina Triplett, John Church, Steve Rauchfuss, Sandra Watts and Monty Minton.

- ♦ Tina Triplett discussed the cleaning out of the basement in the Visitor Center and removal of items stored under the porch.
- ♦ Bob Kogut shared with plans of the upcoming 2nd annual Celtic Festival. Dates were considered for October.
- ♦ Monty Minton gave an update on the replacement of shutters purchased in 2023 and the condition of the sprinkler system. He also recommended that the board consider heating and air for the main house to keep it climate controlled.
- ♦ The site directors report was given by Sandra Watts, who also discussed events planned throughout the summer. It is hoped that in September the North Carolina Genealogical Society will be added to the calendar.
- ♦ Mooresville Boy Scout member Michael Mulholland is almost finished with his Eagle Scout Project on the boxwood gardens.
- ♦ Appalachian State University students will visit on the 18th to begin a project on the enslaved population who lived and worked at Fort Defiance.

FRIENDS OF FORT DEFIANCE

Your support is vitally important to the operation of Fort Defiance. **THANK YOU!** The following members have joined for **2024**:

Patriot/Individual

Oscar L. Doberiner
Mary Bohlen
Karen Barlow (in honor of Charles Lenoir)
Jeanne Dairaghi

Mary A. Kincaid
Steve McCord
Tina Triplett
Jim & Judy Thompson
Joe & Frances Delk
Douglas Pegram

Militia/Family

Wanda Prince
Betty Buss
Lissa Holsclaw
Douglas L. Pegram
R. Kelly Coffey
Katherine Nell Lenoir
Tom Gwyn
Douglas Pegram
Lucy McCarl
Jean Lenoir
Pam Helton
Sharon & Roger Underwood

Colonel/ Sponsor

Samuel L. & Sandra B. Ramsey

General/ Benefactor

Barbara Freiman
Yorke Lawson
Brenda Bernhardt

Lieutenant

Alvin M. Johnston

Captain/Patron

Dr. Myra A. Dickson
BrendA. Combs
Monty Combs
John Hawkins
Frank McMillan
Lee Taylor
John B. Beall

Specified Donations—Thank You

Broyhill 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. Or you can make payment by credit card on our website, 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 or call 828-758-1671.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Please Come Visit Soon!

Fort Defiance is located past the former Pat-
terson 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