

Lewiston Historical Association Members Explore Ruins of Millar Property

River Road site was owned by Scottish immigrant who came to Lewiston in early 1800s

Lewiston's Hometown Version of an Indiana Jones Expedition

An intrepid group of local history enthusiasts met on Lower River Road on October 1, 2020, to explore the remnants of a property that has been the subject of some of Lewiston's most harrowing and legendary stories. It's the famous "Millar" property.

The explorers parked their cars on Lower River Road near the "stone pillar" entrance familiar to many local residents (it's on private property) and trekked just a few hundred feet east from the road. It was first time most of them had ever seen the ruins of the iconic location.

Alexander Millar, Sr., a wealthy Scottish immigrant, wanted to live on the Frontier so he purchased the property in 1805 while he was in Albany, NY.

When the British attacked in 1813, the Millar homestead was one of the first partially destroyed. Alexander Millar, Sr., and his son, Alex, Jr., were taken prisoner and sent to Montreal. Fortunately, Mrs. Millar and the other seven children escaped unharmed and fled with the rest of the local population down Ridge Road. After the war, they returned to rebuilt their lives.

The pioneer family must have had some very interesting discussions around the dinner table.

Remains of Original Barn Inspected by Museum Curator

Museum curator, Tom Collister, inspects the barn, which recently collapsed from natural causes. It is believed that part of the structure was constructed in the early 1800s and survived the British attack in 1813. Records indicate that since the British were acquainted and on friendly terms with the Millar family, only the main residence was torched, leaving the barn and out buildings standing. That would make it one of two extant sites in Lewiston that survived the attack, the other being the Sage home next to today's Hillview Cafe.



Draper Unearths Rare 1830 Coin Thanks to Metal Detector

Lloyd Draper, with his trusty metal detector, did a quick survey of the property and quickly discovered an 1830 Liberty Head copper penny coin near the remains of a home believed to have been constructed in 1820 and later destroyed by fire in 1920. Records indicate that the newly formed Lewiston volunteer fire company responded to the fire, under the leadership of Chief Perrigo. Was this house built after the War of 1812 at the original location of the first home that was destroyed by the British? We may never know.



Huge "Witness Tree" Found on Property

Local explorer Bruce Sutherland stands next to this huge maple tree the group spotted on the Millar property — it was hard to miss! It's estimated to be 280 years old, making it one of the oldest trees in Lewiston. It's about 7 feet across and is classified as a "witness tree" because it was already several decades old when British troops ransacked and burned the Millar's home and barn during the 1813 attack — it "saw" all the action.

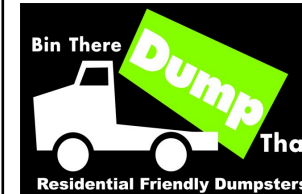


In 1810, 14-year-old Alexander Millar, Jr., organized a local gang to shoot mud balls from homemade log cannons at a passing British warship. The British turned their ship around and found out later they were pranked. Alex was reprimanded and apologized to the British officers. Unfortunately, no cannons or mud balls were found on the property during the Historical Association's recent visit. They would have long succumbed to the elements.

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