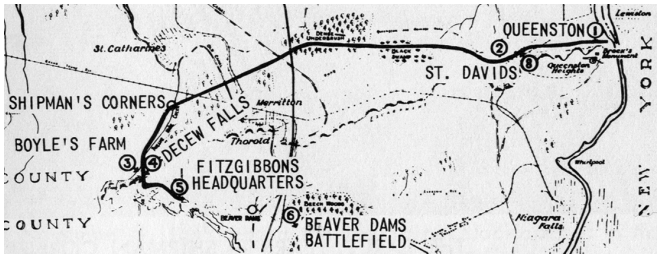
Looking back... with Alun Hughes

FOLLOWING IN LAURA'S FOOTSTEPS

"The story of Laura Secord is well known. In late June 1813, at her home in Queenston, she heard of an American plan to attack the DeCew House in Thorold, then in use as a British base with Lieutenant James FitzGibbon in command. FitzGibbon had to be warned. Laura's husband James was the obvious person to do this, but he had been invalided at the Battle of Queenston Heights the previous year. Laura had no choice but to go herself, and after a long and arduous full day's trek, reached the DeCew House at dusk and conveyed the warning to FitzGibbon. Two days later the advancing American troops were ambushed by loyal Native warriors in the beechwoods in the northeastern part of Thorold Township, and after a three-hour battle — the Battle of Beaverdams — surrendered."

The above is quoted from my earlier article "Laura Secord and the Prince of Wales." Over the years I have done a great deal of research on Laura Secord's walk. My initial interest in it was sparked by a map published in 1967 in a booklet called the *St. Catharines Centennial History*. The map itself is unremarkable, but an accompanying paragraph makes two startling claims: first, that the map shows Laura's "exact path" and is "absolutely accurate," and second, that the map was drawn by an "artist," who consulted with "old inhabitants" and "walked over the route" himself. Neither claim bears scrutiny, for the map has serious locational errors, and the design quality suggests few artistic skills.



Laura Secord's route from the Centennial History *book*

The locational errors include misplacing the Beaverdams Battlefield, the Black Swamp, Boyle's Farm and — most surprisingly for a centennial booklet devoted to St. Catharines — Shipman's Corners. The Corners should be at the intersection of Ontario and St. Paul Streets in the heart of downtown, but instead they are positioned to the south where Glendale Avenue crosses Twelve Mile Creek. These errors also raise questions about the route depicted on the map.

Laura Secord's route is the focus of this article. There are, of course, many other issues that remain unresolved about her walk, including how she learned of the American plan, if she encountered any enemy soldiers, whether or not her walk made any difference, and even what she wore. Though some of these questions will inevitably arise in the discussion that follows, the article will not seek to answer them. It will concentrate on the route that she took, which has never been definitively settled.

The evidence for the route consists of both written evidence and map evidence. The written evidence is threefold: petitions and certificates, books and magazines, and other written material. (All spellings in the various extracts quoted below are as they appear in the originals.)

Petitions and Certificates

The written evidence commences in 1820, when Laura's husband James petitioned the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada for the right to occupy land (including a stone quarry) on the Queenston Military Reserve. His petition mentioned that he "was wounded at the battle of Queenston — and twice plundered of all his moveable property" during the War of 1812. It also included this reference to Laura's walk: "That his [sic] Wife embraced an opportunity of rendering some service, at the risk of her life, in going thro the Enemies' lines to communicate information to a Detatchment of His Majesty's Troops at the Beaver Dam in the Month of June 1813." James' petition was successful and he was granted a lease of the quarry.

The petition was accompanied by a certificate (or a letter of support) written for Laura in 1820 by none other than FitzGibbon himself. It began: "I certify that Mrs. Secord Wife of James Secord of Queenston, Esquire, did in the Month of June, 1813, come to the Beaver dam and communicate to me information of an intended attack to be made by the Enemy upon a Detachment then under my command there, which occasionally occupied a large Stone House [the DeCew House] at the place." This was the first of three certificates that FitzGibbon was to write for Laura; the others were in 1827 and 1837.

The 1827 certificate was probably written to support an application submitted by James for an unspecified position in the same year (the application seems not to have survived, but we know that it was unsuccessful). In 1831 Laura herself petitioned for the position of managing the first Brock Monument at Queenston Heights. Though she said that the position had been promised her three years earlier by Lieutenant Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland, she too was unsuccessful. No doubt it was because Maitland was no longer Lieutenant Governor by 1831, and there was a widow in far greater need than Laura. In 1832 James petitioned for land as a reward for his services in the War of

1812, and though the initial response was favourable, it is not known how much land he got or even if the petition was granted.

The government of Upper Canada did not completely ignore the Secords, however. In 1822 James applied for compensation for his injuries at the Battle of Queenston Heights, and was granted a pension of £20. Six years later James was appointed Registrar of the District Surrogate Court, and in 1833 he was made a Judge of the Court. Then in 1835 he was appointed Collector of Customs at Chippawa, which led to the Secords moving from Queenston to Chippawa.

The Secords do not seem to have kept copies of the 1820 and 1827 certificates, for there is no mention of them in the 1831 and 1832 petitions. In 1837 Laura asked FitzGibbon to write a third certificate, which she submitted in 1839 with a petition for the license to run the Queenston ferry. Despite FitzGibbon's support this too was not granted. This time Laura did keep a copy, for she used the 1837 certificate twice more: in 1841, when she petitioned for a pension after James' death that February, and in 1860 when she submitted a memorial to the Prince of Wales. The former was not granted, but the latter brought her £100, the first time her epic trek had been recognized by anyone other than FitzGibbon.

Her husband's death left Laura destitute, because she now lacked James' pension and no longer benefited from the income James was earning as Collector of Customs. Accordingly, just five days after James' death, she petitioned the Governor General of British North America to appoint her son Charles to the vacancy. The submission of the petition was delayed, however, and was eventually sent in March along with a petition from Charles himself. Charles sent another petition in 1842 (by which time a new Governor General was in office), accompanying it with FitzGibbon's 1837 certificate. Despite all this, he was never appointed Collector of Customs.

FitzGibbon's certificates do not contain many details of Laura's route. The 1820 certificate said only that she walked 12 miles. In 1827 FitzGibbon wrote that she came "from her House at St. Davids by a circuitous route a distance of twelve miles," and in 1837 that "Mrs. Secord [walked] from her House in the Village of Saint Davids, to Decows House in Thorould by a circuitous rout, of about 20 Miles partly through the Woods."

Laura's 1839 petition for the Queenston ferry contains more details of her route: "That your Excellency's Memorialist did in the Month of June 1813, as the following Certificate of Colonel Fitz Gibbon will fully coroborate, did at great [illegible] peril and danger travelling on foot & partly in the Night by a circuitous rout, through woods mountains, enemys lines & Indian Encampments to give important enteligence of a medetated attact of the Americans upon our troops…." But other petitions contain few additional details. For example, her 1841 request for a pension adds only that she had great trouble getting by the Natives.

This is what the petitions and certificates tell us about Laura's route: St. Davids, Beaverdams, DeCew House, 12 miles, 20 miles, circuitous route, woods, mountains, enemy's lines and Native encampments.

Books and Magazines

FitzGibbon had provided three certificates for Laura Secord, but in 1845 the opportunity arose for the Secords to repay the compliment. By this time FitzGibbon was Clerk of the Legislative Council of Canada. He was considered the person mainly responsible for putting down the Mackenzie Rebellion of 1837-38, and was highly regarded. But he had suffered from financial problems for much of his life, and an 1838 proposal to award him a land grant of 5000 acres was turned down by the Imperial authorities in London, who instead recommended financial compensation. But seven years later he still hadn't received anything.

That's when Charles Secord stepped in. He wrote a letter to the Anglican magazine, *The Church,* which made FitzGibbon sound like the supreme hero of the Battle of Beaverdams. He also mentioned his mother's walk and appended FitzGibbon's 1837 certificate. Later, in 1845, FitzGibbon was awarded £1000, but the role Charles' letter played in all this is not known. Unfortunately, his letter contains very little information about Laura's route, apart from the fact that she "travelled on foot all the way, passing all the American guards and many of the Indian scouts who were placed along the road."

In 1853 Gilbert Auchinleck authored a well-researched, comprehensive *History of the War of 1812,* which came out in serial form in the *Anglo-American Magazine,* and as a book in 1855. In the November issue of the magazine Auchinleck devoted a lengthy footnote to Laura Secord's walk, and quoted what seems to be a letter from her. This is what she said about her route: "I found I should have great difficulty in getting through the American guards, which were out ten miles in the country. Determined to persevere, however, I left early in the morning, walked nineteen miles in the month of June, over a rough and difficult part of the country, when I came to a field belonging to Mr. Decamp [DeCew], in the neighbourhood of the Beaver Dam. By this time daylight had left me. Here I found all the Indians encamped…." Not suprisingly, Auchinleck added a transcription of FitzGibbon's 1837 certificate.

This was not the last time a letter from Laura would appear in a footnote in a book, for one appeared also in Benson J. Lossing's *Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* in 1869, one year

after Laura died. The letter began: "After going to St. David's, and the recovery of Mr. Secord, we returned again to Queenston, where my courage again was much tried. It was then I gained the secret plan laid to capture Captain Fitzgibbon and his party. I was determined, if possible, to save them." Surprisingly perhaps, this is the first mention of Queenston in anything she wrote.

Laura continued: "I had much difficulty in getting through the American guards. They were ten miles out in the country. When I came to a field belonging to a Mr. De Cou, in the neighbourhood of the Beaver Dams, I then had walked nineteen miles. By that time daylight had left me. I yet had a swift stream of water to cross over an old fallen tree (Twelve-mile Creek), and to climb a high hill, which fatigued me very much." (Laura had the sequence wrong when she said this, for, as will become clear later, she traversed the creek and the hill before she reached DeCew's Field.)

She then goes on to describe her encounter with the Natives in DeCew's field, which includes this sentence, "The scene by moonlight to some might have been grand, but to a weak woman certainly terrifying." She adds, "With the intelligence I gave him [FitzGibbon] he formed his plans and saved his country."

The letter is dated February 18, 1861, a month before Laura received £100 from the Prince of Wales, and seems to be a modified version of a document written by one George Coventry on the same date. English-born Coventry came to Canada in 1835, settled in Niagara and worked in part for William Hamilton Merritt of Welland Canal fame. In 1859 Coventry was appointed by the Legislature of the Province of Canada to gather and transcribe documents relating to the early history of Upper Canada. The appointment came largely through Merritt's influence, and lasted until 1863. Coventry was assisted in his work by Merritt's son, Jedediah Prendergast Merritt.

The St. Catharines Museum, at Lock 3, has a copy of the document that Coventry wrote in 1861. It is obviously a precursor to the letter that Lossing published, for this is how Coventry begins: "Mr Lossing will find in the Anglo American Magazine a certificate given by Colonel FitzGibbon to Mrs Secord, to shew what she had done towards saving her Country, but as Mr Lossing wishes a relation given by herself, she has much pleasure in doing so, as far as her memory will allow, which she thanks God she still retains." After relating Laura's account of her walk, Coventry adds this P.S., "Mrs Seacord trusts Mr Lossing will find what she has stated to his satisfaction."

Lossing was in Niagara in 1860 doing research for his book, when he presumably learned of Laura's walk. He evidently contacted Coventry, and asked him in turn to contact Laura. But what appears in Lossing's book in 1869 is not identical to what Coventry wrote in 1861. For example, Coventry refers "to a field belonging to a Mr Decamp," and refers to Laura as Louisa. Also, though he does mention "a swift stream of water" the stream is not named. But Coventry adds this note at the very end, "I intend to call on my friend Mrs Second for further particulars – GC." If he followed through, Laura would have had the opportunity to suggest changes, but it does raise the question as to who wrote the letter that appeared in Lossing's book, Laura Secord or George Coventry.

This is the additional information we glean from books and magazines about Laura's route: Queenston, 19 miles, road, American guards, Indian sentries, Twelve Mile Creek and DeCew's Field.

Other Written Material

This section also describes books, though they are considered less reliable than the ones mentioned above.

In 1864 William F. Coffin published *1812; The War, and Its Moral: A Canadian Chronicle,* which included the story of Laura Secord. His account was not very accurate, however. It was Coffin who introduced the tale of the cow, which Laura supposedly used as a ruse to get by an American sentry posted at her house. Coffin also mentioned wolves, rattlesnakes, a miller's wife and meeting a British sentry, who rather than convey the warning to FitzGibbon himself, simply "sent her on, with a kind word, warning her to beware of the Indians." It doesn't help that Coffin refers to Laura as Mary. Here, then, we have the beginning of the legend of Laura Secord, a mixture of fact and imagination.

Coffin was the first of the "uncritical historians" mentioned by George Ingram in an article in *Ontario History* in 1965: "Laura Secord was enthroned as the queen of Upper Canadian pioneer womanhood in the last half of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century .... Her case was taken up by poetic nationalists, ardent feminists, and uncritical historians who revelled in the romantic qualities of Laura's sylvan ramble and unhesitatingly added a few flourishes of their own. By 1913, a century after the fact, an impressive edifice had been constructed around Laura's walk."

No-one did more for the legend of Laura Secord than English-born feminist Sarah Anne Curzon, who in 1887 published *Laura Secord, the Heroine of 1812: a Drama,* followed by *The Story of Laura Secord* in 1891. In the latter Curzon wrote: "At St. David's she entered … the Black Swamp … but she lost herself more than once, and the moon was rising as she reached the further end. All that hot summer's day, from daybreak to moonlight, on the 23rd of June, she had traversed the haunted depths of the forest, alone, hungry, faint, and, for the

most part of the way, ragged and shoeless. Even today we can judge how short a time it would take to destroy every article of attire in a thicket full of thorns and briers, of branches and fallen trees, of water and bog."

She then relates Laura's fear of wild animals, her crossing of the Twelve Mile Creek, her ascent of the "mountain" (the Niagara Escarpment), her encounter with a British sentry — who again did nothing except direct her to the DeCew House — and her ambush by the Natives.

Three things are significant about what Curzon wrote. First, she repeats Coffin's tale of the cow. Second, she got the date wrong — Laura's walk was on the 22nd not the 23rd — which caused all manner of confusion in later writings. Third, she introduced the Black Swamp, which almost everybody mentioned thereafter.

In 1889 military historian Ernest Cruikshank wrote *The Fight in the Beechwoods* about the Battle of Beaverdams. Incredibly, he says that Laura made her journey very early in the morning on the 24th (the date of the battle), and walked for only five or six hours. He provides no additional information about her route, except that she avoided the main road throughout. But he does mention the cow, and adds a milk-pail.

Local historian Emma A. Currie also says that Laura walked very early on the 24th in her book *The Story of Laura Secord and Canadian Reminiscences,* published in 1900. Currie provides nothing new about Laura's route, but she does quote a letter written by Laura's great-niece, Elizabeth Gregory, to Mrs Orlando Dunn on October 27, 1884. In the letter Elizabeth says that Laura stopped in St. Davids at her sister-in-law Hannah Secord's home — Hannah's son Alex, who was 12 at the time, confirmed this late in life. The story is that Laura was then accompanied by her niece Elizabeth as far as Shipman's Corners, where an exhausted Elizabeth turned back. Incidentally, Laura's stop in St. Davids explains FitzGibbon's belief that the Secords lived there. Elizabeth Gregory added in her letter that "the cow and the milk-pail are a fable."

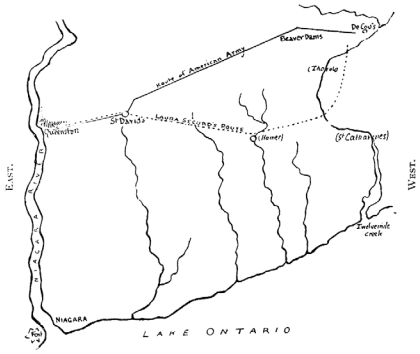
This section has added only two pieces of information about Laura's route — the Black Swamp and Shipman's Corners. All the books and articles that have been written since 1900 contain no new material, and this includes the definitive biography by Ruth McKenzie, *Laura Secord. The Legend and the Lady,* published in 1971.

We are left with the following information about the route that Laura Secord followed: Queenston, St. Davids, Shipman's Corners, Beaverdams, DeCew House, Twelve Mile Creek, DeCew's Field, 12 miles, 19 miles, 20 miles, circuitous route, road, woods, mountains, enemy's lines, American guards, Indian sentries and Native encampments. We can reduce the number on the list right away by disposing of Beaverdams, for the DeCew House is simply near the village of Beaverdams.

Map Evidence

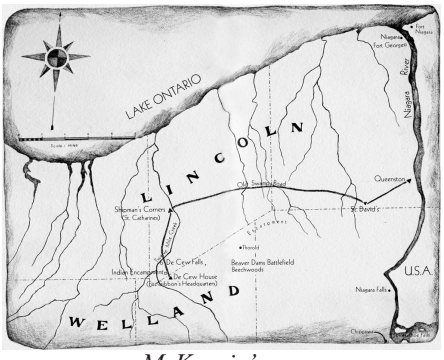
The very first map depicting Laura Secord's route is said to be an undated map supposedly drawn for Sarah Anne Curzon, the original of which is in the Niagara Historical Society Museum. The map is quite difficult to read, but on close examination it does not show her route at all.

The actual first map appeared in *A National Monument to Laura Secord,* a paper read by R.E.A. Land before the U.E.L. Association of Ontario in 1901, advocating a monument to Laura Secord at Queenston (a copy is in Special Collections in the Brock University Library). This is shown below.



Land's map

Land's map shows a very approximate route, but it certainly is circuitous. Several maps have been produced since 1901, and they all essentially show the same route: Queenston, St. Davids, Homer (in 1813 it was known as The Ten or Brown's), Shipman's Corners (also known at the time as The Twelve or St. Catharines), and the DeCew House. One example, from Ruth McKenzie's biography, follows.



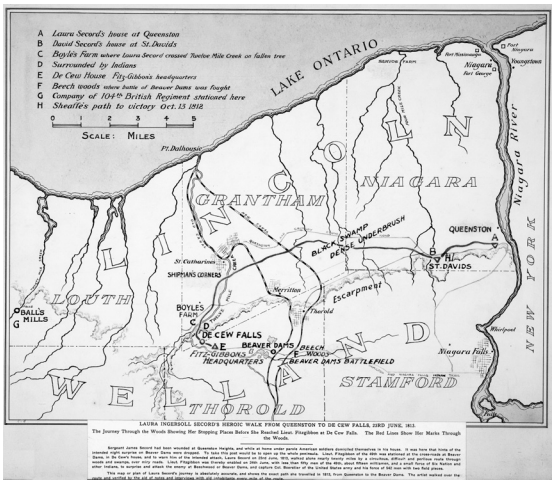
McKenzie's map

Four of the maps contain the same locational errors as the Centennial map shown on the first page of this article, and are obviously derived from the same source. These are: a map in a pamphlet called *Queenston Heights* published by the Niagara Parks Commission prior to 1923; a map produced by the Laura Secord Candy Company in the mid 60s or

earlier; a map illustrating an article by Francis Petrie in the *Niagara Falls Review* on June 24, 1978; and a map in an article by Donald Jones in *The Toronto Star* on September 12, 1987.

It turns out that the original from which these were drawn is included in the J. Ross Robertson Collection in the Toronto Reference Library. Robertson was an important individual in late 19th and early 20th century Ontario. He is known chiefly as a newspaper publisher, but he was also author or publisher of several histories, a strong advocate for amateur sport, and a major philanthropist, making significant contributions to the "Sick Kids" Hospital in Toronto.

He also amassed a huge collection of Canadiana, comprising paintings, drawings, prints, photos, maps, books and other items. When Roberston could not get hold of originals he would engage artists to make copies, and he also paid artists to produce paintings from scratch. One of these was John W. Cotton, who accompanied fellow artist Owen Staples to Niagara in 1917. It was Cotton who was evidently given principal responsibility for recording the events of 1813, for he painted two pictures each of the Secord House in Queenston, the DeCew House and the Beaverdams Battlefield. He also drew a map of Laura Secord's route, which is reproduced below.

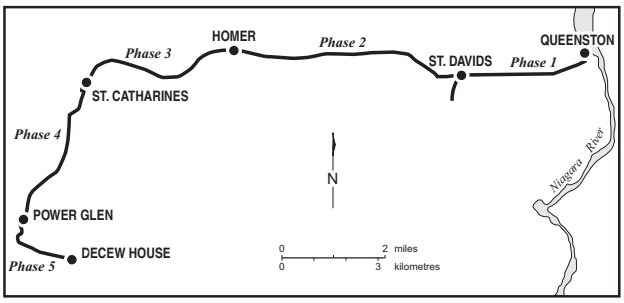


Cotton's map

Unlike the Centennial map, the above map was clearly drawn by a person with artistic skills, but the locational errors are the same. The accompanying text contains all the claims about accuracy present in the Centennial booklet, and even gets the date of Laura's walk wrong (June 23rd rather than the 22nd). However, this is clearly the source for not only the Centennial map, but the four other maps listed above.

Laura Secord's Route

It is time now to consider all the evidence and discuss Laura's route in detail. Her route will be divided into five phases: Queenston to St. Davids, St. Davids to Homer, Homer to St. Catharines, St. Catharines to Power Glen, and Power Glen to the DeCew House. (Note the use of present-day names for settlements; roads will be given their present-day names also.) The five phases are depicted in the map below.



Laura Secord's overall route

Queenston to St. Davids

Laura would have wanted to reach her relatives in St. Davids as quickly as possible, and there is no evidence that she followed any other route than York Road. The story is that she was seeking the help of her half-brother Charles, but he was sick in bed and couldn't go to warn FitzGibbon himself. Instead her niece Elizabeth apparently offered to accompany her.

As for American sentries (Laura called them "guards"), which she said were 10 miles out in the country, there weren't any — enemy sentries were no more than 2 miles out from Fort George on the day that she walked. This is simply an exaggeration on Laura's part. Her son Charles' reference to "Indian sentries" is similar.

St. Davids to Homer

This phase of Laura's route, from St. Davids to Homer, followed Old Highway 8, and would have been where she passed through the Black Swamp. But the story of the Black Swamp, like the cow, is "a fable," even though the swamp did exist in 1813. Old Highway 8 follows an elevated ledge (the former Lake Iroquios Shoreline), and the Black Swamp lay to the north, as confirmed by contemporary maps. Old Highway 8 may have been muddy after recent rains, and it was crossed by several streams (their locations still apparent today where the road dips), but it certainly wasn't a swamp. Significantly, Laura herself makes no mention of the Black Swamp, and she would have hardly survived had she ventured into it.

At Homer Laura would have crossed the Ten Mile Creek. Dramatic changes have occurred here since 1813, as a result of the building of the Fourth Welland Canal and the Garden City Skyway. In 1813 Old Highway 8 did not stop at Highway 55, but ran straight ahead into the minor valley of the Ten Mile Creek; there it crossed the stream by a bridge and continued on to Queenston Street. Nowadays the creek has almost been destroyed by the Welland Canal, but there remains a small section

with a concrete bridge over it, in the same location as the bridge that Laura crossed in 1813.

Homer to St. Catharines

Laura would have followed the equivalent of Queenston Street and St. Paul Street into St. Catharines, which in 1813 was no more than a village alongside the Twelve Mile Creek. On reaching Ontario Street she would have cut to the left and descended into the steep valley of the Twelve Mile Creek, crossing it by means of a low level bridge. Incidentally, there is absolutely no evidence that the bridge was destroyed in the War of 1812, so that was not the location where she crossed the creek by a fallen tree.

This phase is where Cotton's map gets ridiculous. If Laura's route as shown on his map is to be believed, she would have crossed multiple tributaries of Dick's Creek, which would have been impossible. They were deep and they were wooded, and she would have got lost in no time. (Cotton's map is wrong also in depicting the previous phase, St. Davids to Homer. It shows Laura following a path right through the middle of the Black Swamp south of Old Highway 8!)

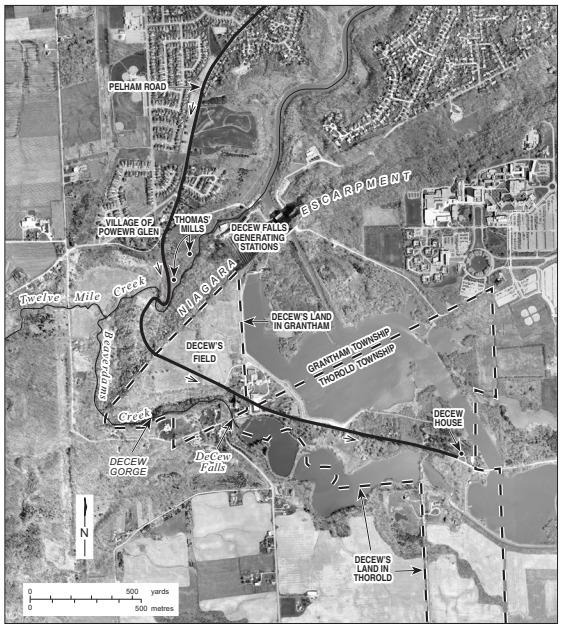
St. Catharines to Power Glen

After crossing the creek Laura faced two choices. She could continue up the valley of the Twelve Mile Creek, or she could ascend the slope on the other side and follow Pelham Road. The latter is almost certainly what she did. Nowadays the lower part of the Twelve Mile Creek is fast-flowing, at times near a torrent, thanks to the two DeCew Falls Generating Stations at Power Glen, opened in 1898 and 1947. But in 1813 it was a small, meandering stream, flowing through what was probably a very damp flood plain. To venture up the valley would not have been a wise choice.

There is also another consideration. Most writers assume that Laura figured out her route as she trekked towards the DeCew House. But this is unrealistic. She would surely have discussed the route with her husband James before she set out from Queenston, as he was likely more familiar with the roads and trails in the area. This probably accounts for the circuitous route, planned in advance to avoid being overtaken by the American troops going to attack FitzGibbon. This possibly explains why Laura did not take Warner Road west from St. Davids. Indeed, the Americans eventually followed Warner Road before moving south to Mountain Road (the route of the American army shown on Land's map is wrong). James would also have advised Laura to follow Pelham Road, as the final phase will indicate.

Power Glen to the DeCew House

There was no village of Power Glen in 1813. There was only a grist mill and a saw mill, owned by Peter Thomas, down in the valley alongside the Twelve Mile Creek. An access road led from Pelham Road to the mills, and this is what Laura probably followed, no doubt on the advice of James. Apparently this road led to a bridge over the creek, which Laura had to cross to get to the DeCew House. But the bridge had been washed out by recent rains, and, in Laura's own words, she had "to cross over an old fallen tree."



The final phase

But where exactly did she cross? If a photograph in the *Jubilee History of Thorold,* published in 1897-8, is any guide, it was at the point where the creek does a sudden turn south. The picture, captioned "Present appearance of the spot where Laura Secord crossed the Twelve Mile Creek on her way to warn FitzGibbon," has sky in the background. The only location close to the access road where sky is visible is where the stream turns to the south.

One of the paintings that John Cotton produced showed where Laura crossed the Twelve Mile Creek. But the picture depicts a broad river, which is obviously below the DeCew Falls Generating Station. The artist clearly got the crossing point wrong, but to his credit it is consistent with his map.

After crossing the Twelve Mile Creek, Laura climbed the wooded "mountain" (the Niagara Escarpment) into DeCew's Field. John DeCew, who already had land in Thorold alongside the DeCew House, had purchased additional land just before the War of 1812 broke out. This extended all the way to the DeCew Falls, but also included land back of the falls on top of the Escarpment in the neighbouring Township of Grantham. This is presumably DeCew's Field. Of course, DeCew's Field is where Laura was "ambushed" by Natives, who eventually took her to the DeCew House.

As the 2006 airphoto underlying the map of the final phase shows, the land on top of the Escarpment has changed dramatically since Laura did her walk in 1813. What was once the broad shallow valley of the Beaverdams Creek above DeCew Falls is now largely under water. In the late 1870s the creek's lower reaches were flooded to create collecting ponds for the new St. Catharines Waterworks, and in the early 1900s two huge reservoirs — Lake Moodie and Lake Gibson — were established to store water for the new DeCew Falls Generating Station.

Conclusion

Laura Secord definitely walked her walk, and deserves every credit for doing so. But how long was her journey? The consensus is that she walked about 20 miles, which originates in FitzGibbon's 1837 certificate. But in this he says, "I write this certificate in a moment of much hurry & from memory," which doesn't inspire much confidence in his mileage estimate.

The route discussed in this article, which includes Laura's stop at her sister-in-law's at St. Davids, is only about 16 miles. But the total might in fact be 18 miles, for Laura could have deviated from this route here and there; furthermore, the roads, trails and paths in 1813 were in a primitive state, more winding and dipping than they are today.

Sunrise was at 4.39 am on June 22nd, 1813, and sunset at 8.03 pm. Assuming Laura travelled from sunrise to the end of nautical twilight at 9.25 pm (she certainly arrived at the DeCew House after dark), she was on the road for 16 hours, 46 minutes. Either way — 20 miles or 18 miles — her average speed was just over a mile an hour.

Principal Sources: (in addition to those cited in the text): George Ingram, "The Story of Laura Secord Revisited,"*Ontario History,* 1965; David F. Hemmings, *Laura Ingersoll Secord, A Heroine and Her Family,* 2010; numerous articles about Laura Secord; extensive field work.

Credits: maps and layout (Loris Gasparotto); editing (John Burtniak).

Reproduced from the *Newsletter* of the
Historical Society of St. Catharines, December 2012