

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Caldwell	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Fort Defiance

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Lenoir vicinity

CITY OR TOWN:  
Lenoir

STATE North Carolina	CODE 32	COUNTY: Caldwell	CODE 14
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Caldwell County Historical Society, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
c/o Miss Margaret Harper, Box 673

CITY OR TOWN: Lenoir    28645	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 32
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Caldwell County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Post Office Box 757

CITY OR TOWN: Lenoir    28645	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 32
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:                     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)		(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The main block of Fort Defiance is a two-story frame structure measuring approximately 28 feet x 40 feet with interior end chimneys. Though many of the exterior features were changed over the years, it is certain that it was originally a five-bay house with a one-story shed porch across both front and rear.

There are four rooms on each floor. The long center hall commonly found in dwellings of its size and date was omitted at Fort Defiance. A small entrance-stair hall was employed with the space that would normally have been included in a full length hall given to the principal room. This unusual four room plan is also found on the second floor. There are no doors between the rooms on the east side of the second floor and those on the west. Each side is served by its own stair.

Among the papers of William Lenoir is a contract between him and John Goldsmith and T. Anthony, brickmasons. Among the particulars of the contract are entries for the use of 1200 bricks for "Laying Brick floor & Etc. about Brick Room" and 1350 bricks for "Filling in Walls about." The former refers to the brick floor of the interior kitchen on the first floor and the latter to the brick nogging which filled all the exterior walls.

In 1823 a wing was added to the west end of the house. This contained two first floor rooms and one in the finished attic above. This wing was built as a separate dwelling by General Lenoir for his personal use. It had no direct access to the main section which at that time became the home of Lenoir's son and his family. Traces of the original marbleizing of the trim in the wing have survived. At a later date this wing was moved to the rear of the house and remodeled. It has been restored to its original position and form as one of the first steps of the restoration program now underway.

On the interior Fort Defiance contains several exceptionally fine mantels. Much of the interior trim was altered when the house was remodeled.

On the grounds are the remnants of an extensive boxwood garden, the site of the early fort from which the place takes its name, and the Lenoir family graveyard.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                             |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |  |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Defiance was the home of Revolutionary War leader William Lenoir. Lenoir was born in Virginia in 1751 but moved to North Carolina shortly thereafter. An ardent and influential revolutionist he was active in "patriot" associations and as a captain at the battles of King's Mountain in 1780 and Haw River in 1781. After the war Lenoir continued his military service by becoming a major general of the state militia. He became a member of the Council of State which adopted the Constitution of North Carolina, served in both houses of the legislature, and was elected president of the Senate. He was a delegate to the Convention of 1788 which rejected the constitution of the new United States, and to the next one in 1789 which adopted it. Lenoir was also president of the first Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina and the library there contains hundreds of Lenoir family items.

Built by Thomas Fields for General Lenoir over a four-year period (1788-1792), the house "Fort Defiance" takes its name from an early frontier fort which once occupied the site. Until 1965 Fort Defiance had continuously been in the possession of the Lenoir family. In that year Andrew and Fannie T. Lenoir conveyed the house to the Caldwell County Historical Society, under whose direction the present restoration is being undertaken.

Because of the prominence of the Lenoir family, the vast amount of original documents concerning the plantation furnished by the Lenoir family papers in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the unusual design and structural features of the house, Fort Defiance should be one of the most interesting historic places in the state when its restoration is perfected.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ashe, Samuel A. Biographical History of North Carolina, II.  
Greensboro: Charles Van Noppen, 1905. pp. 219-221.

Caldwell County Records, Caldwell County Courthouse, Lenoir,  
North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Reports.)

Caldwell County Records, State Department of Archives and History,  
Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers,  
Census Reports.)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	36	00	42
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	81	30	13
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5.0 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

J. G. Zehmer, Survey Specialist; Sherry I. Penney, Survey Assistant

ORGANIZATION

State Department of Archives and History

DATE

June 26, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:

109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

32

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name

Dr. H. G. Jones

Title

Director, State Department of  
Archives and History

Date

June 26, 1970

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Caldwell	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

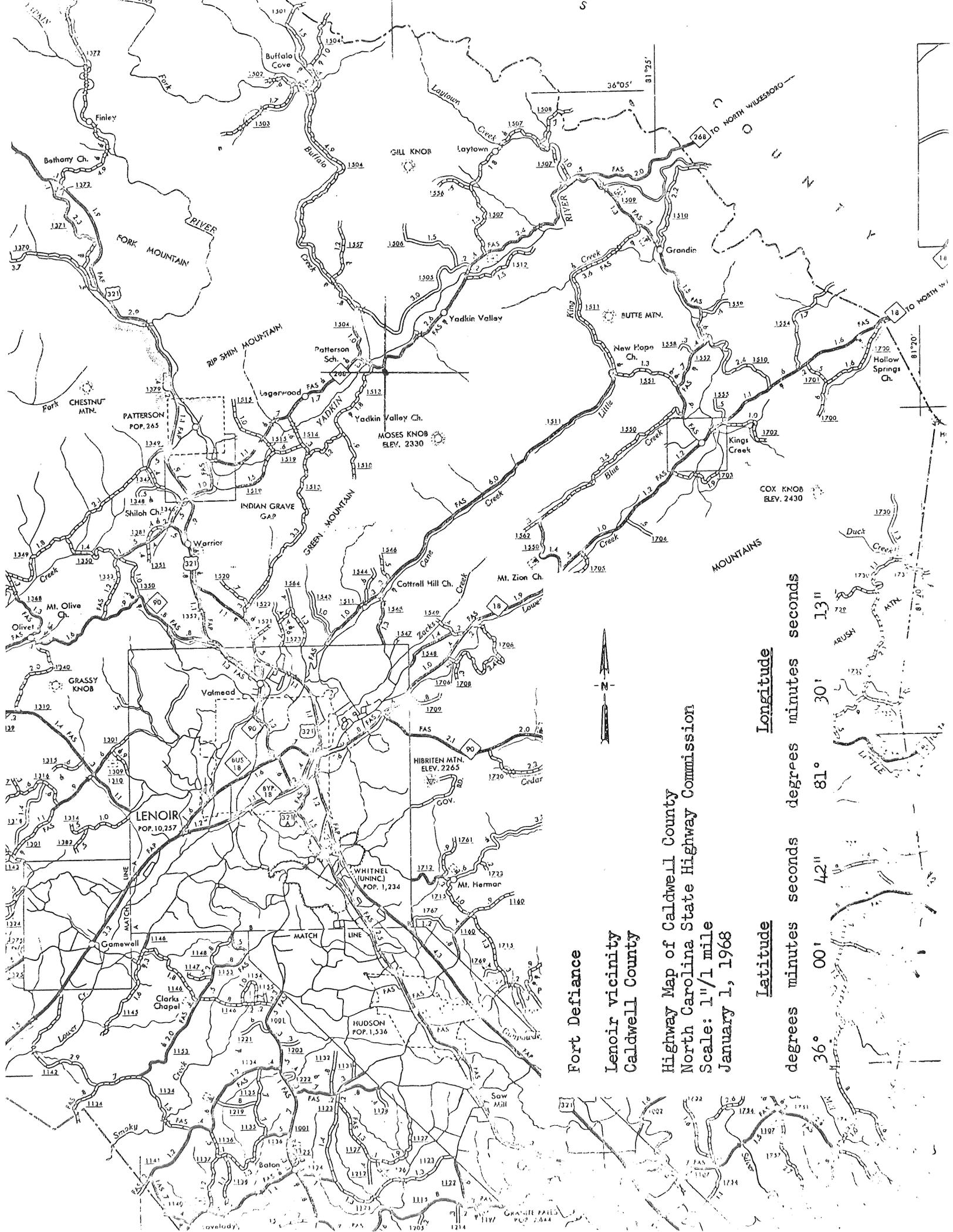
(Number all entries)

9. Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, 1662-1790.  
Raleigh, Goldsboro and Charlotte, 1886-1910.

Lenoir Family Papers, 1753-1929. The Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

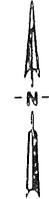
Wilkes County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Reports.)

Wilkes County Records, Wilkes County Courthouse, Wilkesboro, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Reports.)



**Fort Defiance  
Lenoir vicinity  
Caldwell County**

Highway Map of Caldwell County  
North Carolina State Highway Commission  
Scale: 1"/1 mile  
January 1, 1968



Latitude  
degrees minutes seconds 36° 00' 42" 13" 13"

Longitude  
degrees minutes seconds 81° 30' 18" 18" 18"



