

## Laura Secord - a journey from Queenston to Decew House, 1813

---

### Components to consider including:

- DESIGN: navigation, credits
- Images, videos, swipe map, AGOL map, map scene, narrative, credits
- Alternate text for screen readers
- Citation within storymap

### Background reading:

<https://brocku.ca/social-sciences/geography/wp-content/uploads/sites/152/Following-in-Laura%E2%80%99s-Footsteps.pdf>

[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ingersoll\\_laura\\_9E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ingersoll_laura_9E.html)

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/laura-secord-dangerous-journey.htm>

<https://www.ontariotrails.on.ca/index.php?url=trails/view/laura-secord-legacy-trail>

StoryMaps Reference Help: <https://doc.arcgis.com/en/arcgis-storymaps/reference/release-notes.htm>

### Map Sources:

Laura Secord's walk digitized over historical maps:

<https://brock.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=85e39fcabbba49d8aa6abe3b225cc8f2>

1862 map overlay:

<https://brock.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=310e280635dd4e49971529b354af116b>

1815 map overlay:

<https://terra.library.brocku.ca/arcgis/rest/services/EarlyNiagara/NiagaraPeninsula1815NMC21587/ImageServer>

1818 Niagara map overlay:

<https://terra.library.brocku.ca/arcgis/rest/services/EarlyNiagara/NiagaraPeninsulaHall1818NMC3003/ImageServer>

1818 Queenston map overlay:

<https://terra.library.brocku.ca/arcgis/rest/services/EarlyNiagara/Queenston1818NMC22750/ImageServer>

1910 map overlay:

<https://brock.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=bdb45bdcf20f4b7d83f2975727858b33>

R.E.A. Land's map of her route, 1901

<https://dr.library.brocku.ca/bitstream/handle/10464/2621/nationalmonument00lauruoft.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

War of 1812 points of interest – Niagara Open Data (CSV to geocode)

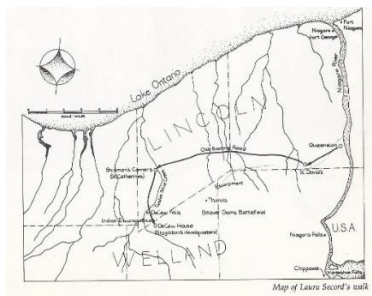
<https://niagaraopendata.ca/dataset/war-1812-poi>

### Images:



Laura Secord, Legendary Patriot

From Library and Archives Canada, 1992



<https://cdnhistorybits.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/b9371-laurasecord27swalk0002.jpg>

<https://cdnhistorybits.wordpress.com/2015/06/23/laura-secord-journey/>

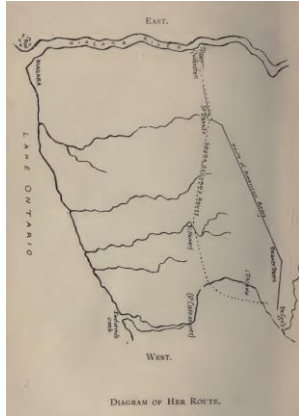


Diagram of her route, 1901 by R.E.A. Land

<https://dr.library.brocku.ca/bitstream/handle/10464/2621/nationalmonument00lauruoft.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>



painting of Laura talking to Fitzgibbon c.1920 by Lorne Kidd Smith



The place where she crossed. From “Jubilee History of Thorold”

Image from Six Nations Public Library

<https://vitacollections.ca/sixnationsarchive/details.asp?ID=2686669>



Sketch of the aged Laura Second 1907 by George Bryce



Second Homestead images, 2021 by Sharon Janzen

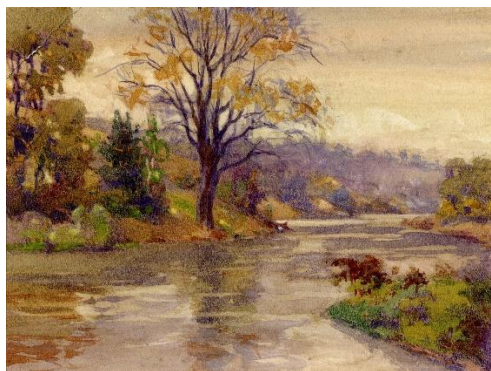


Trail near Secord Homestead, Queenston, 2021 by Sharon Janzen



Laura Secord Monument, Queenston Heights, 2021 by Sharon Janzen





Twelve Mile Creek painting, 1913 by John Wesley Cotton

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMD-PICTURES-R-873&R=DC-PICTURES-R-873>

---



Decew House, Thorold Tourism <http://www.thoroldtourism.com/preservation/decou-house/>

**Videos:**

- <https://youtu.be/L-vL5NFkYA> Heritage Minute: Laura Secord
- upload "CreekVideo.mp4" (this is a video I captured that might resemble some of the creeks Laura would've had to cross)

### **Some narrative text to consider:**

**Setting the scene:** Dusk had long since past and Laura was still busy tending to the men in her care. Being a woman, she was not suspect for espionage and so she overheard the American's plans to ambush the British. Her husband was not fit to journey to Decew House and so, being the courageous woman she was, Laura set out to warn Lt. Fitzgibbon of the impending attack.... Or so the story goes...

### **INTRODUCTION:**

On the 22nd of June, 1813, Laura was busy tending to the militia bunking at her homestead in the small town of Queenston. Being a woman, she was not suspected of espionage and so she learned of a sneak attack the Americans were planning later that week in Thorold. With her husband unwell, Laura resolutely decided to make the treacherous journey on her own to warn Lt. Fitzgibbon and save Upper Canada.

### **PHASE ONE: QUEENSTON TO ST. DAVIDS**

It must've been early in the morning on June 22nd, 1813 that Laura headed out to save her country. Being a woman wouldn't cause suspicion in her travels and some say that she brought her cow along for the journey... at least part of it. No doubt, she hurried to her relatives' home in St. Davids where she would've sought the help of her half-brother, Charles. However, Charles was sick and so Laura's niece, Elizabeth offered to accompany her. And off they went to Homer.

<insert map; turning off all layers but the route and the Queenston 1818 historical map>

### **PHASE TWO: ST. DAVIDS TO HOMER**

Historical maps show the most direct route would've been via Queenston Rd although some would argue that York Rd was the more popular link. At any rate, this segment of the journey included reference to the "Black Swamp". The map below depicts the region in 1818 with labels and symbols for swamp landcover. Although the landscape has changed significantly, it is a fact that there were many streams and rivers indicative of low-lying land and perhaps 'swamp-like' terrain.

<insert map; turn off all layers but the route and the Niagara 1818 Hall et-al map, zoom out>

### **PHASE THREE: HOMER TO SHIPMAN'S CORNERS**

Having lost her travel companions (documents indicate that Elizabeth turned back at Homer and likely brought the cow with her), Laura continued over Ten Mile Creek toward St. Catharines and Shipman's Corners (modern day Ontario St and St Paul St). At this point, she would face crossing Twelve Mile Creek and likely used a 'low level' bridge.

<insert map; turn off all layers but the route and Niagara 1862, NMC map number 26837>

### **PHASE FOUR: SHIPMAN'S CORNERS TO POWER GLEN**

Having descended the banks of the Twelve and crossed over to the southwest side, Laura likely ascended the embankment to follow the trail (Pelham Rd) to Power Glen. Although this route is indeed circuitous, there is no doubt she consulted her husband and brother regarding the journey. At first glance, we may wonder why she didn't take a more direct route, but there were enemy troops to consider.



<insert map; turn off all layers but route and Niagara 1815 Public Archives Canada, NMC Map number 21587>

#### **PHASE FIVE: POWER GLEN TO DECEW HOUSE**

The final leg of her journey would've been arduous, to say the least. The terrain would've been hilly and forested with another crossing of the Twelve Mile Creek, this time by a fallen tree, rather than a sturdy bridge! And then to face the Indians! After describing her plight, she was escorted to Decew House and shared her intel with Lt. Fitzgibbon. Imagine the exhaustion! And how did she get back home?

<insert map scene; A Perspective Display of Laura's Journey

Other research documents:

**“Laura Secord: A study in Canadian patriotism” by George Bryce, 1907**

SPCL [https://ocul-bu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL\\_BU/331q1k/alma991001239109705152](https://ocul-bu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_BU/331q1k/alma991001239109705152)

16 pages, maps [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Laura\\_Secord:\\_A\\_Study\\_in\\_Canadian\\_Patriotism](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Laura_Secord:_A_Study_in_Canadian_Patriotism)

"I do hereby certify that Mrs. Secord, the wife of James Secord, Esq. of Chippewa, (his latest residence) did in the month of June, 1813, walk from her house in the village of St. David's to Decamp's house in Thorold, by a circuitous route of about twenty miles, partly through the woods, to acquaint me that the enemy intended to attempt by surprise to capture a detachment of the 49th regiment, then under my command; she having obtained such knowledge from good authority, as the event proved. Mrs. Secord was a person of slight and delicate frame; and made the effort in weather excessively warm, and I dreaded at the time that she must suffer in health in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, she having been exposed to danger from the enemy, through whose line of communication she had to pass. The attempt was made on my detachment by the enemy, this detachment, consisting of upwards of 500 men, with a field piece and fifty dragoons, was captured in consequence. I write this certificate in a moment of much hurry and from memory, and it is therefore thus brief.

(Signed) JAMES FITZGIBBON.

Formerly Lieutenant in the 49th Regiment."

"Ah! faithful to death were our women of yore!  
Have they fled with the past to be heard of no more?  
No. No! Though this laurelled one sleeps in the grave.  
We have maidens as true, we have matrons as brave;  
And should Canada ever be forced to the test—  
To spend for our country the blood of the best—  
When her sons lift the linstock and brandish the sword.  
Her daughters will think of brave Laura Secord."

—[Charles Mair](#).

**Be aware that copy/paste  
may result in awkward  
formatting when it comes to  
lists or blockquote content.**

**“Laura Secord” by Caroline Barnes 1981**

Available via HathiTrust, Emergency Temporary Access Service  
Canadian Library Association, Ottawa

**“Laura Secord: The Legend and the Lady” by Ruth McKenzie 1971**

Available via HathiTrust, Emergency Temporary Access Service  
McClelland and Stewart Limited, Toronto/Montreal

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89040740649>

**“HISTORY MADE IN NIAGARA” by Alun Hughes 2019**

Article *Following in Laura’s Footsteps* <https://brocku.ca/social-sciences/geography/wp-content/uploads/sites/152/Following-in-Laura%E2%80%99s-Footsteps.pdf>

“Laura had no choice but to go herself” quote from Alun’s article titled *Laura Secord and the Prince of Wales*. Pp.305-311

**ArcGIS StoryMaps Learning Resources:**

ArcGIS StoryMaps: Getting Started with the New Story Builder: [https://youtu.be/t\\_oFnIJA-A](https://youtu.be/t_oFnIJA-A) (~40min)

ArcGIS StoryMaps: RESOURCES <https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/resources>

StoryMaps Reference Help: <https://doc.arcgis.com/en/arcgis-storymaps/reference/release-notes.htm>