

# Fort Defiance

## Chronicle

Summer Issue

August 2021

**Fort Defiance**

**P.O. Box 686**

**Lenoir, NC  
28645**

**828-758-1671**

### **Board Of Directors**

Sandra Watts

**President**

Nell Fisher

**Secretary**

Ike Forester

**Treasurer**

Bill Karr

Bob Kogut

Stephen Rauchfuss

Doug Davis

Tina Triplett

Monty Minton

**Site Director**

Jonathan Baird

### **Newsletter Committee**

John Hawkins

Sandra Watts

Kelly Coffey

Jonathan Baird

## **REQUEST FOR MATCHING FUNDS**

Recently Fort Defiance, Inc., received a grant of \$10,000 from the Covington Foundation toward the replacing of the roof. One of the conditions of the grant is that the funds be matched within three years. Since the grant is only a small portion of what is needed, the Board of Directors would like to match the funds before the end of the calendar year, so they can move forward in raising the remainder of the needed amount.

A replacement roof has been the subject for discussion for more than twenty years. Various fundraisers have been held, but the funds raised always seemed to be needed for other causes.

Because the original restoration was made in accordance with William Lenoir's specifications, it is perhaps the most authentic restoration in the State. The house is on the National Registry of Historic Places, so any repairs or renovations must be in accordance with the Registry's guidelines. Shingles for the roof must conform to the time period of the house's original construction.

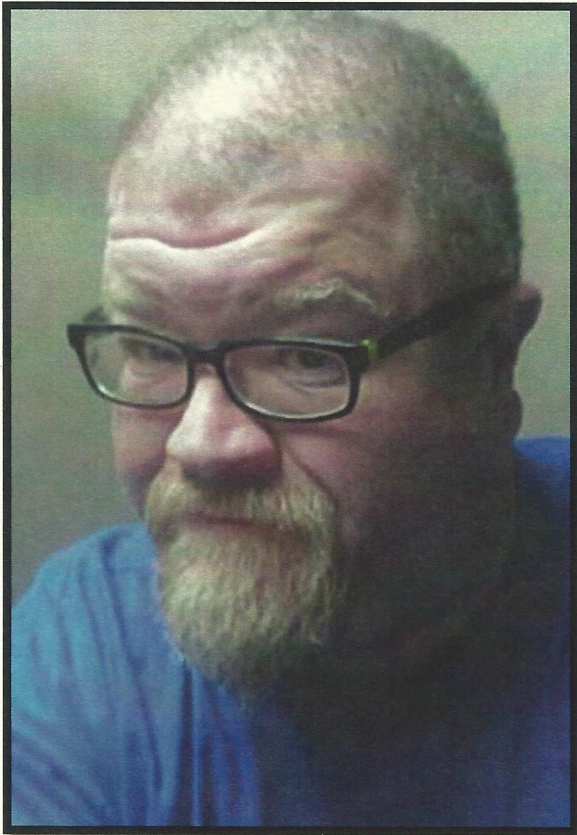
Funding for the day-by-day operation has always been from those who join the Friends of Fort Defiance. No Federal, State or local monies are received to operate the site. Any special projects that are above and beyond the cost of daily operations must be funded by special fund raisers or donations designated for the cause.

In order to match the Covington Foundation grant, the Board is asking for gifts specified as matching. A gift in any amount would be appreciated, and the small gift is appreciated just as much as the large gift. Donors will be listed in a separate category in the newsletter.





## New Site Director



**JONATHAN BAIRD**

Born and raised in the South Mountain area of Burke County, North Carolina. Jonathan David Baird worked professionally as an archaeologist between 1994 and 2014. As an undergraduate, he attended Western Carolina University. He has a master's degree from Fort Hays State University in American history, focusing on the frontier and frontier mythology during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He also has a master's degree in English literature from Fort Hays. His focus of study was the influence of Darwin's theory on late 19th-century Gothic horror literature.

In 2014 Jonathan was elected and served for two years as one of the district supervisors for Soil and Water in Burke County, North Carolina, only leaving due to his move out of the district.

Jonathan has an avid interest in sword fighting and fought at the world championship, Battle of the Nation's 2017, in Barcelona, Spain. His interests also include traditional skills, primitive technology, and ethnobotany.

In 2018 Jonathan completed the MFA program in writing at Lindenwood University and is currently working towards his Ph.D. in American history at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. His research focuses on the diaspora of tri-racial populations out of Virginia in the late 18th and early 19th century and the continuing family connections between Melungeon (tri-racial) groups throughout Appalachia into the early 20th century.

Jonathan has written for and edited several fiction anthology collections. He also has an academic work entitled *A Wolf in Petticoats: Essays Exploring Darwinism, Sexuality, and Gender in Late Victorian Gothic Horror*.

Jonathan is a Melungeon. Melungeons are a tri-racial group (Portuguese/European, African, and Native American) who lived in isolated communities in the Appalachian Mountains.

Jonathan began his duties on July 1.



## DONATIONS

A 1820 corner cabinet that belong to William Lenoir has been gifted back to the site from the family of Gwyn Hunt Lenoir Moore.

Also added to our collection is a Eastlake Victorian walnut drop marble center top dresser, a Seth Thomas OG or Ogee clock by the William L. Gilbert Clock Co. of Winsted, Ct. along with a U.S. Cavalry Sable model 1860 and a U.S. Civil War Era M1850 Foot Officer sword. These items were gifted by the Gloria Lenoir family of Texas.

Thank you to Mary Bohlen for the gifting of toilet paper, paper towels and hand soap from our wish list in the last newsletter

Thank you to Steve McCord for doing handy-man type maintenance.

Thank you to the Bernhardt Foundation for a donation for the public restroom renovations.

## WISH LIST

1. Gravel for driveway, approximately \$1,500.
2. Past Perfect Inventory Software, approximately \$2,000;
3. Office and Housekeeping supplies, i.e. printers ink, business envelopes, paper, file folders, cleaning supplies, toilet tissue, paper towels, soap, etc.
4. Volunteers—regular and occasional—docents, administrative skills as well as special skills such as grounds care, building repair, or cleaning.
5. Bottled water or soft drinks and snacks for volunteers.
6. Acid free boxes and acid free tissue paper.

## LUNCH & LEARN

A special “Thank You” to William Caldwell, Park Guide for the Overmountain National Historic Trail, for an excellent “Lunch and Learn” program on June 19. Approximately 35 people were in attendance. Thank you to Board members Sandra Watts, Nell Fisher, Bill Karr, Ike Forrester, Stephen Rauchfuss, and Tina Triplett who volunteered on that day.





## CHAMPION—AMERICAN BEECH TREE

Board member, Nell Fisher, got in touch with the Joseph Franklin and Jason Noble of the North Carolina Forestry Service and requested that they come out and take a look at the American Beech tree and give the board of directors information and tips on how to mitigate concerns and to help guide the board in maintaining the tree. The tree was last measured 17 years ago. To quote their report “The tree in question is an American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*). Using growth factor calculations, I estimate this tree to be 380 years old! Not only is this a large beech tree, it is currently known as the champion beech tree in the North Carolina Forestry Service database. Meaning it is currently the largest beech tree known in the State of North Carolina. You contacted my office concerning the health of this tree and how you can protect it since it is not only a champion tree but is also of historical significance to Fort Defiance.”

“The condition of the tree upon inspection suggests, the tree has lost some major heavy limbs, the tree has hollowed out in the sections from heart rot, and there are large exposed root systems. The tree is still producing plenty of leaves and gumballs and there are no signs of harmful diseases or insects at the time of the inspection.”

“The current issues will grow more severe as the tree grows and ages. Trees unfortunately don’t live forever and while it can be a sad event for those that are historically significant to die, there is little that can be done to keep trees of any kind alive forever. American beech trees are recorded to live to around 300-400 years old and this tree is estimated to be in that age range. The best thing you can do is promote the health of the tree as best as possible and hope for a positive outcome. “



The tree measured 191 inches in circumference in 2004 and is now 206 inches. The average crown spread was 92 feet and now is 104 feet.

### Recommendations

1. Contact a Certified Arborist or tree care specialist with similar credentials to look into reducing any hazardous limbs and improve the overall structure of the crowns of the American beech. A list of arborists can be found here: [https://www.ncforests-service.gov/urban/urban\\_consultingarborists.htm](https://www.ncforests-service.gov/urban/urban_consultingarborists.htm)

2. Potentially look at removal of the competing trees nearest to the beech to allow less nutrient consumption and crowding from surrounding vegetation. Keep in mind not to remove too much of the surrounding trees as these trees can assist in protecting the crown from wind damage.



## IN THE OLDEN TIMES

Connected with the account of the battle of Kings Mountain, you have already had some account of Surry (including then Wilkes, Ashe, and Burke and extending to the Miss. River) being frontier country in 1775, and of the thinly inhabited situation of the Western Country, it being an entire wilderness.

Then the Mulberry Fields Meeting House was the only place of worship in the upper end of said County. It was built by the Baptists and very large congregations of different persuasions of people attend their meetings. The gentlemen generally dressed in hunting shirts, short breeches, leggings, and moccasins. The ladies in linsey (flax) petticoats and bed-gowns and often without shoes in the summer. Some had bonnets and bed gowns made of calico, but generally of linsey, and some of them had on men's hats. Their hair commonly was clubbed.

Men generally had long hair, and wore it either in a cue or clubbed. Once at a large meeting I noticed there were but two ladies that had on long gowns. One of them was laced genteelly, and the body of the other was open, and the tail thereof drawn up and tucked in her apron or coat string. They appeared very orderly and devout at meetings, and going to their homes you would find them living well, and they would treat you with great hospitality, giving you plenty of pork, bacon, beef, bear meat and venison; also milk, butter, cheese and honey. The buffaloes and elks were then chiefly destroyed. And when you left them, as there were no public roads and few plain paths, the men would go with you to show you the way until you could be thus accommodated by some other person. You might travel hundreds of miles and not meet with any person who would receive any pay.

As the war progressed, Gentlemen and Ladies that had been in the habit of dressing well seemed to take a great pleasure in dressing in homespun, to set an example to others, suitable to the times. And through patriotism with some degree of necessity, both gentlemen and ladies continued to dress plain and cheap during the war and for some years after its termination.

The good economy and patriotism of the ladies of those times ought to be made known to their endless posterity as an encouragement to them, should occasion require it, to imitate the virtues and heroism of their ancestors. These ladies were busily engaged to provide clothing for the militia when called into service (which was very often) and clothing could not be had in any other way. The clothing of that day was spun and woven at home. They also encouraged their dearly loved husbands never to flinch in so glorious a cause, and that they would rather their husbands should bravely die in defense of liberty, than to disgrace themselves by cowardice. Each expressing a willingness that her husband should perform his full share of public service, while they would stay at home and provide subsistence for their families. Many of them did this by putting their hands to the plow and hoe by day and to the spinning wheel by night.

The Provincial Congress that formed our State Constitution in 1776 appointed Justices for each County to act until Justices could be permanently appointed by a legislature to be convened under said Constitution. I was appointed a Justice by the Congress aforesaid, and one of the first appointed by the General Assembly of the State, and still act under that appointment, and I suppose, the oldest in the United States.



## Board Highlights

The Board met on June 8. Members present: Sandra Watts, Ike Forrester, Bob Kogut, Tina Triplett, Monty Minton, Stephen Rauchfuss, Nell Fisher, Doug Davis.

Antique furniture and swords were donated by Gloria Lenoir of Texas and delivered.

Monte Minton and Tina Triplett approved to Board.

Sandra reported on profits from William Lenoir's birthday party.

Grants received: Covington Foundation matching challenge grant for roof; Bernhardt Foundation, renovation of restrooms.

Grants requested: Hogan Foundation, grading and graveling of the driveway; Lenoir Service League, newsletter; Caldwell County, operating expense.

Sandra reported newsletter has been a beneficial marketing tool. Many people are appreciative and complimentary.

Received several application for Site Director position. Decision to be made soon.

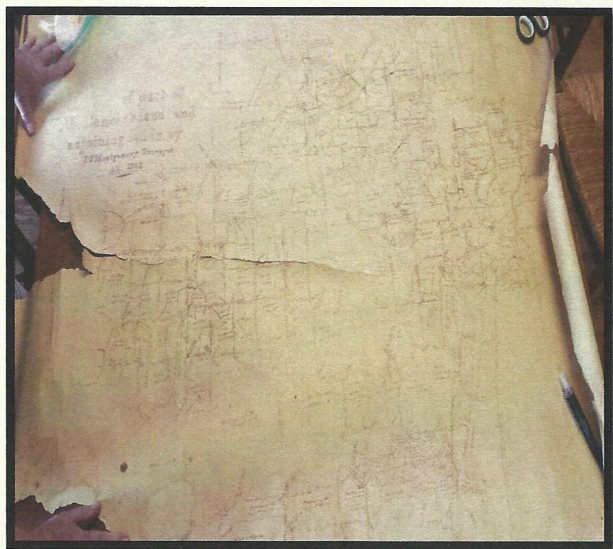
Air conditioner in Visitors Center not working.

Tina Triplett is working on inventoried of approximately 200 books. Discussion on how to display them are on going.

Checking on reprinting the book entitle "Hand In Hand."

Jason Noble, Caldwell Ranger, has been contacted about trees on property.

A representative of the NC Highway Historical Marker program has been contacted regarding improving the signage along highway 321 and highway 268.



Heather South, Lead Archivist with the Western Regional Archives and Jeff Futch Regional Supervisor, Western Office of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources are planning to come to and assist with the digitizing of the 1868 map of the property owned by Walter W. Lenoir donated by Steven Sudderth of Blowing Rock



# FRIENDS OF FORT DEFIANCE

The following members have joined for 2021:

## Patriot/Individual

Wanda Prince  
Oscar Dobereiner  
Cheryl Hill Sanborn

## Militia/Family

John Hawkins  
Nell Fisher & Bill Karr  
R Kelly Coffey  
Betty Buss  
Jeanette A. Jacob

## Lieutenant

Stephen Rauchfuss

## Captain/Patron

Mary Kincaid  
Dr. John W. & Hanna Thuss  
Joe & Frances Delk  
Lucy F. McCarl  
Samuel & Sandra Ramsey  
Jerry & Millie Brooks  
David B Smith  
Jeff and Rita Joines  
Chuck Forester (In honor of Ike Forester)

James Pennell  
Monty & Brenda Combs  
Catherine Lenoir Brown Simpson (In loving memory of Carol Jean Sellers Brown )  
Tina Triplett (in Memory of Ned Triplett)  
Kim Browning (in Memory of Beck Phillips Forester)  
Barbara Freiman  
Steve McCord  
Cheryl & Darrell Keener  
Jean and Steve Branch

## Colonel/ Sponsor

## General/ Benefactor

Building Laboratory LLC

## Matching Funds Contributors

Steve and Jean Branch  
Eliza Bishop

## Specified Donations

Bernhardt Foundation (Restrooms)

Interested in becoming a Friend of Fort Defiance? Memberships are available for individuals, families, and corporations who are looking to support local history. 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.

Anyone wanting to become a member should send dues in payment to Fort Defiance, P. O. Box 686, Lenoir, NC 28645.

Contact Fort Defiance at [fortdefiance@gmail.com](mailto:fortdefiance@gmail.com) or call 828-458-1671.

-----Detach here-----

_____ 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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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)

**Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Instagram.**

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



Return Service Requested

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Fort Defiance  
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