

Lewiston  
History  
Mysteries



200+ year old grand-  
father clock is still ticking  
and chimes on the hour!

# Lewiston's Buried Grandfather Clock: Hidden from the Enemy

## Bartons Save Family Valuables from Burning British Torches

In October 1812, three thousand American soldiers — half of the American Army — along with three thousand American militia, were camped along Center Street in Lewiston preparing to invade Canada in what would be become the first major battle of the War of 1812 — a conflict between the U.S. and Britain that was known as the “Second American Revolution.”

American officers knocked on Benjamin Barton's front door and explained they were commandeering his home for their headquarters and were placing a cannon battery on his property to bomb Canada.

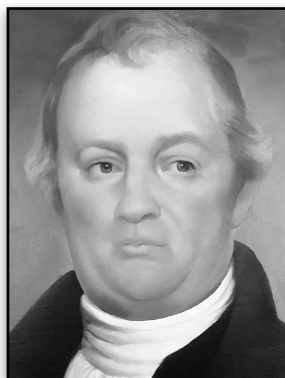
### Agnes Had to Think Fast: How Was She Going to Save Her Beloved Keepsakes?

Barton's wife, Agnes, realized she and her nine children had to get out of harm's way and she made plans to take everyone to Geneva, NY. But before she left, and fearing their home would be destroyed by returning cannon fire, she wrapped up some of her family's prized possessions in a large tar cloth and buried them in the front yard. The stash included many items including a silver tea service, family portraits and a large grandfather clock.

### The Clock that has Stood of the Test of Time

The grandfather clock was made around 1800 by Griffing & Sweeney in Geneva, NY, and was kept in the Barton family for generations. In 2021, 92-year-old James Barton, from Buffalo, sold the clock to the Lewiston Museum so it would be saved for posterity.

Today, over 200 years later, the clock proudly stands in the Lewiston Museum on Plain Street, and chimes on the hour. An amazing story about a family and a clock that survived the worst period of Western New York history.



Benjamin Barton  
“The Father of  
Lewiston”



Agnes Barton  
Saved the Family's  
Heirlooms

### Americans Lose the Battle and Lewiston is Burned to the Ground

The Americans were badly defeated during the invasion, known today as the Battle of Queenston Heights. A little over a year later, British forces burned Lewiston to the ground, including the Barton mansion. Many lives were saved during the attack by the intervention of the Tuscarora Heroes. (You can visit the Tuscarora Heroes Monument at the corner of Portage Road and Center Street.)

### After the War it's Time to Rebuild. Is the Clock Still There?

After the War, the Bartons returned to Lewiston to rebuild. In 1815, they dug up and retrieved the buried valuables, and to their delight, discovered everything was intact and the grandfather clock was still in pristine condition and still working!

The clock is considered one of Lewiston's most historic relics and visitors can see the clock during Museum hours in the summer, or by appointment.

### The Barton Legacy

Benjamin Barton (1771-1842), known as the “Father of Lewiston” made a mark on local history. His family's home, located high on a bluff at the northwest

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Placemats written and designed by volunteer, Lee Simonson.

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corner of 3rd and Center Streets, is the oldest structure in the Village. He held many titles and was the principal builder of the Frontier House.

We are grateful to the Barton family for letting us share this fascinating slice of history with you.