

REPORT ON FORT BUTLER
MURPHY, NORTH CAROLINA

On July 7, 1959, I visited Murphy to discuss possibilities of restoring Fort Butler with interested local persons. The following suggestions and recommendations grew out of that visit.

1. Of prime importance at the present time is the fact that not enough information about the physical setup of Fort Butler is in hand to make possible an authentic restoration. Local historians have made a splendid start but they feel that they have gone as far as they can go on a spare time basis. The time seems to have come when it is desirable and necessary to put a research specialist on the problem and let him or her work it out. Such a person could take the information that has already been gathered and go on from there into new channels of research.

It is not possible to estimate in advance how much time and money will be involved but if you could count on employing a specialist for two or three months that would be a good solid beginning. It might even do the job. Eight or ten hundred dollars would be good amount to have available in planning a research project such as is indicated.

2. I was informed that the Town of Murphy has title to a plot of ground at the site of Fort Butler measuring 200 by 200, feet--something less than one acre. The original fort undoubtedly covered more ground than this, if it accommodated several hundred Indians at the time of the Removal. In order to restore the fort it will be necessary to have additional land surrounding the restoration for protection and for necessary public facilities, such as parking space, perhaps a museum, and rest rooms. Our experience has generally been that the best time to buy land is before the projects starts, as all land values nearly always jump up when it is known that such a project is underway.

REPORT ON FORT BUTLER (Cont'd)

The sponsoring local groups probably would not want to buy land outright until research shows whether or not a restoration is feasible, but it might not be a bad idea to take an option on several acres of land if it is possible to get a long term option.

3. In order to promote the project most effectively it will undoubtedly be well to interest various organizations of the whole area in it, in line with the suggestions made by Senator Forsyth and others. I would particularly suggest that, Western North Carolina Historical Society, the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, and the Cherokee Historical Society be approached. The Antiquities Society has always been particularly active in promoting restoration work and generally will make a \$200 contribution to responsible groups promoting restorations. In other words, the more general interest you can stimulate in the project the better off you will be.

The Department of Archives and History will want to assist wherever it can. We will be glad to assist in trying to find a competent researcher for the research program. Later on, if restoration is undertaken, we will be glad to help with technical problems in that connection.

With best wishes, and good luck--

W. S. Tarlton
Historic Sites Superintendent

WST/h