

**Lewiston  
History  
Mysteries**

# Tale of the Crystal Ball Lady and the Search for Lewiston's Buried Treasures

## Fort Gray Stood Above Artpark

You may be familiar with Fort Gray Drive in Lewiston. The street is named after a real fort that was located at the top of the escarpment, close to the gorge wall, in the early 1800s. In today's world, it would be overlooking Artpark. Any traces of the fort were destroyed when the Niagara Scenic Parkway was completed in 1962.

In 1958, local historian Margaret Robson's book "Under the Mountain" was published. The book is considered the "Bible" of Lewiston's history and she writes about strange



occurrences that took place near Fort Gray.

No actual images of the fort exist, but it is known that it was connected to the British "blockhouse" (left) and that it consisted primarily of "earthworks" and a series of trenches and cannon placements.

It was built by Nicholas Gray and had a commanding view of the river.

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Placemats written and designed by volunteer, Lee Simonson.

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## Local Residents Buried Valuables Near Fort Gray for Safe Keeping

### Mysterious Crystal Ball Lady Comes to Town

In the early 1800s, Lewiston residents became more wary of what might happen if war broke out between the U.S. and Canada. As tensions mounted, some local residents feared for their safety and actually camped outside the gates of the American Fort Gray at the top of the escarpment. Others secretly buried valuables around the fort, hoping that if Lewiston was raided (and it was!) they could come back and retrieve their belongings when the coast was clear.

Author Margaret Robson wrote in her book, "For years stories of buried treasure were told and retold until curious people and treasure hunters started a search of the area. For over 100 years the stories persisted and from time to time people tried their hands at digging for treasure. Today (1958) there are numerous holes in the vicinity of Fort Gray that show where the treasure seekers have worked.

"On one occasion, a nearby resident, John McConnell, heard a knock at his door. It was a lady accompanied by a young boy dressed like genie in the Aladdin stories. She explained she had a crystal ball with which she could tell where the buried treasure lay. She added that if she was paid, she would show where there was gold. Mr. McConnell, not to be taken in by such a scheme, finally agreed that he and one of his sons would be accompany the pair to Ft. Gray. The young boy, along with the McConnell boy, dug and dug as the lady peered into her crystal ball. After nothing was found, the lady and young genie departed. But when Mr. McConnell and his son returned home they found \$30 was missing from the son's coat!"



## Are There Fort Gray Ghosts Too?

Here's another strange story. Two men came to Fort Gray one dark night. They tied their horse to a tree, hung a lantern and started to dig for treasure. The hole was getting bigger and bigger when suddenly they struck something hard and metallic. At that moment, two ghostly apparitions appeared and the men started screaming and ran away as fast as they could. The horse was also spooked and broke his rope to escape.

The next morning, John McConnell, a neighbor, inspected the area and found the lantern, shovels, and the broken rope. But he did not see any ghosts.

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