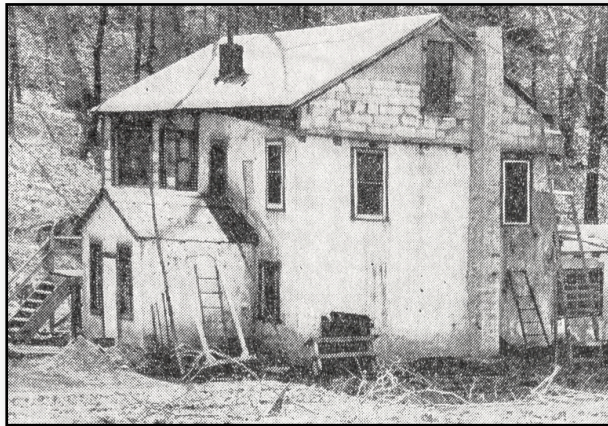


**Lewiston
History
Mysteries**

The Waldrans: Legendary Squatters Become a Part of Lewiston History

Old timers in Lewiston remember the days of Barney and Eleanor Waldran.

Barney made \$90 a month from his veterans pension and extra income as a jack of all trades. And while he kept to himself most of the time, his wife Eleanor took daily walks to the village, dressed in her gray coat and flat shoes, pulling her shopping cart behind her. Eleanor was afflicted with neurofibromatosis which caused disfigurement. Her appearance often frightened children but she was a kind and gentle woman.



Squatters Home was Remote Hideaway for Reclusive Couple

Located near today's upper parking lot at Artpark, the Waldran home was situated half way up the Escarpment, above the dump used by the Village of Lewiston. Previously, the dump was a rock quarry. The home had no electricity or running water. There was an outhouse nearby. There were ladders outside several upstairs windows, apparently as fire escapes. Barney built the house over a number of years using scrap lumber and even discarded railroad ties.

“Wild horses won't move us!”

In 1928, Lewiston attorney, J. Boardman Scovell, owned various properties in the area — one of which was located near today's Artpark.

At that time, he gave permission to Barney Waldran to park his car there. Eventually, Barney built a shelter around his car, and then — piece by piece — a house around the shelter. After 10 years, Barney claimed the property as his own because of “squatters’ rights.”

In 1958, the New York Power Authority was planning to blast millions of tons of rock off the gorge wall to construct the Power Project. They decided to put those “spoils” along the escarpment in the village — right on top of Barney's home.

But Barney and his wife, Eleanor, protested. Barney said he had the right to live in his home the rest of his life, regardless of what the Power Authority would pay him for the property.

In the end, they had no choice and had to move, and did so peacefully.

Buried at Greenwood in Wilson

The couple is buried, side by side, at Greenwood Cemetery in Wilson, New York. Barney died in 1978, at age 99, one of the oldest veterans of the Spanish-American War in the nation. Eleanor died in 1965, at age 75, and was survived by two sisters and a brother. Funeral services for her were conducted at the old St. Peter's church on Plain Street.

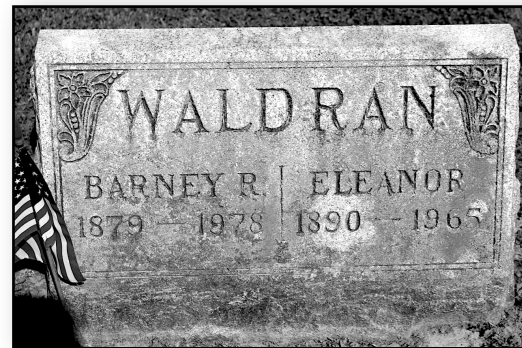


Barney & Eleanor Waldran

The couple lived in a ramshackled house on the side of Lewiston hill with twelve Dalmatian dogs — some vicious. Barney made sure that visitors knew they were not welcomed. They also kept goats and chickens.

Barney built the stone wall you can see today along Center Street, in front of Tim Horton's.

Soon after they were evicted, student volunteers at Lew-Port built the Waldrans a new home, near their old site. Eventually, Eleanor died and Barney entered a nursing home. The student built home was razed when Artpark was constructed in 1973.



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