



# Fort Defiance

## Chronicle



Fall Issue

October 2024

### Fort Defiance

P.O. Box 686

Lenoir, NC 28645

828-758-1671

fortdefiancenc@gmail.com

historicfortdefiancenc.org

### Board Of Directors

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Tina Triplett

**Vice President**

Nell Fisher

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**Treasurer**

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Bob Kogut

Stephen Rauchfuss

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Monty Minton

John Church

**Newsletter**

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Sandra Watts

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## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Celtic Music Festival

**FREE ADMISSION!**

Saturday, October 12, 2024 - 11:00 AM to 5:30 PM

**FORT DEFIANCE**

*Bring a lawn chair!*

◆ **Puddingstone**

◆ **Miller & Pardue** ◆ **Suzanne Williams**

◆ **Down The Hall Band**

◆ **Terry Edwards** ◆ **Patrick & Kay Crouch**

◆ **St. Joseph Irish Step Dancers**

◆ **Fife & Drum Band**

**Bobby Steadman, Sound Engineer**

### FREE EVENT

Come visit Fort Defiance on October 12 for this **free** event featuring local musicians in the gorgeous setting of Happy Valley. There will be multiple musical acts throughout the day culminating with three sets by **Puddingstone** in the afternoon. Bring a lawn chair and settle in for a fun day of tunes and camaraderie. Tours of the historic home will be available throughout the day for the typical admission fee of \$7 for adults and \$5 for children. The event will also include demonstration by the Caldwell County Heritage Museum, 18th century interpreters, vendors and food.



### Upcoming Events

#### Annual Membership Meeting

The Board of Directors at Fort Defiance would like to notify the “Friends of Fort Defiance” of the annual membership meeting on Saturday, October 26, 2024 beginning at 12:30 at Fort Defiance (weather permitting). Food and beverages will be served. Those planning to attend should RSVP by calling 828-758-1671 or email [fortdefiancenc@gmail.com](mailto:fortdefiancenc@gmail.com). Please reply by October 19, 2024.

Members will be given an update and overview of the year’s activities, future projects, invited to ask questions, offer suggestions and learn ways to become involved.

Come for a time of information and fellowship with others who are interested in and dedicated to the preservation of Fort Defiance



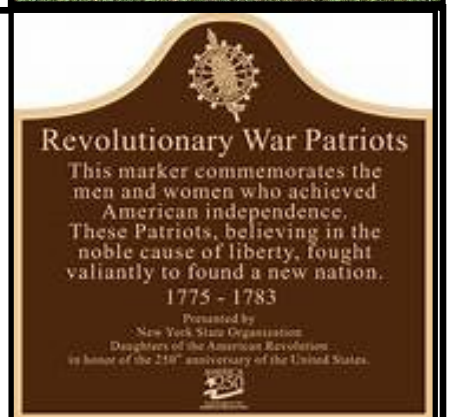
#### REVOLUTIONARY WAR VETERAN GRAVE MARKING

**(November 2 11:00 am)** The Rendezvous Mountain Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (Wilkes County) will place individual grave markers at the graves of Major General William Lenoir and Major Charles Gordon to honor their service in the Revolutionary War. The public is invited to attend.



#### PATRIOT MARKER CEREMONY (November 10 3:00 pm)

The Tucker’s Barn Chapter (Caldwell County) of the Daughters of the American Revolution will dedicate a Patriot’s Marker at the entrance to the Fort Defiance Visitor Center. A reception will follow in the picnic shelter with music provided by Bob Kogut.



### The Women of Fort Defiance: A Five Part Series

The following article is Part Four of the continuing series on the women of Fort Defiance. This issue will focus on Eliza Mira Lenoir daughter of William Lenoir and Ann Ballard Lenoir.

Eliza Mira Lenoir was born on September 20, 1789, in Wilkes County and lived at Fort Defiance until her death on August 16, 1835, having never married.

Not much is known about Mira except through newspaper clippings and letters of the family. A newspaper article published in *The Morganton Herald* dated August 14, 1890 is about the Hon. Robert H. Burton, however, there is a small notation of Mira included. "It was said, that at one time the Hon. Robert H. Burton who settled and practiced law in Morganton was engaged to Miss Myra (Mira) Lenoir, a daughter of General Lenoir, who never married. On account of some disagreement, she broke off the engagement."

In the book entitled *Echoes of Happy Valley*, by Thomas Felix Hickerson a letter from Mira dated July 9, 1828 to her niece Julia of whom she was also guardian gives the reader a glimpse of what life was like for Mira at that point in time.

*Dearest Julia: I expect others have told you about your Cousin Eliza's wedding, etc. We had a pleasant time and should have been truly glad if you and Louisa could have been here. Mira D - went with the party to Spartanburg. I have been sorry ever since that I did not go too, for they appeared anxious to have me. There was a great ball in Spartanburg on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, partly in compliment to Mr. and Mrs. Henry. We all had tickets there, and to a ball in Wilkesboro, but did not go.*

*We received a letter last week from your Uncle Samuel. He is not coming to North Carolina this summer. Says your dear little brothers [he, being their guardian] are well and doing well. I don't know whether you have heard that the Legislature of Alabama unanimously entered into a resolution to have a vessel fitted out to send to the Island of Cuba for the purpose of conveying the remains of your dear Father to his plantation home in Alabama to be buried by the side of his beloved wife. [Governor Pickens had gone to Cuba hoping the climate would improve his health]. It is an evidence of the high regard in which that State held him, and a testimony of their respect to his memory, that I shall ever feel grateful for, tho it was nothing more than he deserved....*

*I tried to get a homespun dress to send you by Edmund but could not get it woven. Let me know how you like Louisa's, and if you had rather have yours some other stripe, and whether you want it checked, and all about it. Let me know what you need and how you get your clothes made.*

*Mother gets a little better of her lameness and her health is tolerably good, and father is quite well. They both send their love to you and L-, and you must be good girls. I hope there is no danger of your doing otherwise. I cannot think that either of you will ever act so as willfully to cause moments of disquietude to your friends..... You and L- know that I love you and wish you every good. Heaven bless and preserve you and fill your hearts with gratitude for all its blessing.*

*With sincere affection,*

*Your aunt Mira*

As stated earlier, Mira died on August 16, 1835, and is buried in the family cemetery at Fort Defiance which is still being used by the Lenoir family.



The inscription on the tombstone states,

Eliza Mira Lenoir

Born September 20, 1789

Died August 16, 1835

Daughter of William and Ann Lenoir

*“Admired and beloved for her intellectual and moral worth and will long be affectionately remembered by her relations and numerous friends.” Heaven is our best home.*

An obituary for Mira published in the *Weekly Raleigh Register*, Tuesday, September 15, 1835 states “At Fort Defiance, Wilkes County, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, after a lingering illness, Miss Eliza Mira Lenoir, daughter of General William Lenoir, in the 45<sup>th</sup> year of her age. The deceased possessed in an eminent degree all the moral, social and refined qualities of the heart, which adorn and beautify the female character, in the exemplification of which, the many acts of kindness and urbanity which it fell to her lot to dispense at the hospitable mansion of her venerable father, bears ample testimony, and will be long remembered by an extensive circle of friends and acquaintances.”

## Art Project Update

The Board of Directors at Fort Defiance is excited about the unique opportunity to honor the enslaved individuals and families who labored at the plantation, but whose lives and contributions have long been overlooked. A fund raising campaign began to raise funds to commission a painting that will shed light on their stories and experiences.

The artist chosen for this project is Israel Solomon, a descendant of Nancy (born 1785), Fairby (born 1806), and Edmund (born 1835 and sold 1848), who were among those enslaved at Fort Defiance. Israel is a talented painter, muralist, and educator based in Indianapolis, Indiana, known for his vibrant and colorful paintings depicting people and community scenes.

The commissioned painting will cover an entire wall in the summer kitchen building, which houses a new exhibit about the enslaved people who lived and worked on the plantation. The painting will provide visitors with deep and lasting interpretations that present the reality of slavery to a modern generation

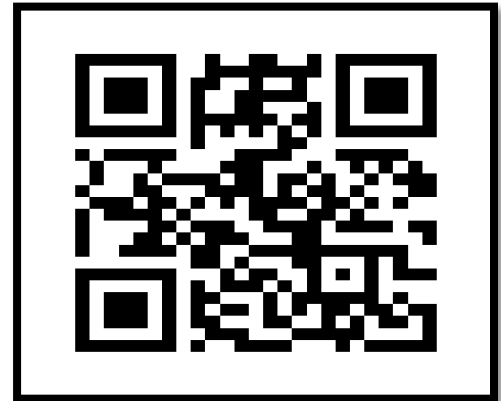
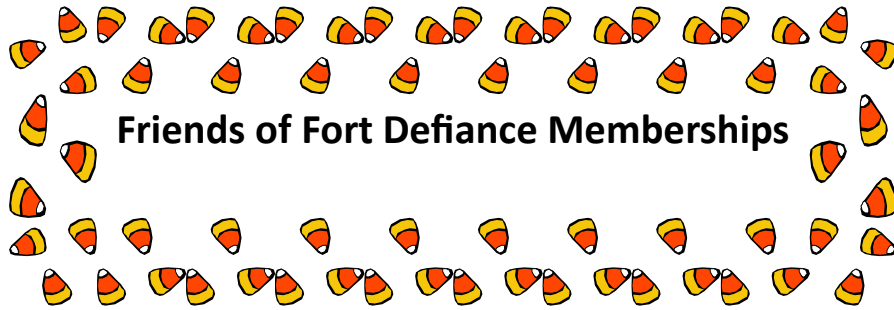
Thank you to the following who have made a contribution to this project.

Joseph and Francis Delk	Myra A. Dickson
Ellen A. Cowen	Judy H. Beal
Liza Plaster	Samual and Sandra Ramsey
William A. Early III	C. Yorke Lawson
Jeannie G. Deal	Robert L. Patton
Barbara Freiman	Mabel T. Ledford
Jerry and Millie Brooks	Alex and Ann Bernhard
Lynn Lathrop	James W. Pennell
Julie Lenox-Sharifi	Beth Davidson
Wanda Prince	Leslie McKesson
Charlotte N. Travland	Caroline B. Bradford
Doris C. Conn	Valerie Connor
Monty and Brenda Combs	Patrick and Kay Crouch

Please consider donating to this important project. Checks should be made payable to Fort Defiance, Inc. and mailed to P. O. Box 686, Lenoir, NC 28645. Please indicate your donations are for the project called "The Other Faces of Fort Defiance". Together, we can create a lasting impact and share a more complete

The following was taken from among the old letters and papers which were examined by William Lenoir's granddaughter, Laura Lenoir Norwood.

**Written by William Lenoir—7th October, 1780.** "We defeated Ferguson and his army at Kings Mountain. Killed and took all. Their total number was 1187, their dead 250. Our number was about 700. Our dead 32 and 40 died after-word of their wounds



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.** If you haven't renewed your membership for 2024, please do so now. If you're not yet a member, won't you please join now. 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](http://www.historicfortdefiancenc.org) to show support. Continued patronage is essential to the success of Fort Defiance. **Thank you!**

### Board Highlights

- ◆ Board meeting was held September 5, 2024 at 5:30 at Fort Defiance. Attending members were: Monty Minton, Steve Rauchfuss, Ike Forester, Tina Triplett, Bob Kogut, Nell Fisher, Bill Karr
- ◆ Gabe Pipes gave the Site Director's report. His report included the number of visitors over the last two months and gross sales for the Fort. Gabe also discussed the upcoming events which includes the "Living History Days" for Caldwell County Students
- ◆ Sandra Watts reviewed all working grant applications with the board.
- ◆ Tina Triplett discussed the grant application to the National Park Service and gave an update on donations that are earmarked for the art project. Tina also discussed the purchase of acrylic window inserts. This will help with the UVA exposure to furnishing and artifacts in the house.
- ◆ The Mooresville Boy Scout Troup 377 has contacted the site for another Eagle Scout project to take place in the fall.
- ◆ Bob Kogut updated the board on the final stages of the planning process for the upcoming Celtic Festival.

# 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

Karen Barlow (in honor of Charles Lenoir)  
 Mary Bohlen  
 Katherine Bravo  
 Jeanne Dairaghi  
 Oscar L. Doberiner  
 Nell Fisher  
 Britton King  
 Ed Wright

## Lieutenant

Alvin M. Johnston

## Captain/Patron

John B. Beall  
 Sharon Bryant  
 Brenda Combs  
 Monty Combs  
 Valerie Connor  
 Dr. Ellen Cowan  
 Cindy Day  
 Joe & Frances Delk  
 Dr. Myra A. Dickson  
 Scott Frady  
 John Hawkins  
 Mr & Mrs. William F. Howard III  
 Jeanette A. Jacob  
 Mary A. Kincaid  
 Steve McCord  
 Dr. Leslie McKesson  
 Frank McMillan  
 Douglas Pegram  
 Lee Taylor  
 Jim & Judy Thompson  
 Tina Triplett

## Colonel/ Sponsor

Samuel L. & Sandra B. Ramsey

## General/ Benefactor

Brenda Bernhardt  
 Barbara Freiman  
 Collot Guerard  
 Yorke Lawson  
 James Pennell

## Militia/Family

David Baker  
 AJ & Caroline Bennett  
 Betty Buss  
 Kelly Coffey  
 Karen Dickerson  
 Tom Gwyn  
 Pam Helton  
 Lissa Holsclaw  
 Jean Lenoir  
 Katherine Nell Lenoir  
 Lucy McCarl  
 Bill McKinney  
 Tony & Jane Parisi  
 Wanda Prince  
 Sharon & Roger Underwood  
 Mabel T. Ledford

## Specified Donations—Thank You

Anne and Alex Bernhardt Foundation  
 Bernhardt Furniture Foundation  
 Broyhill Family 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](http://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](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 1.8 miles 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

**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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