

Owen Sound Stamp Club

Chapter 191

Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

Next meeting; Wed. July 17th 2013 @ 7:00

From the President...



Summer has arrived in full force with its hot and humid weather. I've been busy with some stamp sorting activities, but also with family weddings and other functions. It is pleasant to have a get together and it was nice to see my son and daughter come back "from away." But speaking of "away", I will be attending a simulation conference and so will not be at this month's meeting. The meeting will be led by **Larry Crane** instead.

As mentioned at the previous meetings, this month will be a club auction night. For the newer members, it means that you can sort through your excess material and see who would like to add it into their own philatelic interests. For instance, I have shared some interests with the club like numeral cancels and "stamps on stamps" and it would be nice to see other topical collections started by your ideas. The auction itself will be run by "auctioneer" John Lemon, a very capable peddler of words and hilarity. Please arrive early enough so that the items can be listed properly and then the sellers can collect their "reward." One last administrative point to mention is that the club has a 10% commission to help keep the club afloat.

The meeting will NOT be held at the High School this month. Instead, Larry has arranged for our meeting to meet at the Rectory, directly across the street from the high school. There will be more precise directions given later in the newsletter. The August meeting will be at the High School again. The club circuit books from Stratford will be at the August meeting, and I need to confirm who will be available for the September meeting. I hope you all have a pleasant evening on the 17th and I hope to see you in August.

Cheers,
Phil Visser
President OSSC

[July Meeting at St. Mary's Rectory](#)

Some construction work is being done to the cafeteria at St. Mary's High School where we have been meeting lately. The school is on 15th St. East. Across the road the Church itself can be seen. You can enter the parking area for the Church and the Rectory from the east off of 6th Ave. East or from the north off of 16th St. East. Larry Crane will have a sign posted on the rectory doors that we will be using and I will try to get there early enough to put out our sandwich board sign. the Ed.

Coming Events...

- JULY 20, Burlington, ON
BURLOAK STAMP FAIR, Seniors' Centre, 2285 New St. (at Seneca). Hours: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. 18th year of regular monthly shows on the third Saturday of every month. Six to nine dealers, active buyers and always something new. For more information contact Steve Simon, telephone 905-575-2950, email bas6@bell.net.
- AUG. 10, Kincardine, ON
Kinex 2013, Davidson Centre, 601 Durham St.. Eight to nine dealers, exhibits, youth table, door prizes. Sponsor/Affiliate: Kincardine Stamp Club. For more information contact John Cortan, email kincstampclub@hurontel.on.ca, telephone 519-395-5817
- AUG. 10, Fenelon Falls, ON
Fenpex 29, Fenelon Seniors Hall, 58 Murray St. Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Our 29th annual stamp show and bourse, accessible, air conditioned, bright new building, free parking, free admittance, door prizes, hourly draws, silent auctions, displays, 12 dealers, freebies for junior collectors, lunch available. Sponsor/Affiliate: Fenelon Stamp Club. For more information contact Maureen McEwan, telephone 705-324-7577, or Lloyd McEwan, cellphone 705-324-7577, email lmceewan@sympatico.ca.
- AUG. 17, Bracebridge, ON
MUSPEX 2013, Muskoka Riverside Inn, 300 Ecclestone Dr. Ten dealers, club exhibits and club table, door prizes, free admission and parking. Sponsor/Affiliate: Muskoka Stamp Club. For more information, contact Bruce Hughes, telephone 705-385-2020, email brucestamp1@sympatico.ca.
- AUG. 24, Brighton, ON
2013 South - Central / Eastern Ontario Saturday Postage Stamp, Coin & Postcard Fairs, Brighton Community Centre/Hockey Rink Complex, 75 Elizabeth St. / Hwy. 2 E. Show hours 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Free admission and parking, 37th year in business, with more than one million worldwide stamps, postcards, covers, coins and currency notes. Related supplies also available, many at discounted prices. For more information email dejackson8138@gmail.com.



This June Canada Post has brought to light two more heroes of the War of 1812. Laura Secord and Charles de Salaberry both had important roles to play 200 years ago in 1813. This month we'll take a look at the events surrounding the famous thirty km. trek of Laura Secord.

Skirmishes and battles continued to take place in 1813 as the War of 1812 carried on. York (Toronto) was lost on April 27 and Fort George at Niagara-On-the-Lake a month later. The defeat at York was not a huge blow militarily but more perhaps a stronghold of the York was the capital British troops at The Americans had General Zebulon



psychological one. Kingston was the British Marine corps on Lake Ontario. of Upper Canada. The retreating York blew up their own magazine. many casualties including their Pike. They did a lot of looting and

burning before retreating across the lake to Fort Niagara just across the Niagara River from Fort George. After taking the time to pull up their boot straps the Americans attacked and won Fort George on May 27, 1813.

By June Queenston had also been taken by the Americans. It is here where we encounter Laura Secord although she has already played a small role in this war. Her husband James Secord came from a long line of military that had fought as Loyalists in the American Revolution. James was a 1st Lincoln

The Americans took Ft. York on April 27, 1813 and then went on to Ft.

militiaman under Sir Isaac Brock. It is said that James Secord helped to carry Brock's body from the battlefield on Queenston Heights in October 1812. He then returned to battle only to receive terrible wounds himself. His brave wife Laura ran to her wounded husband to retrieve him from the field where American soldiers were about to beat him to death. American Captain Jon E. Wool interfered to allow her to remove James Secord from the field.

The British, the First Nations and Canadians won the day that time in 1812 but now the Americans had overrun Queenston and a number of soldiers billeted themselves at the home of the Secords. James was still recovering from his wounds. Like many stories from the past the truth of this story becomes somewhat hazy.

Laura has written about this story herself over the years and even her version of the story varies.

Some say that Laura overheard the drunken soldiers talking of a plan to ambush Lt. James Fitzgibbon at Beaver



As the connecting route between Lakes Ontario and Erie many skirmishes were fought

Dams. Others say that the men boasted of the story to her husband. Some think that she was protecting an American informant by muddying the waters. Did she slip off quietly in the early dawn of June 22nd or did she tell the soldiers that she was going to St. David's to visit an ailing family member? Apparently she did go to St. David's and enlisted the company of her niece Elizabeth Secord who only managed to walk with her for a few hours. Laura continued on to Shipman's Corners (St. Catharines) and to Short Hills. Part of her journey was along the escarpment and possibly along parts of what is now the Bruce Trail. Her route was very circuitous as she avoided the main roads and possible American sentries along the way. Eventually Mrs. Secord came upon a camp of Mohawk warriors. Though greatly afraid she told the Mohawks her tale and then they escorted her to DeCew House where Lt. James FitzGibbon was situated. Her 30 km trek through the wilderness took her 17 hours.

Fitzgibbon then waited to see if any more news should arrive about an impending raid. Secord did not have details of the timing. In a couple of days native scouts reported the advancing American troops. Captains Dominique Ducharme and William Kerr led 300 Iroquois and 100 Mohawks to Beaver Dams (Thorold). They laid in wait for the Americans until June 24, 1813.

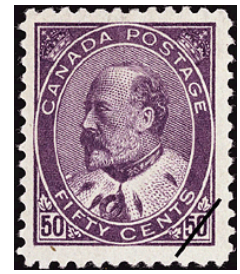
600 American troops had left Fort George under the leadership of Lt. Col. Boerstler some already billeted in Queenston to disguise their purpose. When the main body of their force was attacked from the trees and marshes twenty-five Americans were killed and fifty more wounded (including Captain Boerstler). The US troops had no idea how many natives were attacking them and feared that they would all be tomahawked and scalped as they shot randomly into the woods. Even so, they killed five native chiefs and warrior and wounded a score more.

The British never fired a shot. FitzGibbon and his fifty men of the 49th Regiment offered the Americans protection from the wrath of the natives if they surrendered. The surrender process was finalized when Major de Haren arrived with reinforcements from Twelve Mile Creek.

Mohawk leader John Norton has been quoted saying "the Cognawaga Indians fought the battle, the Mohawks got the plunder, and FitzGibbon got the credit."

It was quite some time in fact before Laura Secord was given any credit. It was 1827 when FitzGibbon wrote an account of the event with Laura Secord's role included. Information from Boerstler verified that Secord had foreknowledge of the raid plans. The battle at Beaver Dams and the loss of Boerstler's detachment led to low morale and fear for the Americans stationed at Fort George and led to abandonment of the fort on December 10th, 1813 and general recovery of the Canadian side of the Niagara Peninsula.

Laura's husband James died in 1841 and his pension came to an end. She petitioned to get her husband's pension continued or for a pension for herself for her role in the War during 1813. No such luck was to be found until 1860 when she was 85 years old. While on his first tour of Canada, The Prince of Wales heard the story of Laura Secord and her financial problems and sent her £100 to Chippawa (now part of Niagara Falls) where she lived since 1835. This was the only official acknowledgement she received. She lived until 1868 when she was 93 and was buried at Drummond Hill Cemetery in Niagara Falls next to her husband. Her grave now has a monument with a bust of her atop it.



On his 1st trip to Canada, young Prince Albert sent £100 to the aging Laura Secord upon hearing her story. (Future K Edward VII)

But what a dramatic tale! An unprotected female alone in the wilderness on a trek to save her countrymen, fighting off mosquitoes, rattlesnakes, bears, men with guns and perhaps with tomahawks! You can't keep a good story down and Laura Secord's fame grew and grew. A play was written about her in 1887. The play received bad reviews but the story became known widespread and was in school textbooks before 1900.

A seven ft high granite monument in Queenston heights was dedicated to Secord in 1901. You can also visit her homestead there. Beaver Dams Battlefield Park (Thorold) has a plaque dedicated to her. A number of schools have been named after Laura.



A more modern tribute is the 'Laura Secord Legacy Trail'. Friends of the trail have recreated Laura's trek to the best of their ability. The 32km trail goes through cityscapes, countryside and along the escarpment adjoining the Bruce Trail in part. Laureen Harper, the Prime Minister's wife participated along with 1,000 other people on the Laura Secord Commemorative Walk on Saturday June 22nd, 2013. At the DeCew's House remains, the end of the journey, several events were held including re-enactments, town crier competitions, award ceremonies and pipe bands.

Oh yeah, there is another tribute you may have heard of. On the centennial of Laura's trek, Frank O'Connor founded the Laura Secord's Chocolate Company. In the 1970s it was the largest candy retailer in Canada. I can't tell you how the company

Laura Secord is honoured as a legendary hero of

fares in market shares now, but I do know that we have a Laura Secord shop right in Owen Sound! Try their ice cream!

note: you may disagree with some of the spellings or facts that have been presented here. I do use the internet as a source, checking out a number of sites. In stories 200 years old spellings of names can vary a lot. Names of places have often

changed more than once and facts seem to change from site to site, some embellished and many omitted. I will forward you a list of references if you contact me.

From the Editor...

Hi folks. Jim Brett made it to our meeting in June. I hope that you found some goodies among the Saugeen circuit books. People did jump in. I never had a chance to see the Canadian offerings. I take that as a good sign.

Dig around and see if you can come up with some interesting items for the auction.

See you on Wednesday!

Marion Ace, Editor OSSC

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The Owen Sound Stamp Club meets at 7:00 pm on the third Wednesday of each month in the cafeteria of St. Mary's High School, 555 15th St. East. Please park behind the school. The business of the evening is typically to trade, buy and sell stamps and philatelic material. An Auction is often held at 8:00 pm. There are presently about 30 active members whose interests cover just about everything at all levels, from beginner to expert. Guests or new members are always most welcome. Annual membership fees: \$15; Junior- Free

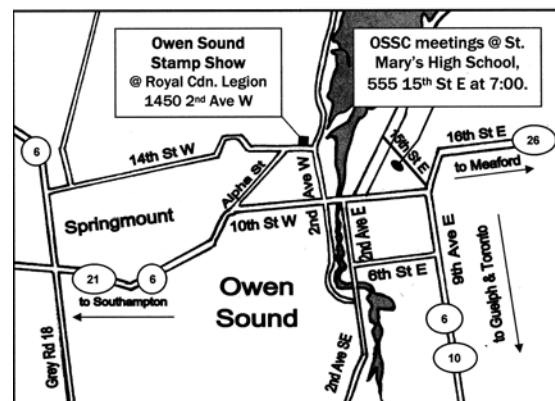
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IRUMBERRY DE SALABERRY, CHARLES-MICHEL D', army and militia officer, politician, seigneur, office holder, and jp; b. 19 Nov. 1778 in Beauport, Que., eldest son of Ignace-Michel-Louis-Antoine d'irumberry de Salaberry and Françoise-Catherine Hertel de Saint-François; m. 13 May 1812 Marie-Anne-Julie Hertel de Rouville, daughter of

Jean-Baptiste-Melchior Hertel* de Rouville, in Chambly, Lower Canada, and they had four sons and three daughters; d. there 27 Feb. 1829.

Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry enlisted at the age of 14 as a volunteer in the 44th Foot. In 1794, through Prince Edward* Augustus, a family friend, he received an ensign's commission in a battalion of the 60th Foot stationed in the West Indies. After his arrival on 28 July that year, he distinguished himself by his bravery in the invasions of the French colonies of Saint-Domingue, Guadeloupe, and Martinique. During this time the prince, having become commander of the military forces in the Maritime colonies, undertook to obtain a lieutenancy for him in his own regiment, the 7th Foot, which was stationed at Halifax. On learning that Salaberry had already been promoted to that rank in the 60th, where advancement was swifter, he asked for the appointment to the 7th to be cancelled and in the interim had him sent home to Lower Canada on leave.

Salaberry's readmission to the 60th came through too late for him to sail for the West Indies. After being shipwrecked on St John's (Prince Edward) Island he was detained at Halifax, in the prince's service. The prince initiated him into freemasonry, and on 2 Feb. 1797 Salaberry was installed as master of Royal Rose Lodge No.2. From March till the end of June he served as a lieutenant on the *Asia*, which was chasing Spanish ships. He returned to the West Indies at the beginning of July and was garrisoned in Jamaica. Although the prince recommended him several times for a captaincy, Salaberry, who did not have the means to buy the commission, had to wait until the end of 1799 to receive the rank of captain-lieutenant, without a company, in the 60th Foot. On 18 June 1803 he finally obtained a company in the 1st battalion.

In 1804 Salaberry asked the prince – now the Duke of Kent – to use his influence to get him sick leave; he arrived at Quebec on 24 October. On 26 June of the following year he sailed for England with his brothers Maurice-Roch and François-Louis, both of whom had been promoted lieutenant in the duke's regiment. The three were warmly received at home by Edward Augustus and his companion, Mme de Saint-Laurent [Montgenet], and the duke immediately took steps to have Salaberry exchanged into a different regiment to spare him another tour of duty in the West Indies. In the mean time Edward got several weeks' leave for him, gave him lodging, invited him to supper every day, and let him use his box at the theatre.

Early in 1806 Salaberry was transferred to the 5th battalion of the 60th Foot, under Colonel Francis de Rottenburg. At the duke's request he conducted recruiting in Britain for the 1st Foot between July 1806 and March 1807. Major-General Sir George Prevost* created difficulties for him, but to the duke's great pleasure he none the less succeeded in enlisting more than 150 men. In August 1806 the youngest Salaberry brother, Édouard-Alphonse*, arrived in England. The Salaberrys met only a few times, however, since Maurice-Roch and François-Louis left for India on 18 April 1807. For his part, Charles-Michel was called to Ireland in August. In 1808 he was appointed brigade-major of the light infantry brigade commanded by Rottenburg which in 1809 was dispatched to the Netherlands. Like a number of his comrades, Salaberry caught a contagious fever in that disastrous campaign and returned to England in October. He was transferred back to the 60th Foot, 1st battalion, and in June 1810 learned that he would soon be leaving for the Canadas. There, in the autumn, he became aide-de-camp to Major-General Rottenburg.

On 2 July 1811 Salaberry was promoted brevet major. Seven months later, with the international situation pointing to the imminence of war, he put forward a plan to set up a militia corps, the Voltigeurs Canadiens. In the circumstances Prevost, who had become governor-in-chief in October 1811, could only commend Salaberry, who had the influence, zeal, and energy to raise a corps of volunteers and turn it quickly into an efficient and competent unit. Salaberry began recruiting for this "Provincial Corps of Light Infantry" on 15 April 1812.

Obtaining experienced officers for the militia was not easy, since a man's absence from his regiment held up his promotion in the army. Furthermore, a militia officer was subordinate to an officer of the regular army holding the same rank – hence Salaberry's anger when Prevost commissioned him a lieutenant-colonel in the militia, effective 1 April 1812, instead of giving him an army rank. But on 29 Jan. 1813 Rottenburg informed him that he was to have a supervisory function in the Voltigeurs Canadiens with the rank of Lieutenant-colonel in the army. When, contrary to expectations, this rank was not confirmed, Salaberry had to be satisfied with receiving that of lieutenant-colonel of the Voltigeurs Canadiens, on 25 March 1813. Confirmation that he had the same rank in the army did not come until July 1814. Although the militia was subordinate to the army, some army officers insisted upon being taken on in the Voltigeurs Canadiens. They did so for two reasons: the virtual certainty of the militia unit becoming a regular army unit and their rank being recognized, and the desire of some to retire from the army with a militia officer's salary added to their half pay. Salaberry was thus able to obtain several experienced officers.

At the beginning the recruitment of militiamen succeeded beyond all hopes, on account of the economic crisis, Salaberry's reputation, and the fact that the Select Embodied Militia had not yet been raised. Notwithstanding the claims sometimes made, exaggerated notions that Salaberry deserves all the credit for recruiting and that the unit was raised in two days are not tenable. In April 1812 the target was a corps of 500, but Prevost reduced the number to 350 in June, and to 300 the next month. In fact, financial circumstances did not permit the Voltigeurs Canadiens and the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles to be raised at the same time. With 264 men recruited in the first three weeks, enlistment promised to be easy. But the harshness of military life apparently led many discouraged recruits to desert, for numbers dropped from 323 in June to 270 in October. Salaberry had difficulty mustering 438 men in March 1813. Nevertheless, at the battle of Châteauguay the following October the Voltigeurs Canadiens had 29 officers and 481 non-commissioned officers and men.

Salaberry was a strict and conscientious commander. His officers did not always possess the same qualities. Jacques Viger*, a captain who was later to retain his company through Salaberry's intervention, often regretted his commission, complaining of the severe discipline and the onerous financial charges that the officers had to assume. Salaberry's brother-in-law, Jean-Baptiste-René Hertel* de Rouville, who was also a captain in the Voltigeurs Canadiens, begged the adjutant general of militia to transfer him to another regiment because he found his commanding officer too demanding.

On 18 June 1812 the United States had declared war on Great Britain, and the Americans were making ready to invade the Canadas. To defend Lower Canada, in May the government had conscripted the men to form four battalions of Select Embodied Militia; a fifth was created in September, and another in February 1813. The sedentary militia took training and on occasion was called up. Besides the Voltigeurs Canadiens a number of voluntary militia units were raised, sometimes for brief periods. In November 1812 an attempted invasion near Lacolle brought the Voltigeurs Canadiens into action. On 27 November Salaberry was praised for his conduct in commanding the advance guard. But in July 1813 he learned that Prevost had sent the British government a dispatch on the events making no mention of his name and congratulating the adjutant general, Edward Baynes, and Major-General Rottenburg, who had taken no part in the action.

Early in August the Voltigeurs Canadiens covered the withdrawal of the British ships sent to burn the barracks in Swanton, Vt, two blockhouses at Champlain, N.Y., and the barracks and arsenal north of Plattsburgh. In October Salaberry was sent to Four Corners, near Châteauguay, with a handful of soldiers and some Indians to reconnoitre the enemy forces and attack. However, there were not enough men and the plan fell through.

Disappointed with the missions being given him, Salaberry wanted to leave the army. But then he was summoned to proceed in all haste from Châteauguay with his troops to the river of that name. The Americans were preparing to attack Montreal in order to cut off the British army in Upper Canada. On 21 October Major-General Wade Hampton crossed the border at the head of some 3,000 men and advanced up the Châteauguay towards Montreal, which he and Major-General James Wilkinson, who was coming down the St Lawrence from Sackets Harbor, N.Y., were to attack.

Having foreseen that the enemy would cross the Châteauguay at Allan's Corners, on the east bank, Salaberry had an abatis thrown up at the spot. There he placed about 250 of the Voltigeurs Canadiens, the sedentary militia, and the Canadian Fencibles, along with some Indians. He sent 50 men from the sedentary militia and from the 3rd battalion of the Select Embodied Militia across the river. A mile behind the abatis about 1,400 militiamen under Lieutenant-Colonel George Richard John Macdonell* were divided among four entrenchments one behind the other.

When he reached Ormstown, some miles from the abatis, Hampton split his troops; he sent about 1,000 men across the Châteauguay and himself advanced with 1,000 or so, leaving a like number in reserve at his encampment. The American troops did not manage to surprise Salaberry's militiamen. By shrewd tactics Salaberry had succeeded in creating the illusion that his force was much stronger than it actually was and thus discouraged the enemy. After about four hours of fighting on 26 October, Hampton ordered his troops to retreat. The Canadians remained at the abatis, ready to resume combat the following day. But Hampton, who had received orders to take up winter quarters in American territory, thought that his superior, Major-General Wilkinson, had called off the attack on Montreal, and he moved his troops back towards the United States. His actions were based on a misunderstanding, but having learned of Hampton's defeat and withdrawal, Wilkinson did not want to attack Montreal. The battle of Châteauguay therefore saved that town from a large-scale attack [see Joseph Wanton Morrison].

Salaberry's superior, Major-General Abraham Ludwig Karl von Wattenwyl*, and Prevost arrived at the same time to observe the enemy's retreat. After the battle, relying on prisoners' estimates, the Canadians thought they had faced 6–7,000 Americans. In reality some 3,000 Americans had met about 1,700 Canadians. According to Prevost's report, written on the day itself, about 300 Canadians had opposed 7,500 Americans. From that time, the battle of Châteauguay took on a legendary character and became a source of popular pride: the Canadians, commanded by one of their own, had displayed their bravery, their military capacity, and their loyalty in repelling the Americans.

If people found reasons for pride in Prevost's general order, Salaberry saw in it an intention to cheat him of credit for the victory. Indeed, Prevost said that he himself had been present at the battle and gave Wattenwyl credit for the strategy employed. Humiliated and denied his rights, Salaberry made innumerable attempts to obtain recognition from the authorities and a promotion in the army. But confronted with the attitudes taken by Prevost and by the Lower Canadian parliament, which in the absence of the governor's assent, did not dare give the usual expression of thanks, Salaberry, who was tired and ill, enquired at the end of 1813 about the terms for retirement from the army. He asked his father to moderate his ambitions for him: he could never become a general officer, because he was a Catholic and because advancement would require 10 or 12 years' more experience. In January 1814 he offered his commission to Frederick George Heriot* for £900. After finally receiving the thanks of the House of Assembly on 30 January and those of the Legislative Council on 25 February, he was still thinking of retiring when he learned on 3 March that Prevost was to recommend him for appointment as inspecting field officer of militia. This promotion promised monetary gain and interesting work. He left the Voltigeurs Canadiens with some regrets, and Heriot replaced him in his command.

In a letter of 15 March Prevost did indeed recommend Salaberry for appointment as inspecting field officer, but in a confidential report dated 13 May he disparaged him, accused him of negligence, and claimed that he had only been carrying out Wattenwyl's orders; in so doing he robbed him of any credit for the victory at Châteauguay. Salaberry had, then, good reason to be wary of Prevost's duplicity, and the appointment was not confirmed. Therefore, having carried out the duties for several months, he sent in his resignation. It was intercepted by the Duke of Kent, to the good fortune of Salaberry, who continued to receive an army lieutenant-colonel's pay. He retained his appointment as inspecting field officer, and also remained lieutenant-colonel of the Voltigeurs Canadiens, his service being interrupted by a 42-day stint on the court martial of Henry Procter. The war ended on 24 Dec. 1814, but the news did not reach the colony until the spring. The militia was demobilized in March 1815. Once the troops had been discharged, Salaberry turned his attention for several months to obtaining his own pay; he also took steps on behalf of the militiamen entitled to payments and the wounded who were to receive compensation.

In 1816 Salaberry received a medal commemorating the battle of Châteauguay. Then, on 5 June 1817, he learned that as result of a recommendation from Sir Gordon Drummond* and Macdonell's friendly intervention, he had been made a companion of the Order of the Bath. In December, Governor Sir John Coape Sherbrooke recommended him to replace Jean-Baptiste-Melchior Hertel de Rouville, his father-in-law, on the Legislative Council. His appointment dated from December 1818, and he took his seat on 19 Feb. 1819. His father was already a member of the council and thus, for the first time, a father and son served together on it.

In 1814 Salaberry had gone to live in Chambly. In July the Hertel de Rouvilles gave the Salaberrys some land near the military reserve. Then Salaberry's father handed over to him the 2,000 *livres* that his godfather, vicar general Charles-Régis Des Bergères de Rigauville, had bequeathed him. Salaberry therefore found himself in possession of a sizeable estate; he managed it conscientiously, claiming compensation for the depredations his lands had been subjected to during the war and bringing lawsuits against several of his neighbours and *censitaires* to establish the boundaries of his lands and full possession of them.

The death of Pierre-Amable De Bonne* in 1816 enabled Salaberry to add to his fortune, since his mother-in-law, Marie-Anne Hervieux, was a relative of the judge. Having conferred power of attorney on her son and son-in-law to get possession of De Bonne's estate, she handed the property over to them and to her daughter in March 1817. This gift was made not long before Jean-Baptiste-Melchior Hertel de Rouville's death on 30 Nov. 1817, which was followed by his wife's on 25 Jan. 1819. Management of their estate was entrusted to Salaberry. Salaberry's wife had inherited the fief of Saint-Mathias, and on 5 Nov. 1819 Salaberry bought the adjoining fief of Beaulac from William Yule. Salaberry's brother-in-law, who was in financial difficulties, sold him and his wife part of his inheritance, including the flour-mill at Saint-Mathias. In January 1818 Salaberry had bought the rights on the part of the king's domain located in the seigneurie from Samuel Jacobs, who was the seigneur of part

of Chambly. Finally, when Jacobs went bankrupt in 1825, he bought his land and so was able to extend his own property. He profited from his holdings and in addition lent money.

Salaberry was also interested in transportation. With his friend and neighbour Samuel Hatt and several merchants and private individuals from the Richelieu region he founded a company in October 1820 to build the steamship *De Salaberry*. It was launched on 3 Aug. 1821, to ply between Quebec, Montreal, and Chambly. On 12 June 1823 the ship burned off Cap-Rouge; six or seven people perished and an extremely valuable cargo was lost.

In 1815 Salaberry had been appointed a justice of the peace for the District of Quebec. He received a similar commission for the districts of Montreal, Trois-Rivières, and Saint-François in 1821, and for the district of Gaspé in 1824. On 14 May 1817 he had been given responsibility for improving communications in Devon County, being named commissioner of roads and bridges. Although he was an illustrious member of the Legislative Council, he was more conspicuous by his absence than by his participation. He supported the petition against the Union Bill of 1822, but in 1824 he wrote to Viger that he expected the union of Upper and Lower Canada to come about.

That year Viger, who had become a friend of his former commander, undertook to raise a subscription to have an engraving done of Salaberry, "whose name is already part of history." The engraver, Asher Brown Durand of New York, did the portrait from a miniature by New York artist Anson Dickinson.

Salaberry was a man of impetuous temperament Rottenburg called him "my dear Gunpowder." He was also pleasant, straightforward, and warmhearted. Stricken by an attack of apoplexy while supping at Hatt's, he died on 27 Feb. 1829.

The name of Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry was, however, not to be forgotten. His role in the battle of Châteauguay, much disputed even during his lifetime, would be viewed in many different ways as Lower Canadian society evolved. In the mid 19th century he was perceived as an experienced, courageous, intrepid soldier who enjoyed the confidence of his men. At the turn of the century English-speaking historians put greater emphasis on the roles played by Macdonell or Wattenwyl, but French-speaking ones defended Salaberry, stressing his valour and intrepidity and pointing out that he had had to make do with limited means furnished by pusillanimous superiors. In the early 1950s Salaberry was looked upon as the French Canadian who had given an outstanding demonstration of the courage of the race. In the decade that followed, the portrait of the hero was effaced by the image of a body of national militia including both English- and French-speaking men who side by side defended Canada. Finally, more recently Salaberry's victory has been attributed to a fruitful collaboration by various elements against a common enemy.

[Michelle Guitard](#)

INGERSOLL, LAURA (Secord), heroine; b. 13 Sept. 1775 in Great Barrington, Mass., eldest daughter of Thomas Ingersoll and Elizabeth Dewey; d. 17 Oct. 1868, at Chippawa (Niagara Falls, Ont.).

When Laura Ingersoll was eight, her mother died, leaving four little girls. Her father remarried twice and had a large family by his third wife. In the American War of Independence, Ingersoll fought on the rebel side, but in 1795 he immigrated to Upper Canada where he had obtained a township grant for settlement. His farm became the site of the modern town of Ingersoll. He ran a tavern at Queenston until his township (Oxford-upon-the-Thames) was surveyed. Within two years, about 1797, Laura married James Secord, a young merchant of Queenston. He was the youngest son of a loyalist officer of Butler's Rangers, who had brought his family to Niagara in 1778. James and Laura Secord were to have six daughters and one son.

They lived first at St Davids but soon settled in Queenston. Early in the War of 1812, James, a sergeant in the 1st Lincoln militia, was wounded in the battle of Queenston Heights and was rescued from the battlefield by his wife. The following summer, when neither side had a firm hold of the Niagara peninsula, Laura heard on 21 June 1813, probably by listening to the conversation of some American officers dining at her house, that the Americans intended to surprise the British outpost at Beaver Dams and capture the officer in charge, Lieutenant James FitzGibbon. It was urgent that someone warn FitzGibbon and, since James was disabled, Laura resolved to take the message herself early the next morning.

The distance to the outpost by direct road was 12 miles but Laura feared she would encounter American guards that way and chose a roundabout route. She went first to St Davids where she was joined by her niece, Elizabeth Secord, and then to Shipman's Corners (St Catharines). Elizabeth became exhausted and Laura continued alone, uncertain of the way but following the general direction of Twelve Mile Creek through fields and woods. That evening, after crossing the creek on a fallen tree, Laura came unexpectedly on an Indian encampment. She was frightened, but after she explained her mission to the chief he took her to FitzGibbon. Two days later, on 24 June 1813, an American force under Colonel Charles Boerstler was ambushed near Beaver Dams by some 400 Indians led by Dominique Ducharme* and William Johnson Kerr*. FitzGibbon then persuaded Boerstler to surrender with 462 men to his own 50 men. In the official reports of the victory no mention was made of Laura Secord.

The Secords lived in poverty in the postwar years until 1828 when James, who had received a small pension because of his war wound, was appointed registrar, then judge (in 1833), of the Niagara Surrogate Court. In 1835 he became collector of customs at Chippawa. He died in 1841 leaving Laura without financial resources. She ran a school for children in her Chippawa cottage for a brief period. Petitions to the government for a pension and other favours were unsuccessful.

Laura Secord was 85 before she achieved wide public recognition for her heroic deed. While visiting Canada in 1860, the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII) learned of Laura's 20-mile walk. She had prepared a memorial for the prince describing her war-time service, and she also had placed her signature among those War of 1812 veterans who presented an address to him. After Albert Edward returned to England, he sent Mrs Secord a reward of £100. She died in 1868, at the age of 93, and was buried beside her husband in Drummond Hill Cemetery, Niagara Falls.

Laura Secord became celebrated as a heroine in history, poetry, and drama, after 1860. Legends grew; the favourite was that she had taken a cow with her on her walk, for camouflage, and that she had milked it in the presence of American sentries before leaving it behind in the woods. In fact, Mrs Secord never mentioned a cow and it is unlikely that she encountered an American sentry. William F. Coffin* apparently invented the episode for his book *1812, the war and its moral* (1864). According to another story, Laura had walked through the woods at night, on her bare feet. But she herself said, "I left early in the morning," and though she may have lost a slipper in the woods or fields, she was far too sensible to have started out barefoot. Her popular fame was such that two monuments were erected in her honour, one at Lundy's Lane in 1901, the other on Queenston Heights in 1910. Her portrait was hung in the parliament buildings at Toronto, and a memorial hall was established in the Laura Secord School at Queenston.

Some 20th century historians, however, have questioned her place in history. For example, W. Stewart Wallace* in *The story of Laura Secord: a study in historical evidence* (1932) concluded from the available documents that Mrs Secord had undoubtedly taken a message to FitzGibbon, probably on 23 June, but that she had arrived too late for her information to be of value. Lieutenant FitzGibbon had said in his report on the battle of Beaver Dams: "At [John] De Cou's this morning, about seven o'clock, I received information that . . . the Enemy . . .

was advancing towards me” It was argued that this information, brought by Indian scouts, was Fitzgibbon’s first warning. Wallace also cited a certificate written by FitzGibbon in 1837 testifying that Mrs Secord had brought warning of an American attack; unfortunately FitzGibbon gave no specific date, and he wrote, he said, “in a moment of much hurry and from memory.”

The puzzle of the chronology and of Laura’s role in the events was solved when two earlier testimonials came to light, both written by FitzGibbon, in 1820 and 1827, to support petitions the Secords had made to the government. In the 1827 certificate, FitzGibbon said that Mrs Secord had come “on the 22d day of June 1813,” and that “in consequence of this information” he had placed the Indians in a position to intercept the Americans. Thus he made it clear that Laura’s warning had indeed made the victory possible at Beaver Dams. It was a significant victory, and for her part in it Laura Secord became justly known as the heroine of the War of 1812.

Laura Secord typified pioneer women in her courage, endurance, and resolution in the face of adversity. FitzGibbon remembered her as a person of “slender frame and delicate appearance,” but underneath was a strong and persistent will.

[Ruth McKenzie](#)

[The main documentary evidence of Laura Secord’s heroic deed is found in the petitions she and her husband made to the government and in three certificates by James FitzGibbon, all now at the PAC. The petitions are in MG 24, 175 (n.d.); RG 5, A1, 46, pp.22844–45; 108, pp.61567–68; C1, 52, no. 3157; 59, no. 222; and the FitzGibbon certificates are in RG 5, A1, 46, p.22487 (1820); 84, pp.45661–63 (1827); C1, 82, no.2880 (which encloses the 1837 certificate). Laura Secord’s memorial to the Prince of Wales in 1860 is in RG 7, G23, 1, file 2. Official reports of the battle of Beaver Dams are in RG 8, I (C series), 679, pp.132–41. In PAO, Misc. 1933, is “The story of Laura Ingersoll Secord, wife of Captain James Secord, as related by Laura Secord Clark, grand-daughter of Laura Secord to Mrs. George S. Henry.”

Laura Ingersoll’s birth and marriage records are missing but the approximate date of her marriage is known from circumstantial evidence. Two birth dates appear in biographies and family histories – 13 Sept. and 19 Dec. 1775. The former was confirmed as correct by Mrs Secord’s granddaughter, Laura Louise Smith, in E. J. Thompson, “Laura Ingersoll Secord,” *Niagara Hist. Soc.*, [Pubs.], no.25 (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., 1913), 10.

Among the published material are two letters Laura Secord wrote about her walk to Beaver Dams, the first for Gilbert Auchinleck, in “A history of the war between Great Britain and the United States of America, during the years 1812, 1813, & 1814,” *Anglo-American Magazine* (Toronto), III (1853), 467n (the series of articles appeared as a book under the same title (Toronto, 1862; repr. London, 1972); and the second for B. J. Lossing, now in PAC, MG 24, K2, 13, pp.396–98, an edited version of which is in B. J. Lossing, *The pictorial field-book of the War of 1812 . . .* (New York, 1869), 621n. Charles B. Secord related his mother’s deed in a letter to the *Church*, 18 April 1845. W. F. Coffin, *1812, the war and its moral; a Canadian chronicle* (Montreal, 1864), 146–53, first introduced Laura Secord as a heroine. The *Niagara Mail* (Niagara, Ont.) reported on the prince’s gift to Mrs Secord, 27 March, 3 April 1861, and on her death, 17 Oct. 1868. The best of the early biographies is E. A. [Harvey] Currie, *The story of Laura Secord, and Canadian reminiscences* (Toronto, 1900; St Catharines, Ont., 1913). W. S. Wallace, *The story of Laura Secord: a study in historical evidence* (Toronto, 1932), raises questions about Mrs Secord’s contribution. Ruth McKenzie, *Laura Secord, the legend and the lady* (Toronto and Montreal, 1971), reassesses the evidence and Laura Secord’s place in history. r.m.]