

month of May, General Vincent was forced by a much superior force to evacuate Fort George and retreat to the Heights where he entrenched his little army on the ground now included within Harvey and Dundurn Parks and the western part of the cemetery, where the remains of some earthworks can still be seen.⁷ The invaders were then in complete possession of the Niagara frontier from Fort George to Fort Erie, and General Dearborn made preparations to drive Vincent from his position on the Heights, then the key of the military situation in the western peninsula of Upper Canada. All of you are quite familiar with the deeply interesting story of the memorable incidents, which led to the complete failure of the plans of the invaders, and the signal success of the defenders of Upper Canada. Many, if not all, of you have visited the battlefield of Stoney Creek⁸ where Colonel Harvey surprised on a night in June a large force of American troops and captured the two brigadiers, Chandler and Winder, with a large amount of stores.

You all have followed with thrilling interest the footsteps of Laura Secord in her perilous journey to warn Lieutenant Fitzgibbon at De Ceu's of the sudden approach of Boerstler and his forces.

"Sleep Laura Secord, resting well,
Serenely pillowed 'neath the grass :
Tender and reverent be the steps
That by thy green grave pause and pass.
The while across the ages long
Oh, faint ! Oh, far ! sweeps down a song
From graves of heroes of our race
From many an honoured resting place ;
'Numbered with us on glory's roll
Be this Canadian dauntless soul.'"⁹

The result of this courageous woman's exploit—the exploit of the daughter and wife of Loyalists—was the surprise of Boerstler and several hundred men through the clever strategy of Lieutenant Fitzgibbon, then in command of less than fifty firelocks. The invading forces retreated in dismay to the cover of Forts George and Niagara and Upper Canada was saved at this critical juncture by Harvey and Fitzgibbon, whose names must be always associated with the history of the park where we now stand. By the end of the year the British had again possession of the Niagara frontier, and General Murray retaliated severely on the United States, for McClure's shameful destruction of old Niagara town by the capture of Fort Niagara, and the burning of all the villages from that historic post as far as Buffalo. I need not dwell longer on the later events of the war which ended in the following year when the whole province of Upper Canada was free from hostile forces, except at Amherstburg, where the Stars and Stripes still floated. I shall close