



# Fort Defiance

## Chronicle



Winter Issue

December 2023

**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**

Open Position

**Newsletter**

**Committee**

John Hawkins

Sandra Watts

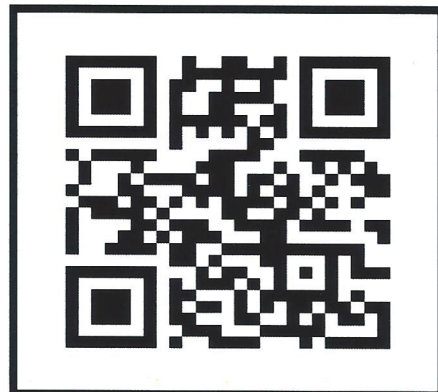
Kelly Coffey

Barbara Freiman

# YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

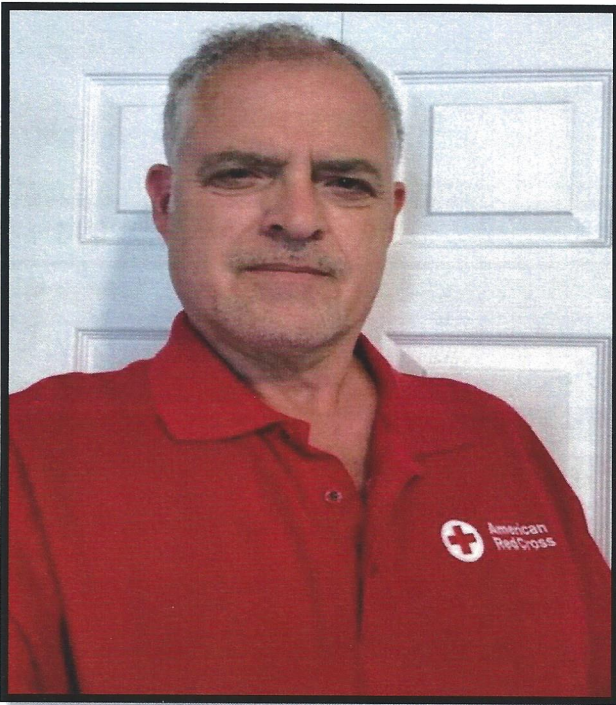
By renewing or becoming a member of the “Friends of Fort Defiance,” you can help keep the story of William Lenoir and Fort Defiance alive. It helps with restoration of the historic house, buildings, grounds, textiles, development of programs, hosting special events throughout the year and the day-to-day operations of the organization. Your membership allows the site to provide visitors and school groups with a unique experience while visiting Fort Defiance. By renewing your membership or by becoming a new member the site can continue the goal of preserving and interpreting 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 the newsletter for complete details then take a moment to fill out the bottom portion of page 7, make your check **payable to Fort Defiance** and mail it to us at **Fort Defiance, P. O. Box 686, Lenoir, NC 28645** or visit us at **www.historicfortdefiancenc.org** to show your support, which is essential to the success of our mission.

The purpose of the Corporation is to preserve, research and enhance the land, buildings and artifacts of Fort Defiance; to publish and disseminate information about life in what is now Caldwell County, particularly in its Yadkin Valley region during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries; and to promote the use of said properties and information for the education and pleasure of the general public



Go to our website by using the  
QR Code

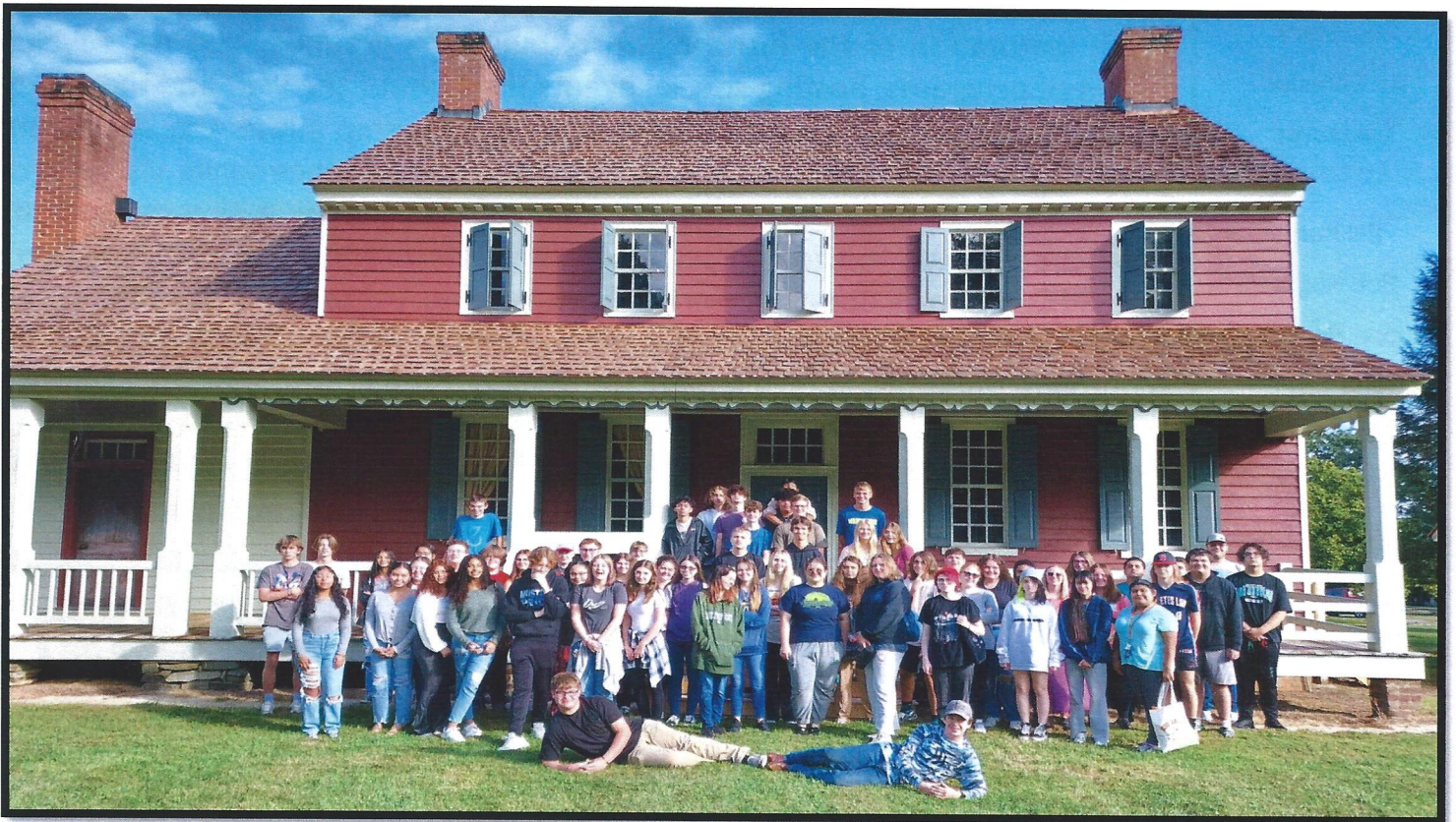




### New Board Member John Church

John Church joined the board of directors in September 2023, He was born in Memphis, TN but has been a lifelong resident of Caldwell County. He attended school at Patterson School, West Caldwell High School, AA, and CCC&TI He also attended ASU and majored in Business Management/Industrial Arts and Alternative Energy. He attended Law Enforcement Training at WPC and Graduate Studies at Lenoir Rhyne University. John has two adult children, John IV and Alanna Easily. He currently works as property manager, developer, and private practice as an Appellant Paralegal. He is Vice Chairman at Cahah's Mountain Planning Board, a member of the Blowing Rock Rotary Club and volunteers for the National Park Service, the American Red Cross Disaster Responder as a County Liaison, and the Foothills Conservancy.

### Caldwell Early College High School



October 6, 2023, sixty-two students from Caldwell Early College High School paid a visit to Chapel of Rest, Fort Defiance and Patterson School. Activities for the day at Fort Defiance entailed a walk of the grounds with Brian Heath with the NC Forestry Service and Mickie Parson, retired from the NC Forestry Service to learn about the different species of trees found on the property and how they could be used in everyday life in the 18th century. Board member Bob Kogut demonstrated the ancient art of fiddle making, while President Sandra Watts lead students on a guided tour through the house.



## Annual Membership Meeting



On October 14, 2023 the Annual Membership Meeting was held. Attendees enjoyed a delicious meal of pulled pork, Brunswick stew, slaw and baked beans from J. D.'s Barbeque and banana pudding donated by volunteer Cindy Parlier. President Sandra Watts gave a review of the changes and upgrades over the last year. Members in attendance were: Karen Barlow, Lissa Holsclaw, Monty & Brenda .

Combs, John Hawkins, Wanda Prince, Barbara Freiman and C. Yorke Lawson. Board members in attendance were: Monty Minton, Steve Rauchfuss, John Church, Nell Fisher, Bill Karr, Sandra Watts and Doug Davis.

President Sandra Watts reported on the many important capital improvements that had been made such as roof replacement to the main house, summer kitchen, and original smokehouse. Siding for parts of the main house were replaced, new shutters for the second floor, windows were reglazed. The main house, and summer kitchen received a fresh coat of paint. The Visitor Center received a new HVAC system and LED lighting. The picnic shelter was upgraded with new wiring of LED lights and receptacles. These improvements were funded by the following: Bernhardt Furniture Foundation, Stevens Family Foundation, Blue Ridge Energy, Broyhill Family Foundation, Cannon Foundation of Gastonia, Marion Stedman Foundation of Greensboro, and the Hogan Family Foundation. Private matching donations came from the following individuals: Mike and Brenda Bernhardt, Monty and Brenda Combs, Liza Plaster, Eliza Bishop, Steve and Jean Branch, Joe and Francis Delk, Myra A. Dickson, and C. Yorke Lawson.



Celtic Festival Held November 4, 2023



The First Annual Celtic Festival was held on November 4, 2023. Lenoir Boy Scout Troup 254 and Girl Scout Troup 1254 provided food and drinks for the event. Volunteers Kelly Coffey, Karen Barlow and Roberta Kogut walked visitors through the house. William Caldwell, Park Ranger of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, National Park Service provided some historical connections between the musical culture and the men who journeyed past Fort Defiance in 1780. Braxton Nelson of the Caldwell Heritage Museum spoke to the group about the history of the valley. Musicians were Two Bird Stone, R. G. Absher and the Celtic Sessions Trio, Mary Greene Celtic Trio and Danny Wicker. Approximately 300 visitors were in attendance.



## Lenoir Family Textile Project



Quilt of Illusion/Tumbling Block (Lap Robe)

With funding from the Lenoir Service League, board member Tina Triplett engaged in a project that allowed the Fort to display some of the many textiles from the Lenoir Family. In the inventory are several quilts that are too fragile to be handled and displayed. A photograph of each quilt was taken and placed on canvas which allows them to be displayed in the Visitor Center. The quilt pictured was made from the Confederate uniform of Walter Waightstill Lenoir, grandson of William Lenoir. Each square is hand embroidered with various things. In addition to this quilt, there are also quilts called Courthouse Steps, Tree of Life, a quilt of stars, a table runner made of wool and a child's Christening gown. Martha A. Marking, Professor/Costume Designer of Theatre and Dance at Appalachian State University visited the Fort to help determine the time period for each quilt and other textiles. All textiles are wrapped in acid free tissue paper and placed in archival boxes for safe keeping.



Cornelia Isabella *Christian* Lenoir

Jan. 15, 1827—Feb. 7, 1856

Wife of

Walter Waightstill Lenoir

Grandson of William Lenoir

## Recipes from the 1850 Cookbook of Cornelia Lenoir

### Deception Cake.

2 eggs, beat whites & yolks separately (or leave out the yolks entirely) then [knead] a soft dough, work it very well. Take a piece of dough as large as a hickory-nut, roll it very thin & fry them in lard scarcely a minute. Sift loaf sugar on them while hot.

### Marble Cake

1 teaspoonful cochineal, 1 of saleratus, 1 of alum, 1 of cream tartar. Mix the cochineal (1), saleratus & alum with a little warm water in a cup, the cream of tartar in a separate cup with some quantity of water & then mix with the other ingredients. [Color] one third of your batter with the preparation, and put a layer of each alternately until your cake mold is full enough, the [plum] batter on top. In cake will be dark

- (1. Cochineal is a scale insect from which a crimson-colored dye, known as carmine dye or simply as cochineal, is derived. This dye is primarily used as a food coloring or for cosmetics )
- (2. Saleratus is a leavening agent consisting of potassium or sodium bicarbonate (i.e. baking soda.)

### Jumbles

2 lbs flour, 1 ¼ of sugar, 1 lb butter, 24 eggs

(The word "jumbles" is whimsical term used in the late-18th and 19th centuries for "tea cakes" or what we would refer to as cookies.)



## A Letter To General William Lenoir from his son William Ballard Lenoir dated December 27, 1834

Dear Father:

It has been so long since I wrote to you that I am really ashamed of it. I now take an early start at it this morning under a determination that I will not be hindered from it. For weeks past I have been anxiously looking for a letter from Wilkes. On **Christmas** morning early I heard the stage horn. Now I shall surely hear from Wilkes thought I, but no letter came. My friends have not been more neglectful than I have, therefore I must not complain. 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 been turned to the place of my nativity, and to those who are near and dear to me and who will never 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 a marksman. I am now looked on as you were then and have more boys (shooting boys) than you had. Say Albert, Tommy, William, Avery, and Franklin all thinking they were tolerable good with a gun, and all have rifles. Yesterday they got to shooting not far from the house. I went to them and took a couple of rounds and by chance (as I cannot see to take a good sight) made two good shots, such as would have been considered equal to the best of them had they shot but twice. This being a petty clear morning, the first fair one for 8 or 10 days, they will probably take a squirrel hunt and I may want to be with them. There is a time for all things and my time for squirrel hunting will not last long. Enough of this.

This past summer and fall may justly be called the sickly season or sukly (sic) year in Tenn. There has been more sickness, say measles, mumps, fever, and fevers and ague then ever I have known before. We had two or three tolerably bad cases of the mumps last winter or spring and some few slight cases of sickness since. On the whole I might say that my family has enjoyed pretty good health. We are all well at this time. We have a few days to ago finished gathering our crops of corn some better than 5500 bushels. It was somewhat injured by the late drought, but I have no reason to complain of it. I have been engaged in building two frame houses a story and a half high. The chimneys (brick) are done, and the ceiling of one nearly finished. When they are done, I will have 4 frame houses with good brick chimneys for negroes to live in and after I build a store house next summer the present store house will make a fifth negro house, framed, etc. I now have, including the three chimneys at the old house, 18 brick chimneys here, 16 of which I have had built. The village if I may so call it contains 100 souls about 40 or 42 black. They are all in a great measure dependent or looking to me for something to eat, and in my employment. It has caused me to kill a good many beaves (sic) perhaps 20 or upwards one of which weighted about 900 lbs. I have fattened 90 or more hogs generally pretty good, several upwards of 300. I have yet about 30 to kill. Have bought about 3500 lbs. at \$4, don't know whether I will have bacon enough or not Suppose I will have corn enough.

On Christmas morning by far the valuablest horse that I owned died with bots. Have near 30 head left in all. Have a tolerable good stock of cattle, middling of hogs, some sheep, etc. Betsy has about 50 geese, 40 turkeys, ducks, chickens, etc. You will guess that

we don't starve. I could name a heap of out-goings that I have, some of them (hiring hands) perhaps unnecessary and unprofitable. But says you where are the incomings? That rather stumps me; but some how or another we get along and honestly too. My factory I consider a source of profit, but only half what it ought to be from the quantity of machinery, which no being of the first order, makes more waste, takes more hands, and does less work than it should. Had I 500 good spindles and other good machinery in proportion to my house and water power I could make from 75 to 100 dollars clear money a week. But I don't expect to be so fixed shortly. It would cost me too much and I must get along the best I can with what I have got and add to it as I find convenient. My factory was very near burnt down a few weeks go by the greatest negligence (to say the least of it) by the machine maker who at that time was the manager in leaving an ash box on the floor at the head of stairs.

About a week ago I received a letter from brother Walter. I suppose he wrote to some of you at the same time. I was pleased to think he was so well accommodated for the present, but suppose it is to much in the heart of the country for him to settle permanently there. He left with me a lame gray horse which he said he got of Mr. Patterson. He is very little better and probably will never be of much value. I let him have on which I hope answered him a good purpose. Reports says Selina is married to Samuel Pickens. Young Fletcher from Buffalo is a few days ago confirmed the report etc. How happens that such an occurrence should take place, and no one write about it for so long a time? I hope its was not so unpleasant a thing that each and every one hated to communicate it. Surely by Monday mornings mail we will hear all about it. I have written about a number of little things, but such as will not be entirely uninteresting to you. I feel stronger and in better health than through the summer and fall. My hearing is considerably impaired. You may count on hearing from me again in four weeks.

Yours affectionately,

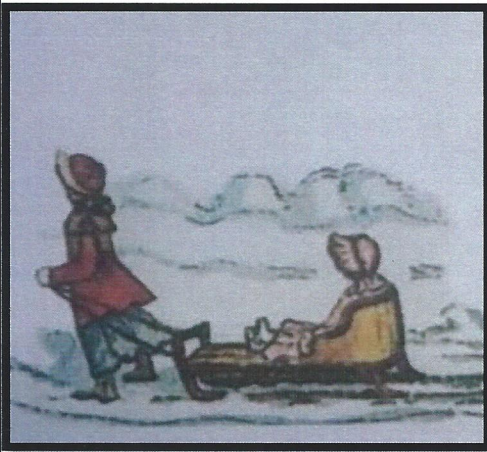
Wm B. Lenoir

P. S. Not one of my relatives must think that because I have said nothing about them I and mine think nothing about them. It isn't so.

**This letter is taken from the book entitled "Happy Valley" by Thomas Felix Hickerson and is transcribed as written.**







**Wishing for  
you, all the  
blessings of the  
Christmas  
Season**

## Appalachian State University Returns



Dr. Ellen A. Cowan, Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences, Appalachian State University and Keith C. Seramur, Professional Geologist with Seramur & Associates, along with several Appalachian students made a return visit to the Fort on November 12, 2023. The goal is to use GPR (ground penetrating radar) in hopes of discovering the location of the actual stockade that was on the property when William Lenoir built his home. In addition to the stockade, an effort will be made to locate the slave quarters and hopefully the slave cemetery.

## Board Highlights

The Board of Directors met at Fort Defiance on November 15, 2023. Board members present were Tina Triplett, Ike Forester, Doug Davis, Steven Rauchfuss, Bill Karr, Nell Fisher, Doug Kogut, Monty Minton and Sandra Watts.

- ASU returned to perform additional scan of the property collecting information below the surface of the ground.
- Sandra and Tina made a trip to the library at ASU to make copies of the Thomas Isaac Lenoir family papers.
- Michael Mullholland of Scout troop 377 of Mooresville will begin his Eagle project in December.
- Discussion of how the 1st Annual Celtic Festival was received by the public with plans to do it again in 2024.
- A grant from Blue Ridge Energy is still outstanding.
- Looking for names for potential board members.
- Moving the office from the back room to the front room of the Visitor Center to make it easier to know when visitors have arrived.
- The aerial photos used in the October newsletter were taken by Douglas Terry.



# FRIENDS OF FORT DEFIANCE

Your support is vitally important to the operation of Fort Defiance. **THANK YOU!** The following members have joined for **2023**:

## **Patriot/Individual**

Oscar L. Doberiner  
 R. Kelly Coffey  
 Helen Nell Fisher  
 Bill Karr  
 Iredell County Extension Master Gardner Assoc. (in memory  
 Of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Julie Mullis

Matt O'Bryant

Karen Barlow (in memory of Shirley Lenoir)

## **Militia/Family**

Wanda Prince

Liza Plaster (in honor of Steven Rauchfuss)

Charles & Carol Bernhardt (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Joanne M. Schwind (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Kathryn H. Hamrick (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Margaret M. Broyhill

Jean Branch

Betty Buss

Lissa Holsclaw (in memory of revolutionary ancestor Colonel Isaac  
 Lee)

Nathan Hunt Gwyn

Tom Gwyn

Valerie Connor

Caldwell County Historical Society

Douglas L. Pegram

## **Lieutenant**

Pam Helton

## **Captain/Patron**

Dr. Myra A. Dickson

Brenda Combs

Monty Combs

Carson Josey Hobson

Rutzinski Family (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Nathan & Julie Dixon (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Joseph P. Logan (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Alvin Johnston

Evelyn Hartshorn Beam

Mary A. Kincaid

Gemstone District Roundtable (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Roger & Jan Clary (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Jane J. Smith

Tina Triplett

Steve McCord

John Hawkins

Dr. John W. Thuss

Joe & Francis Delk

Jeff & Rita Jones

Jerry Brooks

Kathryn LeNoir

Kim Browning

William & Denise Howard

Lee Taylor

Eliza Bishop (in honor of Monty Minton & Sandra Watts)

Jerry N. Brooks

## **Colonel/ Sponsor**

Keith & Carrie Harrison (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Scott & Karen Glover (in memory of Michael W. Bernhardt)

Samuel L. &

Sandra B. Ramsey

James Pennell

Anne & Alex Bernhardt Foundation

## **General/ Benefactor**

Barbara Freiman

Yorke Lawson

John Worsley

Keith Haas Ent.

Ike Forester

Monty Minton

Brenda Bernhardt

Bob Kogut

### **Specified Donations—Thank You**

Bernhardt Furniture Foundation (Capital Im-  
 provements)

Broyhill Family Foundation (Capital Improve-  
 ments)

Lenoir Service League

Hogan Family Foundation (Grounds)

Stevens Family Foundation (Grounds)

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](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 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

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



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