

Fort Defiance

Chronicle



Summer Issue

August 2024

Fort Defiance

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World War II On The Homefront

Lunch and Learn

Saturday, August 10 12:00 pm

Join local historian Michael Hardy on August 10 at noon for a Lunch and Learn on the subject of World War II on the Home Front. Mr. Hardy is the author of twenty-six books currently in print, and his articles have appeared in *Civil War Times*, *America's Civil War*, *Gettysburg Magazine*, *Confederate Veteran*, *Camp Chase Gazette*, *Carolina Mountain Life*, and the *Tar Heel Junior Historian*. He has appeared on several local television programs, and in 2016, in *Blood and Fury: America's Civil War* on the American Heroes Channel. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama, who honored him with the 2012 Alice Parker Award for Outstanding Literature and Arts. In 2010, he was named the North Carolina Historian of the Year by the North Carolina Society of Historians. That organization has also honored him with several other awards, as have the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans. In 2015, his family was honored as the Volunteers of the Year for the Pisgah District, Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service. Bring a bag lunch to the picnic shelter and learn more about how the War in Europe and the Pacific affected those at home. Bring your own chair to this rain or shine, free event. Tours of the house will also be available during the event for the fee of \$7 for adults and \$5 for children.

Scenes of Fort Defiance Painting Workshop

September 14 & 21 1:00 pm

Award-winning artist Tony Parisi will teach painting skills while leading the class in a canvas acrylic painting of the Smokehouse and Black Walnut Tree. This will be a two Saturday event. All art supplies will be provided and you will leave the event with your own masterpiece of an iconic Fort Defiance scene. The event will begin promptly at 1:00 pm each Saturday with instruction by Tony, who will walk you through the steps leading to your creation. Bring the beverage of your choice and any snacks that you might wish to enjoy throughout the afternoon. The class is limited to ten participants so buy your tickets now. Fee for the class is \$50 for the general public and \$35 for Fort Defiance members. **Participants must be present both Saturdays to complete the painting.** Ticket purchases will include a tour of the historic home. For a tour with the event, please arrive by 12:00 pm on either Saturday. Tickets for the event may be purchased at: <https://www.historicfortdefiancenc.org/event-details-registration/scenes-of-fort-defiance-painting-workshop> or by calling us at (828) 758-1671 during regular business hours.



Upcoming Events

Second Annual Celtic Music Festival

Saturday, October 12

11:00 am—5:30 pm



Free Event!

Come out to 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 out to the Fort 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 demonstrations by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Caldwell Heritage Museum, the Overmountain Victory Trail, and the NC Forestry Service.

The 2nd 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

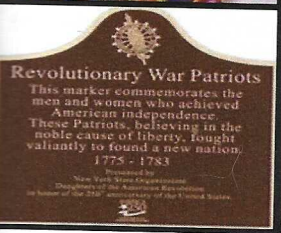
Bobby Steadman, Sound Engineer

Demonstrations by: DAR
Caldwell Heritage Museum
Overmountain Victory Trail
NC Forest Service

Revolutionary War Veteran Individual Grave Markings (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.

Fort Frogmore Stew (November 2 6:00 pm)- Come to the Fort hungry for an evening of great dining, camaraderie, and fun. The menu is a seafood boil including shrimp, oysters, and crab legs. Ticket prices will be announced in the near future. Please plan to attend this event!

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 Three of the continuing series on the women of Fort Defiance. This issue will focus on the third generation of Lenoirs to occupy the historic property through a look at Cornelia, wife of Walter Waitstill Lenoir.

Cornelia Isabella Lenoir

“Nealy”

By: Gabe Pipes



Cornelia Isabella Christian was born January 15, 1827 to John Brownlee Christian and Jane Tate Christian in Augusta County Virginia. Her childhood home was at Walnut Hill, Greenville, Virginia, which is located midway between Lexington and Staunton in the Shenandoah Valley. Although she was a Virginian by birth she did have many relatives and acquaintances in Wilkes county (Caldwell County had not yet been formed) including the Harpers in Lenoir and the Pattersons in Happy Valley (Hickerson, 1962).

Cornelia’s future husband Walter Waitstill Lenoir was born at Fort Defiance in 1823 to Thomas and Selina Avery Lenoir. He graduated from the University of North Carolina as the Valedictorian in 1843. He then studied law for three years and was licensed to practice law in 1846. He returned to Caldwell County afterwards and began working as an attorney in Lenoir and Boone (Cauble, 1973).

Although it is not recorded, letters between Cornelia and Walter seem to indicate that they had known each other for some time. The Pattersons at Palmyra were relatives of both and certainly could have been the genesis of their meeting. Below are transcripts of letters between the two just after they had become engaged in 1856 as taken from Hickerson’s *Echoes of Happy Valley*.

My Walter,

Richmond, Va, Feby, 29th, 1856

What a nice, cunning little plan you took to have letters fixed to your mind! But then you always did have your own peculiar manner of doing every thing—I fear I shall never be able to compete with you in originality—or indeed in anything—unless it be in affection.

Thank you very much for your pretty present—I will always think of you when I see it—and like wise when I do not see it for—

“My winged thoughts do fly to thee

A thousand in an hour”

I cannot realize that we were so far apart, except when I refer to a map. I must be over 500 miles, and yet I parted from Miss Emma (Emma Cannon, at Concord, NC) only last evening! Perhaps I may be able to give you some hints that may be of use when you come to Va. You can get a through ticket at Salisbury to Goldsboro'; from there to Weldon; and from Weldon to Richmond.....

Good night and goodbye!

My Nealy,

Lenoir, NC March 1st, 1856

I love you and am happy. For to love truly, only, and to tell such love, and to feel such love returned, is happiness. I send to you two sweet violets and two hearts' ease, and on every leaf of flower I send a kiss to you. I gathered the flowers for you this morning at Fort Defiance....

...I wrote to George from Jefferson, making haste in order that I might be the first myself to break the news to him. You may judge of my surprise when cousin Caroline told me at Palmyra this morning of the route you had taken. I commenced my letter to him after this wise, 'Cousin George, Nealy and I will be married to one another, God willing on the tenth day of next June.' And didn't I think I had astonished him? ... And lo! You had gone by Davidson College, and, I suppose, told it all him yourself...

The two letters, written just a day apart, shows the excitement of the young couple just after their engagement. Cornelia is clearly excited about the prospect of Walter making a trip to Richmond to see her, even giving him a step-by-step guide of exactly how to make the trip. The two would be married on June 10, 1856 at Walnut Hill.

Unfortunately, the happiness of 1856 would be short-lived. Cornelia and Walter would have a daughter named Anna born in 1857. Anna would live just six months, dying on May 27, 1858. Cornelia would also soon become ill with "galloping consumption" (Hickerson, 1962). This is a very aggressive and rapid acting form of tuberculosis that would eventually take her life on February 7, 1859.

Walter Lenoir would go on after Cornelia's Death to serve in the Civil War. On September 1, 1862, while commanding A Company of the 37th Infantry Regiment, Walter Lenoir would lose his right leg in the Battle of Ox Hill (Chantilly). He would survive the war and live until July 26, 1890. Cornelia, Walter, and Anna are all buried in the northwest corner of the Fort Defiance cemetery.

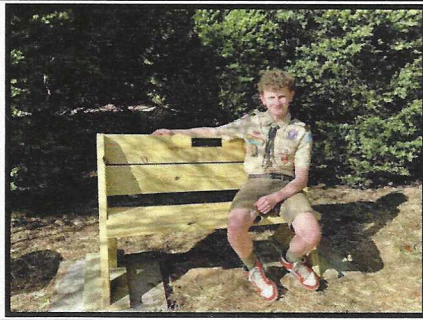


References:

- Frank P. Cauble, "Walter Waightstill Lenoir" (1973, typescript, Lenoir Rhyne College Library).
 T. F. Hickerson, *Echoes of Happy Valley* (1962).

Happenings!

Special thank you to Ms. Collot Guerard who made a special trip to Fort Defiance to return a coverlet that was once used by the family in the historic home. Ms. Guerard had fond memories and stories of the home and Lenoir family and had received the coverlet through her mother. It was important to her that the piece once again be displayed at Fort Defiance.

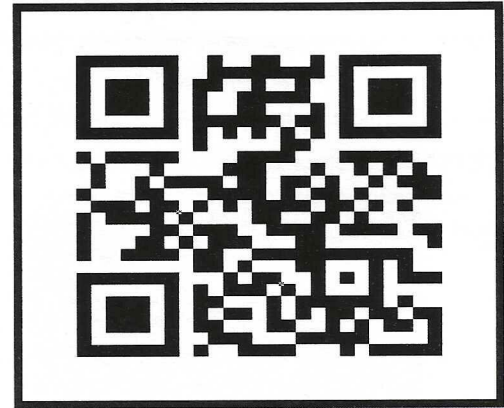


Michael Mulholland of Boy Scout Troop 377 out of Mooresville, NC recently completed his Eagle Scout project at Fort Defiance. Michael's project involved the clearing of brush and vines that were intermixed with the boxwood garden, as well as installing two benches dedicated to his mentor in Scouting, Mr. Mike Bernhardt. The two benches are located at the back of the boxwood garden and have added a peaceful setting to sit, relax, and enjoy the grounds of Fort Defiance. Thank you to Michael and Troop 377 for making this possible and honoring the memory of Mike Bernhardt, a generous supporter of Fort Defiance.

On June 5th the ladies of the Lenoir Service League presented Board President Sandra Watts with a grant. Linda Chambers and Joan McGee from the organization walked the grounds of Fort Defiance before personally conferring the proceeds. The mission of the Lenoir Service League is to support education, the arts, social welfare, civic and humanitarian needs, while assuring a better quality of life for Caldwell County. Portions of the grant will be utilized in the production of the 2nd Annual Celtic Festival, a free to the public event, which will take place on October 12th.



Dr. Ellen Cowan and Tucker Terrel from Appalachian State University have been back at Fort Defiance looking for more discoveries buried in the earth. Recently, they were able to locate the original stockade fort that stood on the northern side of the property. Recently, they have been using their ground penetrating radar in an attempt to locate the slave quarters and slave cemetery that once stood on the property. This is very exciting research taking place on the property, which will undoubtedly lead to more discovery in the near future.

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.** 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 to show support. Continued patronage is essential to the success of Fort Defiance. **Thank you!**

Board Highlights

- ◆ Ike Forester gave the Treasurer's Update detailing the current state of Fort Defiance's finances.
- ◆ Gabe Pipes gave the Site Director's report. His report included the amount of visitors over the last two months and gross sales for the Fort.
- ◆ Gabe Pipes also gave a final update on the 4th of July event including number of visitors and a review of the gross sales for the event. The board discussed how the event could be improved for next year. Finally, he reviewed upcoming events taking place at Fort Defiance.
- ◆ Sandra Watts nominated Tina Triplett for the vacant position of Vice President. The board voted unanimously to elevate Tina to that position.
- ◆ Sandra Watts reviewed all working grant applications with the board. The board held discussion on possible uses for all grant monies to improve the site.
- ◆ Gabe Pipes updated the board on current work being done by Appalachian State University in their search for the slave quarters and slave cemetery.
- ◆ 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

Militia/Family

AJ & Caroline Bennett
 Betty Buss
 Kelly Coffey
 Tom Gwyn
 Pam Helton
 Lissa Holsclaw
 Jean Lenoir
 Katherine Nell Lenoir
 Lucy McCarl
 Bill McKinney
 Tony & Jane Parisi
 Wanda Prince
 Sharon & Roger Underwood

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

Specified Donations—Thank You

Anne and Alex Bernhardt Foundation
 Bernhardt Furniture Foundation
 Broyhill Family Foundation
 Lenoir Service League

In memory of Buddy Forrester:
 Heath Alexander
 Bebe Hennessey
 John and Peggy Harwell
 Arnold and Rebecca Lakey
 Whit and Jeanne Loflin
 James Sebastian
 Walter and Doris Stroud

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 Family is defined as two parents and their dependent children.	\$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 or call 828-758-1671.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Please Come Visit Soon!

Fort Defiance is located past the former Paterson 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.



Return Service Requested

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