

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
Raleigh

Historic Sites Division
Western Region

September 2, 1966

Mrs. Mary Faye Brumby
Post Office Box 6
Murphy, North Carolina

Dear Mrs. Brumby:

I have received and read the interim report on the Fort Butler project.

It is my own feeling that Fort Butler as much was not of great historical significance, but the removal of the Cherokees in 1838 was of great importance both to the state and nation. Few chapters in American history are more interesting than this event.

I believe, therefore, that the Fort Butler project should be centered on the removal instead of on the fort itself. I have always contended that people make history---not forts.

Of course, if you have some large and famous fort like Ticonderoga, then you can properly place the emphasis on the structure itself. But I am convinced that Fort Butler was more of a prison camp or compound and not a compact fort like those used in the American Revolution. Someone at Murphy told me that Fort Butler once spread over five acres, so this upholds my theory of a prison camp type of operation.

There was a blockhouse at Fort Butler---possibly used as a command post and guard house---and a number of log huts, probably utilized to house soldiers. But I imagine many of the Cherokees camped out in the open---surrounded by tents of the soldiers---except for those Indians brought in by force, who were then possibly put in a stockade.

When we talked in Murphy on July 29th, I mentioned my feeling that Governor Moore should be requested to appoint a Western North Carolina Historical Commission. If named, the group would work out this own program of operations, but it might promote: (1) Development of historic sites and history museums in the western counties, (2) writing and publication of books, pamphlets and articles on the history of the mountain region, (3) setting up a program in the schools---to include visits by a Mobile Museum of History, summer tours of state historic sites and museums for N.C. history students, and visits to historic sites in the vicinity during the school year, (4) encouraging private collectors of valuable historical materials and artifacts to contribute their acquisitions for public use.

If such a request were written to Governor Moore and signed by you, Senator Hyde of Buncombe, Senator Norton of McDowell and the president of the WNC Historical Association, I believe it would be honored.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Conway
Vance Birthplace