



Fort Defiance

Chronicle



Summer

June 2026

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

828-758-1671

fortdefiancenc@gmail.com

historicfortdefiancenc.org

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Newsletter

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Lunch & Learn Program **Trail to Victory**

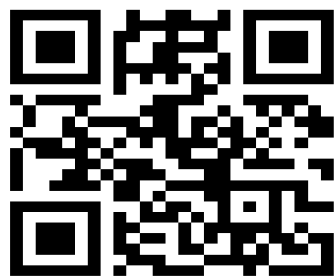


Join us on **Saturday, June 13, 2026 at 12:00** for guest speaker William Caldwell, Trail Ranger, for the Overmountain Victory Historic Trail. William has been a dedicated Park Ranger for the Overmountain Victory Trail for years and will be sharing his knowledge of the trail's history, significance, and preservation. The hardest part of any journey is the first step. The program "Trail to Victory" is not only the story of the Overmountain Victory Trail, but the larger story of the darkest days of the American Revolution and shows how the actions of the Patriot frontiersmen in 1780 turned a journey of difficulties into a path towards victory.

This is a **FREE** event, so bring your lunch and a chair and plan to spend the day. Picnic tables are available but limited.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

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 your support. Your continued patronage is essential to the success of Fort Defiance!



Thank You
**FOR YOUR
SUPPORT**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



CALL US TODAY

Like any non-profit organization, volunteers are a vital part of the success of the organization. A variety of volunteer roles are needed. Activities such as everyday tasks for volunteers who only want to help with special occasions. Do you enjoy dressing up in 18th-century clothing? We have a place for you. But do not worry, you do not have to dress up to volunteer. There are volunteer opportunities for everyone! Ask, and we can find a place for you!

Volunteer opportunities:

Dressing in costume for events, becoming a Docent, helping run the Visitors Center, stocking the gift shop, doing grounds work, cleaning the historic house, researching, educating, hosting group events, and helping to create the newsletters.

For more information about volunteering or to learn how to get involved, please contact us at fortdefiancenc@gmail.com, fill out the volunteer form on the website www/historicfortdefiancenc.org or call Fort Defiance at (828) 758-1671.



Lenoir's Rangers Return

The Lenoir's Rangers muster at Fort Defiance on April 11th and 12th coincided with the 250th anniversary of the Halifax Resolves. This was the first official call for independence from Great Britain in Colonial America and paved the way for the Declaration of Independence in July.

Fort Defiance and the Lenoir's Rangers welcomed over 50 visitors to the site.

Due to the burning ban, no demonstrations requiring an open flame could take place. Visitors enjoyed musket drills and living history reenactments. Fort Defiance welcomed many new visitors as well as old friends, many of whom toured the 18th century home.

Visitors from Historic Bethabara



On Tuesday, March 31, 2026 the site was visited by a group of approximately 20 staff members from Historic Bethabara, located out of Winston Salem. Bethabara is the site of the first Moravian settlement in North Carolina, founded in 1753. Their visit was a training session with particular emphasis on the saga of King's Mountain and its historical consequences. Between 300 and 400 Loyalist prisoners from the battle of Kings Mountain were held at Bethabara from October 23 to November 10, 1780. Once they finished their visit their training took them to Wilkes Heritage Museum in Wilkesboro.

Molding Young Minds

Fort Defiance was visited by 23 fourth grade students and 18 accompanying chaperones on April 2nd for a tour of the home and the grounds. The group mustered in front of the old home to learn about William Lenoir and the Battle of King's Mountain.

Following the introduction of William Lenoir, the group was guided through the house to learn of his descendants as well as life in the home from its construction through the Civil War. The field trip included a tour of the grounds from the family cemetery to the garden and famous beech tree. Following the tour, the students enjoyed lunch and games before departing.



Ms. Cassidy Boyd and her 4th Grade Class from Oak Hill Charter School

Brr... It's Cold In Here: Book Preservation

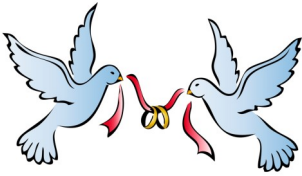


Pamela Mitchem and Angela Howell visited Fort Defiance from Appalachian State University's Special Collections to share their expertise in book preservation and to evaluate the historic book collection from the onsite collection of Lenoir books. During their visit, they assessed the condition of the books and developed a work plan for transporting and flash-freezing the collection.

Although freezing antique books may seem risky due to the potential for condensation, the method of "flash-freezing" involves cooling the books to a very low temperature rapidly. The collection will be maintained at a constant temperature for at least a week to elimi-

nate any mold or silverfish without causing damage to the books. Pamela and Angela also provided guidance on techniques to ensure proper care of the collection once they return to Fort Defiance.

Despite their age, the books are in good condition. Historical details about the books can be observed, including some rebinding on the spines, likely done by family members as the books changed hands over time. The onsite collection includes works from William Lenoir's personal collection, as well as a few by Thomas Lenoir. Optics represented range from ledgers to Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, as well as a copy of *Br'er Rabbit*, among others.



Time for a Wedding!

Below are several wedding announcements with recognizable families from Lenoir and the Happy Valley region. Today June is usually associated with “Wedding Season,” but these unions occurred between the months of October and December, possibly as a general time of gathering.

Published in *The Lenoir Topic*, Thurs, Oct 21, 1880

A DOUBLE WEDDING—On the 13th inst., an interesting event took place at the residence of Sol. J. A. Dula, near Lenoir—being the marriage of two of his daughters. Miss Lula was married to Mr. Thomas A. Love of Watauga, and Miss Alica A. to Mr. P. L. Estes, of Happy Home. Rev. J.S. Ervin, of Lenoir, and Rev. R.L. Abernethy, of Rutherford College, officiated. Quite a number of relatives and friends were present, and a handsome supper was served. Our congratulations and best wishes.

Published in *The Lenoir Topic*, Wed, Dec 12, 1888

WEDDING ON THE YADKIN—Married at the residence of the bride’s father on the 5th inst., by S.L. Patterson, J. P., C. Wm. Sullivan to Maggie G. Steele, daughter of J. J. Steele, Esq., all of Yadkin Valley. Tall men were a feature of the occasion. Eight men were present, including the groom, four brothers of the bride, parson and two relatives, aggregated the respectable altitude of 49 feet 8 inches, or an average each of 6 feet, 2 1/2 inches. There was a large company, a handsome supper and a happy time.

Published in *The Lenoir Topic*, Wed, Dec. 22, 1886

Hymeneal.

Cards are out for the marriage tonight, (Wednesday), in the Methodist church, of Mr. James L. Nelson, of the firm of Cloyd & Nelson, and Miss Emma S., the daughter of Dr. A.A. Scroggs. There will be five couples in attendance and the church will be handsomely decorated. This event has been looked forward to for several weeks and a crowded house may be expected.

“They say” that Mr. H.C. Martin, our popular hardware merchant, and Miss Ida Clarke, daughter of Mr. S. M. Clarke, will be married at the residence of the bride’s father tomorrow evening.

We know that THE TOPIC has no business printing all this, but everybody is talking about the weddings and what everybody talks about it is in the habit of printing. Our friends have our congratulations.



In Other News...

Published in *The Lenoir Topic*, Sat. Oct 19, 1878, page 1.**Narrow Escape**

Judge Cilley's little son, Lenoir, had a narrow escape a few days ago. He was at his grandfather's (Col. Harper) in the country, and was playing alone in the yard. He called his to his grandmother, and told her to come there, he had found a large snake, and it was laughing at him. She hastened to the child, who is not yet three years old, and close by him lay a rattlesnake's pilot, with his mouth stretched and tongue darting. It is needless to say anything of the fright of the family, or the rapidity with which the child was removed, and the speedy death of his snakeship.

Published in *The Lenoir Topic*, Thurs. July 24, 1879.

The Rev. Johannes Oertel, an eminent divine and a distinguished artist, who for some years past has been living in Lenoir, has recently been called to take charge of Grace (Episcopal) Church at this place. He has purchased the beautiful lot opposite the residence of Mr. E. S. Walton, where he proposes to build. He has now become a fixture, and all Morganton congratulates itself on so valuable an acquisition. His art-studio will be a great place of resort for the lovers of fine paintings.

—*Blade*.

**Board Highlights**

- A board of directors meeting was held on Thursday, May 14, 2026 beginning at 5:30. Members present were Ike Forester, Nell Fisher, Tina Triplett, Monty Minton, Steve Rauchfuss, Doug Davis, Kayleigh Cory, Bob Kogut and Sandra Watts.
- Site directors report indicated 270 visitors since April 1, 2026. Memberships continue to be received and stands at 51.
- Tina Triplett designed a quilt for America 250 that will be raffled through out the year.
- Sandra Watts disclosed grant requests that have been submitted for 2026 to be used for capital improvements.
- A update on the Lunch & Learn Event planned for June 13th with Park Ranger William Caldwell.
- New books shelves were purchased to house the Lenoir family book collection once they return from Appalachian State University. They will be housed in the Visitor Center where it is climate controlled.
- Date for the Friends of Fort Defiance Annual Membership meeting has been scheduled for September.
- Molly Switzer who worked in 2025 as an intern from ASU and continued to work at the site after her internship ended will be leaving effective May 23, 2026. She graduated May 8, 2026 with her Masters degree in Public History.

FRIENDS OF FORT DEFIANCE

Your support is vitally important to the operation of Fort Defiance. **THANK YOU!** The following members have joined for **2026**:

Please Renew now for 2026

Patriot/Individual

Mark Coltrain
Orrin Robbins
Karen Barlow
Wanda Prince
Richmond Bernhardt
Katherine Bravo
Fran Hagaman
Jeanne Dairaghi

Militia/Family

Lissa Holsclaw
Kelly Coffey
Steve & Jean Branch
Sharon Underwood
Jill Privott
Pam Helton

Lieutenant

Britton King
Lucy McCarl
William H. LeNoir, Jr.

Captain/Patron

Jennie G. Deal
Al & Adrienne Johnston
Dr. Myra A. Dickson
Monty & Brenda Combs
Cindy Day
Jerry Brooks
Thomas Allen & Virginia Foxx
Douglas Pegram

Captain/Patron

Tina Triplett
Dana M. Brown
Jim & Judy Thompson
Charles Forester
Joe & Frances Delk
Lee Taylor
Lewis & Charlotte Travland
Frank McMillan
Laura Sheaffer
William F. & Denise F. Howard
Ellen Cowan & Keith Seramur
James William Lenoir

Colonel/ Sponsor

Tom Tighe

General/ Benefactor

Brenda Bernhardt
James Pennell
Barbara Freiman
Anne Harper Bernhardt
Sandra & Samuel Ramsey
C. Yorke Lawson

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. Payments can also be made by credit card on the Site's 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 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

Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Instagram.

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



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