

Ideas and Activities
for
Teachers
by
Cynthia Rankin
for
Acts of Courage:
Laura Secord and the War of 1812
Connie Brummel Crook

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About the Activities

These activities are designed for grades 6-8 and focus on major themes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Upper Canada: heroism, women in history, courage, family resilience, responsibility to family, war, national pride, humanity within the inhumanity of war, contributions of all races in Canada, duty and honour. There are a variety of activities at a variety of levels. Read through the guide and select only those suited to your students.

There are many videos and written texts available on the internet; however, material produced in the U. S. may have a different slant on events than those produced in Canada. Be sure to watch the whole video and read the whole text before sharing material with your class.

Before Reading the Novel (Pre-teaching)

Teachers may need to encourage students to build a context for the events and historical setting in the novel. The school library or computer lab and internet access may be used. If using the internet, students should be aware of reliable sources; such as, warof1812.gc.ca. Students may work in pairs or small groups for these activities.

1. Discuss the genre and characteristics of historical fiction. Have students brainstorm movies and books they have read and seen which fit this genre. It is important for

students to understand that some threads of the plot might be fiction while the novel is framed in an historical period that is well researched with real people.

2. Students may brainstorm everything they know about Laura Secord. Most students will know something about the Laura Secord Candy franchise. Use students' knowledge of the name to capture interest before learning the real historical details about the hero.

3. Students should investigate the artwork on the cover, maps, and flags to discover more about the setting of the story.

Guided Reading and Discussion Questions

These questions, which vary in length and difficulty, may be assigned to individuals, pairs, or small groups. A number of these answers could be oral only and lead to whole class discussions. Written answers are not necessarily required to show understanding. A wide variety of questions will prepare students for later in-depth activities and longer written project assignments. **It is not expected that students will complete all of these questions.**

Part One

Great Barrington, Massachusetts

February – April 1787

The American Revolution has been over for four years when the story begins in the town of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where Laura and her classmates hurry home to avoid dangerous rebels. Laura discovers a red-headed boy marching with the rebel farmers who cannot pay their taxes and are losing their farms. Later, Laura learns he was sent from Ireland to help his uncle but when the farm was seized, he had no work. As a result, Laura becomes more sympathetic to the plight of the rebels. Laura's father, Thomas Ingersoll, is the judge of Great Barrington and the captain of the local militia, putting down the uprisings. Laura hides the fugitive, whom she nicknames Red, at a neighbouring farm. Later, Red returns the favour, when he saves Laura's little sister from drowning and protects her father from enemy rebels. In return, Thomas Ingersoll, hires Red to work for him.

Chapter One

1. The novel begins with a crisis. What is the bad news brought by the watchman? What is the role of a watchman? (p. 1)

2. Describe the setting. Include information about Great Barrington, Massachusetts and the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). You may need to look up details in encyclopedias or history texts from your library. If you use the internet, be sure to use reliable sources. (p. 2)

3. Laura's father, Thomas Ingersoll, is "always away"; he is the captain of the local militia. What are his responsibilities in that role? (p. 3)

4. Why is Laura unsure if she is proud of her father for helping to put down the uprising? What are the circumstances surrounding the uprising? (p. 3)
5. How do you know that Laura's family is fairly well off and has status in Great Barrington? Give at least three specific reasons. (p. 7)
6. Sam and Bett are Black slaves. Would it be typical to have slaves in Massachusetts in 1785? (p. 7)
7. Why do you think the red-headed boy is "straggling along behind" at the end of the chapter? What do you think will happen? (p. 8)
8. What acts of courage does Laura show in the first chapter? Consider all of her actions and dialogue in the chapter.

Chapter Two

1. The author uses descriptive language to portray the cold winter landscape. Find three examples of descriptive language. (For example, "iced-up windows" p. 10)
2. What defenses do the settlers of 1787 use against the harsh cold weather? List them.
3. The warm sun contrasts nicely with the cold winter, for example, "A shaft of light beaming through the iced-up windows wakened Laura" (p. 10). Find two other examples of how the author has effectively warmed up the bitter cold with the soothing rays of the sun.
4. How does Laura show her bravery in this chapter? Find at least three examples.
5. The redheaded boy says he is a "scout". What is a scout? (p. 15)
6. What is the debate presented by the boy to Laura regarding "book learnin'" and the education of the farmers? Do you agree with the boy? Why or why not? (p. 15)
7. The boy says the only way to help the farmers is "to stop those taxes" (p. 16). What are taxes and how have they hurt the farmers?
8. The boy calls Laura "ignorant" (p. 15). Do you agree? Is Laura unable to understand the plight of the common farmer? Why or why not?
9. The farmers have taken the law into their own hands: "They've freed the prisoners" (p. 17)! What does this say about the state of affairs?
10. The boy leaves Laura saying, "Better to die by the sword than the halter" (p. 19). What do these words signify? Why do they raise a conflict for Laura that may make her unable to keep her promise to the boy.

Chapter Three

1. The novel is set a long time ago and speech patterns have changed; however, Bett and Sam speak quite differently than most of the other characters. For example, Bett says, “Land sake’s child, what you lookin’ out the window so much fer to see” (p. 20)? Explain why Bett and Sam have different speech patterns.
2. How does Laura show courage when she goes out at night and sees the marching rebel soldiers? (p. 22)
3. Compare Laura’s father, the current judge, and Judge Whiting, the retired judge of Great Barrington. Whose practice do you favour? Explain why. (p. 23)
4. (a) What does it generally mean to make an example of someone? (b) What does the expression mean in the context in the novel? (p. 27)
5. What could happen to the Mayo family if it were discovered they were hiding a rebel fugitive? Why? Is the Mayo family courageous? Explain.

Chapter Four

1. The author provides a detailed description of Laura dressing in the early morning. (p. 30) Research the typical dress for young women and men in 1787. Draw diagrams and label them. Compare it to *your* daily fashion.
2. Why is Judge Ingersoll “terrible torn up, sympathizing with the farmers” (p. 32), yet, he is rounding them up, and there are likely to be hangings? How can he sympathize and support the death penalty at the same time?
3. List all the means of communication at that time and explain each. How does this list compare with resources today – especially your own.
4. Laura was born in 1775 and her father was a rebel soldier at the time. (p. 35) The American Revolution took place between 1775 and 1783. Research the rebels in that war and write a paragraph to describe Thomas Ingersoll’s role in the Revolution.
5. What are the challenges faced by Laura’s father at the end of this chapter and what are the sources of conflict both professional and personal? (p. 37) Is Thomas Ingersoll a courageous man? Why or why not?
6. Use the internet or the library to research Shay’s Rebellion. (p. 37) What were the issues? Do you agree with Thomas Ingersoll that it has to be stopped? Why or why not?

Chapter Five

1. Write a character comparison between Laura and Elizabeth. Make a chart. Consider everything you know about them and consider how they dress and act at the picnic. (p. 38)
2. How is Red a contrast to the other rebels travelling with him? Do you admire him more or less at this point? Why? Give specific examples to support your point of view. (pp. 43-46)

Chapter Six

1. “It was strange how bad beginnings turned into happy endings at times” (p. 47). (a) Explain what Laura means in general. (b) What do you think Laura’s feelings are towards Red? How do you know?
2. How does Red try to protect Mr. Ingersoll from the “would-be assassins” (p. 50)? Is Red courageous or a coward?
3. Predict what will happen between Laura and Red now that he is living and working with the Ingersolls. Do you think it is wise for Mr. Ingersoll to hire Red? Why or why not? (p. 55)

Part Two Upper Canada Spring 1795 to June 1796

Eight years have passed since the time of Shay’s Rebellion in 1787. That same year, Laura’s stepmother had died and four months later, her father had married Elizabeth’s mother. Then there are two more children born to the family. Thomas now moves the whole family to Canada, to take advantage of land grants that are offered by the British government to new settlers. The family arrives in Queenston, on the Niagara River and is helped by a young businessman, James Secord, who attracts Laura at first sight. Conditions are harsh, but Laura shows her strength when she helps the family to settle into their rented tent and then accompanies her father to the site of their new homestead. Upon their return, Thomas buys an inn, which Laura manages while her father is absent on business. She ignores James Secord’s advice to extend credit to costumers, and it proves wise. Although, James shows interest in Laura, she is frustrated when he is away on business, and she receives no letters from him. When James returns, he apologizes for the letters that he thought she had received and confesses how much he has missed her. He begins courting her.

Chapter Seven

1. What is the new family situation and how has it changed in the last 8 years? (p. 57). Draw a family tree in your notes to keep track of the growing Ingersoll family.
2. (a) What are Thomas Ingersoll’s reasons for moving his family to Upper Canada? (b) What are the objections? (pp. 58-59)

3. Sally has a point about land grants in Upper Canada. Why will life be hard in their new location? (p. 60)
4. Study the map in the front of this book that traces the route the Ingersolls travelled from Great Barrington in Massachusetts to Queenston in Upper Canada.
5. As eldest daughter, what responsibilities does Laura have in the house? (p. 64)
6. Even today, it is difficult to move. What challenges does the Ingersoll family face in relocating to Upper Canada? Consider what they were losing and what they were gaining. Make a chart. Was it a wise decision to uproot the family? Explain with specific examples to prove your point. (p. 67)

Chapter Eight

1. The author describes the Niagara River: “The whole landscape was at once gentle and wild” (p. 68). Use the internet to view historic photos and paintings of the Niagara area before its commercialization. How is the area both gentle and wild? Explain.
2. Reread the description of Queenston when the Ingersolls arrived. Who would be most affected by the move? Why? (pp. 71- 73)
3. It was easy to tell someone’s profession in 1794 by the way they dressed. Describe the clothing worn by (a) farmers, (b) soldiers, (c) English gentlemen. (p. 72)
4. Laura thinks that she and James are about same age. Give specific reasons why James seems much older. (p. 74)
5. The farmer asks Laura and her family if they are Loyalists. What are Loyalists? (p. 75)
6. How is it that James Secord is able to secure a room for the Ingersolls when it is clear the inn is full? (p. 78) (a) What does this tell you about him? (b) Why is he so helpful to the Ingersoll family whom he has only just met?
7. Describe the canvas house that Sally finds “surprisingly comfortable” (p. 80).
8. Horses are a necessity in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. List and describe the many uses of the horse in Upper Canada at this time. How would one get along without a horse? (p. 83)

Chapter Nine

1. (a) Why does the author devote four pages to the domestic scene in which Thomas is trying to decide who will accompany him to cook meals at the site of the new homestead?

(b) What is the reason each does not want to go? (c) Why does Laura go? What does this tell you about Laura? (pp. 84-87)

2. Captain Brant and his sons are real people in history. (a) Write a short biography of Captain Brant and his two sons: Joseph Brant and Jacob Brant. (b) Are you surprised that these sons have graduated from Dartmouth College in Connecticut? Why? (pp. 88-89)

3. Reread the details explaining how the log cabin is constructed. (p. 89). Draw a rough sketch of the cabin and label it. (Draw it to scale if possible.) How will the entire Ingersoll family fit in this cabin?

4. (a) Describe Brant's small community. (b) What does he mean when he says, "The little settlement where he had brought the Mohawks who had fought with him for the British" (p. 91)? You may need to use resources from the library or internet to research the Mohawk Nation's contribution in the American Revolution. They were sometimes called Mohawk Loyalists.

5. Why is the chapel so important to the Brants? How does the chapel represent the Mohawk and white British cultures uniting harmoniously? (pp. 91-92)

6. What does the inscription on the communion silver from Queen Anne show about the service of the Mohawks in the American Revolutionary War? (p. 92)

7. Why had the Brants and the Mohawks been forced to leave their "great farms" in the Mohawk Valley and relocate in Upper Canada? (pp. 92-93)

8. (a) How are the Mohawk Loyalists treated compared to the White Loyalists? (p. 93) Why? (b) What does this tell you about the British Government at the time?

9. When Thomas Ingersoll says, "It would have been better if we had followed the way of the Mohawks—no jails" (p. 94). To what is he referring?

10. Thomas Ingersoll is worried that he will arrive back home and Sally will have returned to Great Barrington. (a) How is it that Laura is convinced Sally will have remained in the canvas house? (p. 95) (b) Is Laura naïve or a good judge of character? Explain.

Chapter Ten

1. (a) What is the new Ingersoll business venture that has Sally so pleased? (b) What does this mean for the whole family? (c) What are the risks and challenges? (p. 96)

2. Mira and Josh attend Lady Simcoe's ball at Newark. Given the details describe how you imagine the ball. Write the diary entry Mira writes when she returns home from the ball with Josh. Don't leave out any details.

3. Laura complains that the inn cannot turn a profit because her father gives “credit to a number of newcomers” (p. 99). (a) What is credit? (b) Why does he extend credit to people he does not know? (c) What does James Secord have to say about credit? (d) What does this tell you about Thomas Ingersoll and James Secord?

4. While Laura is in charge of doing the books at the inn, she has little time for anything else. She always jumps in to help when there is a need. (a) What does this show you about Laura’s character? (b) Is this typical of all youth at the time or is Laura unique? How do you know? Use specific examples from the story to prove your point. (p. 98)

5. How do you know Laura is attracted to James Secord by her first reactions to Phoebe? (p. 100)

6. Why is Laura upset that her father takes her advice so “lightly” and sides with James Secord in favour of extending credit? (p. 101) What do you predict will happen?

7. (a) Laura is irritated by her father’s motto: “Never cross a bridge before you come to it” (p. 101). Why? (b) Laura says, “It’s a good job that women don’t wait till folk are at the table before they prepare the meal” (p. 102). Explain what Laura means by her motto. (c) Which is a better philosophy to live by? Why?

8. (a) How do you know Laura is awkward on her first date—berry-picking and picnicking with James? (b) How do you know that James really likes Laura? Give specific details from the novel. (pp. 105 to 110)

9. (a) What is the real reason that Sally and Elizabeth are unhappy in Upper Canada? (b) Why do the farmwomen not want to socialize with Sally? (c) Why would there be “some resentment” toward settlers? (p. 108)

10. How is James's story of arrival in Upper Canada like that of many other Loyalists? (p. 110)

11. (a) Briefly describe what James calls “the hungry year of ’88” (p. 111). (b) Was the British Government responsible for this tragedy? Explain. (c) How did the Loyalists survive? (For further reading, see Connie Brummel Crook’s novel, *The Hungry Year.*)

12. James says, “And there were rumblings again, last fall, of war with the States” (p. 112). What do you think this might be foreshadowing? James also says, “I suppose folks won’t trust the Americans for a while” (p. 112). Why?

Chapter Eleven

1. Why is James having financial trouble in his store in St. David’s? (p. 114) Is this predictable? Explain.

2. James has not asked Mr. Ingersoll’s “permission to call on [Laura] regularly” (p. 115). (a) Why has James not called on Laura since their romantic picnic? (b) Why would James need to ask permission of Laura’s father to see her?
3. What do you think happened to Captain Brant’s son, Isaac? How do you know? (pp. 115-116)
4. Laura notices that James smells of cedar shavings. How were clothes stored at this time? Why would cedar be used? What is a cedar chest and are they still in use today to store clothing and other valuables? Why?
5. Although James learns that extending too much credit is harmful in business, what does his willingness to extend credit tell you about his character and concern for others?
6. Laura says, “she could get [James’s] business in order in no time—if she were in charge” (p. 120). (a) Do you agree? Why or why not? (Consider her business experience and her attitude towards extending credit.) (b) Is Laura arrogant or confident when it comes to running a business? Explain.

Chapter Twelve

1. Although girls often married in their teens in this era, even Laura thinks Mira is too young to marry Josh. (a) Write a paragraph from Mira’s point of view stating why she should marry Josh. (b) Write a paragraph from Laura’s point of view stating why Mira is too young to marry at age of fifteen. (pp. 123-124)
2. Write the letter that Thomas Mayo sent to Elizabeth telling her of his upcoming marriage. (p. 124) Trade your letter with a classmate and write the reply from Elizabeth to Thomas.
3. James says he wrote letters to Laura while he was on his business trip. Write one of the letters, which went missing. (p. 125)
4. Do you think the marriage between Laura and James will last? Support your answer with specific examples from the novel.

Part Three **Beaver Dams (Beechwoods)** **Mid-June 1812 to June 24, 1813**

By mid-June 1812, Laura and James have built a home in Queenston. They have three children and James runs a general store. While Upper Canada is threatened by attack from the Americans, Laura leaves her family to assist at her father’s bedside before he dies. James Secord is a sergeant in the first Lincoln Militia, by October 1812, when Queenston is attacked. Laura flees to the country with her children for safety, but returns to the battlefield to save her neighbour’s son and marches on to the battlefield to rescue her husband who lies wounded behind enemy lines. Later that afternoon, the Canadians gain control of the Heights.

In the spring, the fighting starts again; however, the victories go to the Americans. Due to the location of the Secord home, enemy soldiers stop at Laura's house demanding food often, while her wounded husband lies recovering upstairs. One day a suspicious old woman asks for a meal and the peddler-deserter turns out to be Red, whom Laura had not heard from in years. Laura has now lost respect for this man on the run.

June 21, 1813, American guerrillas invade the Secord home. While the men eat, Laura overhears the plans to launch a surprise attack against the Canadians. Laura decides to deliver the message herself to FitzGibbon's Headquarters at Beaver Dams. The next morning, Laura walks first to St. David's, where her wounded brother's fiancé, Elizabeth, is caring for him. Elizabeth accompanies Laura on through the dangers of the Great Black Swamp; quicksand, snakes, rough terrain, mosquitoes and horseflies. Then Laura proceeds on alone battling heat exhaustion, fatigue, and the loss of both shoes. Nearing the end of her twenty-mile trek, Laura reaches the camp of the Mohawks and Caughnawagas, and two accompany her to FitzGibbon. Laura fears the Lieutenant will not believe her, but it turns out that FitzGibbon is Red. He is not a man on the run after all. Fitzgibbon and his tiny army lay in wait for the enemy who are no match for the well-equipped American forces. A day later, the attack comes. When the Americans withdraw, FitzGibbon offers them the chance to surrender, claiming that they are surrounded and will be slaughtered by the natives. At first, the American colonel refuses, but FitzGibbon says he can only hold back the natives so long. The Americans comply. For now, Upper Canada is saved. Laura returns to her family the next day, after asking FitzGibbon to keep her identity as the messenger a secret.

Chapter Thirteen

1. Draw another informal family tree in your notes to show the expanded Ingersoll/Secord family.
2. Describe the developments in the Laura's family by mid-June 1812. (pp. 128-129)
3. (a) What does James mean when he says, "I can't think that we'll get pushed into war with the Americans over a battle that's not ours" (p. 129)? (b) What is the "war with Napoleon"? (p. 130) What does it have to do with Upper Canada?
4. If the States's quarrel was with Britain why attack Upper Canada? (p. 130)
5. What is James Secord's position in the militia? (p. 129, 30)
6. What has happened in recent years, which has left Thomas Ingersoll defeated? (pp. 133-134)
7. Charles Ingersoll says, "This has been a terrible time. Tragedies come in threes, they say. I wonder what's going to happen next" (p. 134). List the three "tragedies" to which Charles is referring.
8. Write a diary entry as one character from the Secord family revealing their feelings and fears when "War has been declared" (p. 135).
9. Mira and Josh are now married and live in the States. Why is this an added worry for themselves and their families in Upper Canada in time of war? (p. 135)

10. Was it wise for Laura to withhold the news of war from her ailing father? Support your point of view with specific information from the story. (pp. 137-138)
11. The narrator says Sam and Bett were freed shortly after they came to Upper Canada. (p. 138) (a) What were the laws regarding slaves in Canada in the last decade of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century? (b) How were Black slaves treated who came to Canada to escape slavery?
12. How has Sally grown into her new life since arriving in Upper Canada? (p. 141) How do you think she will manage as a widow? How do you know? Be specific.
13. In her last conversation with her father, Laura says, “Perhaps I look like [my mother], but the family say I’m more like you” (p. 139). Do you agree that Laura is a lot like her father? In what ways. How is Laura different than her father?

Chapter Fourteen

1. How does Laura show her characteristic courage and compassion when she hears that Sam has not eaten his meal? (p. 144)
2. Although Laura believes she is “immune” to smallpox, what precautions does she take to ensure she does not spread the disease to others? (pp. 145-147)
3. (a) Is the doctor racist? Why? (b) How does Laura convince him to save Sam? (c) Are you shocked by the doctor’s behaviour? Why or why not? (pp. 147-148)
4. Laura stays a week with Sam. (a) Why does she do this when she has three children at home, her father has just died, and war has been declared? (b) What does this tell you about Laura? (p. 151)
5. (a) What does the fact that James hired two new Black servants; Fan and Bob while Laura was absent tell you about the Secord’s financial state and status in Queenston Heights? (p. 152) (b) Fan and Bob are not slaves, however, but they are servants. What does that tell you about the role of Black people in Upper Canada?
6. (a) How does Laura prepare for war? (p. 152) (b) How did Laura’s experience as a girl in Great Barrington help her to be ready for impending conflict? Be specific. (c) What does this tell you about Laura and women in this day?

Chapter Fifteen

1. (a) Why do Bob and Fan fear an American take over? (b) What rights were granted to Blacks by the law passed by Governor Simcoe in 1795? (p. 156) In your research, you may discover that John Graves Simcoe was a close friend of the great British abolitionist,

William Wilberforce, who, no doubt, influenced him. The movie (DVD), *Amazing Grace*, tells the story of his struggle in the British parliament to abolish slavery.

2. What would happen if the Americans found the body of General Isaac Brock in the Secord's home? Why is Brock's uniform removed? Consider what the Americans might do to the Secords. (p. 157)

3. Although General Isaac Brock died, his actions are considered heroic. Why? (p. 159) Research to learn more about the role of Brock in defeating the Americans at the Battle of Queenston Heights.

4. Credit is given to Captain Runchey's company of Black soliders. Why is it in the best interests of the Black population in Upper Canada to keep it out of American hands? (p. 160) Research will add to your knowledge of the contribution of Black soldiers in the War of 1812.

5. Mrs. Clements welcomes Laura and her children when the Queenston Heights conflict erupts. (a) Why would it be typical for farm families to take in women and children during such conflict? (b) What are the stresses and risks inherent in fleeing to the countryside? (p. 161)

6. Laura returns to Queenston to find John Law. (a) What else motivates Laura to return to the battle site? (b) Is this a sign of courage or irresponsibility on Laura's part? Explain your position with specific examples from the story. (pp. 164-165)

Chapter Sixteen

1. (a) What finally draws young John Law back to the battlefield? (b) Do you think this would be the typical reaction of a young boy? Why or why not?

2. Laura learns James has been wounded behind enemy lines, and decides to venture out on the battlefield to retrieve him. (a) At this point do you see her actions as courageous or irrational? Defend your point of view using specific information from the novel. (p. 169) Consider what would have happened to James if Laura did not rescue him. (b) Could a rescue such as this happen in the midst of war today? Why or why not?

3. Amid the inhumanity on the battlefield, Laura witnesses acts of compassion. Find at least three acts of compassion during the rescue of James Secord. (pp. 169-173)

4. (a) What might have happened to the American soldiers: Adams and Durham for carrying James to the Canadian side? (p. 172) (b) Would it be typical to risk one's own soldiers to save the enemy? (c) Why did Captain Wool allow this to happen? (d) What could have happened if Captain Wool had not been there to admonish the soldiers? (e) In the Historical Notes at the end of the novel, the author says, "Captain Wool and the Secords met again after the war and became lifelong friends" (p. 254). What does this tell you about Captain Wool and the Secords?

5. Laura shows her humanity on many occasions. As American prisoners are marched by her house, Laura says, “Suddenly, she was aware of the suffering of the enemy” (p. 177). It is one thing to say it and it is another thing to take action. What does Laura do that shows she truly is aware of the suffering of her enemy?
6. What does the victory at Queenston mean to the morale of the soldiers and citizens of Upper Canada? What would defeat have meant? (pp. 180-181)
7. General Sheaffe gave the order “that if they surrendered, their lives would be spared” (p. 180). (a) What happened in the chaos of the battlefield? (b) How is this different from warfare today? (c) David Secord shouted the order again and it was followed because his own father-in-law and brother-in-law heard him and trusted his word. Why was it so important to David that they hear the order?
8. (a) Why was David fighting on the opposite side to his own in-laws? (b) Laura says, “But how brutal war is when men must fight their own kin” (p. 181). What other battles have pitted brother against brother?

Chapter Seventeen

1. Answer the question Laura poses: “How would [James] feel if he could not continue as sergeant of his militia regiment” (p. 184)?
2. What was the worst that could have happened to James’ leg? Why? (p. 184)
3. Describe the two battles that took place on Queenston Heights. (pp. 185-186)
4. Use information in the novel to draw a diagram to show how the Canadians took the Heights. (p. 186)
5. How is the battle at Queenston Heights a good example of all peoples in Canada uniting against a common foe? Be specific. (p. 186)
6. Compare the casualties and losses on both sides. How do these facts add to the notion that Queenston Heights was a great victory for the Canadians? (p. 187)
7. (a) Find two different quotations from the text to prove General Brock was well loved as a General. (b) Why was he so well regarded? Be specific. (pp. 188-189)

Chapter Eighteen

1. Why is James so hard on Sheaffe? (p. 191-192)
2. How significant is the capture of York? Why? (p. 191)

3. Why was the looting and plundering so vast at York? (p. 192)
4. Laura's courage shows again when the American soldiers ask for food. (a) Why does she oblige them and treat them so kindly? List all the reasons. (b) Why is Laura worried that American soldiers will see Charlotte? (p. 196)
5. Was it wise for Laura to lash out at the rude American soldier? (p. 196) What might have happened as a result? Again, is Laura courageous or irresponsible?
6. Describe the Canadian defeat at Newark on May 27, 1813. (p. 197)
7. (a) Why do the two soldiers return to Laura's house? (b) Is that not risky for them? (c) Where is the third soldier? (p. 198)

Chapter Nineteen

1. (a) Why does Laura keep "food prepared and ready to serve to anyone who passed her way" (p. 200)? (b) Why is this wise on her part? (c) Is she motivated by compassion or survival or both? Explain.
2. List the clues that make Laura suspicious of the old woman's disguise. (p.203)
3. What's a "scavenger" and why is he more dangerous than the enemy? (p. 203)
4. Before Red reveals himself, the scene unfolds as one of the scariest in the novel. (a) Why does this scene make the reader feel uncomfortable? (b) How does Laura keep her cool and show her characteristic courage again in this scene? (p. 203)
5. (a) Is the Laura/Red love story plot over for Laura? How do you know? (p. 205) (b) Do you have respect for Red, the man on the run in a woman's disguise? Why or why not? (p. 207)

Chapter Twenty

1. After twelve months of war, "With three thousand American soldiers to seven hundred Canadians, the outcome of the war appeared to be inevitable." (p. 208). Explain.
2. Who is James FitzGibbon and the green sliver and his Bloody Boys? (p. 208)
3. Describe the situation that unfolds at the Secord home in which Laura overhears American soldiers' strategy to overtake the Canadians at Beaver Dams. Give all the details. (p. 211)
4. Why would soldiers be so careless in their talk?

5. Why does Laura need to warn FitzGibbon? (p. 213)
6. Why is James Secord less concerned than Laura about the information she overheard? (p. 214)
7. (a) Why does Laura decide to take the message to FitzGibbon herself? (p. 215) (b) Is there another way to deliver the message? If so, how? Look at the Notes in the back of the book that refer to this conversation of Laura and James. You will see that the actual words of Laura and James Secord are recorded in the Archives. Read the details there. (p. 260)

Chapter Twenty-One

1. How does Laura prepare her family and herself for the trip to FitzGibbon? (p. 217)
2. Trace Laura's route to Beaver Dams by drawing a rough map. Use the one on page 253 as a starting point. Label your map showing all the hazards Laura encounters along the way.
3. Laura shows she can think on her feet. This has saved herself and her family a few times. Give examples of her quick thinking during her walk to St. David's. (p. 218)
4. What does Laura mean when she says, "In these times, walls were sometimes too thin" (p. 218). When else has that proven to be the case? Be specific.
5. Why does Laura keep her plan to warn FitzGibbon from her own brother, Charles? (p. 221)
6. Why does Elizabeth walk with Laura as far as Shipman's Corners? Why does Laura agree to allow her to come along? (p. 221)
7. What would have been the worst part of Laura's "arduous slog" for you? Consider such hazards as snakes, quicksand, bare feet, mosquitoes, heat, etc.? Why?
8. How does Laura show tremendous bravery and extraordinary strength of character during her trek to Beaver Dams? Be specific.

Chapter Twenty-Two

1. After Laura loses both shoes in Twelve-mile Creek, what motivates her to go on battling badly damaged feet and severe fatigue? (p. 226)
2. Reaching the Mohawk Camp is a comfort to Laura. Why do the two Mohawk guides accompany her to FitzGibbon? (pp. 228-229)

3. (a) Why does Laura identify herself to FitzGibbon in reference to her husband? Laura says, "I am the wife of Sergeant James Secord, who was wounded in active duty at the Battle of Queenston Heights" (p. 229). (b) Why does she pretend "her husband" does not want to reveal his source? (c) Even in her fatigued state Laura manages to think clearly. What does it reveal about Laura's inner strength and commitment to her task. (p. 230)
4. (a) How did FitzGibbon prepare for the "surprise" attack at Beaver Dams by the Americans? (pp. 232-233) (b) What would have happened if Laura had not warned him of the attack?
5. Describe the key role played by the Mohawks in the battle. (p. 233)

Chapter Twenty-Three

1. What were FitzGibbon's fears about the attack? (pp. 234-235)
2. Who held up the white flag? What did it mean? (p. 235)
3. (a) What strategy does FitzGibbon use during his parley with McDowell of the U.S. Army? Why? (b) How risky a move was this? Why? (p. 236)
4. What might have been FitzGibbon's reply if the U.S. Colonel refused to surrender? (p. 236) Write the reply.
5. (a) Why might Captain Hall have to impersonate Major De Haren? (b) What is FitzGibbon trying to accomplish? (pp. 237-238)
6. Why is Colonel Boerstler "not in the habit of surrendering to an army he has never seen"? (p. 237)
7. (a) What makes Boerstler a little more susceptible to surrender at this time? (p. 238)
8. Under what conditions do the Americans surrender? What are all the factors that led Boerstler to surrender? (pp. 239-240)
9. (a) What might De Haren have done to "give away the ruse"? (b) How might DeHaren have upset negotiations if he had not listened to FitzGibbon? (c) How did FitzGibbon keep De Haren from giving away the plan to Boerstler and the U.S. Army? (pp. 240-241)
10. (a) Why is it a good idea, as suggested by FitzGibbon, to have the American soldiers lay down arms before meeting the Canadian army? Be specific. (b) What does this tell you about De Haren's understanding of the situation? (p. 240)

11. (a) Why does the U.S. Colonel also want his men to ground their arms before they are marched in front of the Canadians? (b) Why is there such a great fear of the Indians? (p. 241)

12. This chapter also shows that in the midst of war there are some small acts of humanity, courtesy, and honour. What surprised you or impressed you as you read about the Battle of Beaver Dams?

13. List all the characters in the section you consider to be heroes. What common characteristics do these characters share? Write your own definition of a hero.

Chapter Twenty-Four

1. How does Laura continue to show her courage and strength even after she awakes in the home of Mrs. Turney? (pp. 242-245)

2. What is Laura's final request of FitzGibbon? This is a very important historical fact that helps explain why historians were slow to prove Laura Ingersoll Secord really did deliver the warning to FitzGibbon. The Historical Note at the end of the book will show not only the proof of her trip but also its importance to Fitzgibbon.

Vocabulary

Some words and terms used in this novel may reflect older times. The page reference indicates the first time the word is used. Suggestions: reinforce new vocabulary through crossword puzzles, matching words and definitions and spelling bees. Categorize words. Put students in small groups with a theme and have students look up meanings and present the findings to the class. Add other words. Categories might include: military, domestic, clothing, farming, medical, etc.

| Page | Word | Definition |
|------|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | town watchman | - policeman |
| 1 | agitator | - someone who disturbs or causes trouble |
| 2 | Revolutionary War | - overthrow of British rule in the States |
| 3 | militia | - local citizens who fight during emergencies |
| 4 | homespun breeches | - fitted trousers extending from waist to knees |
| 6 | covered cutter | - small, light sleigh usually drawn by one horse |
| 8 | mustard plaster | - a cold remedy made of mustard and flour, contained in a cloth sack applied to the chest |
| 12 | waistcoat | - vest, a man's sleeveless waist-length garment worn under his suit |
| 14 | twill breeches | - woven trousers; pants |
| 14 | homespun | - cloth made from yarn at home |
| 17 | victuals | - food |
| 19 | daft | - foolish, reckless, crazy |
| 30 | knee garters | - a band, usually of elastic, worn around the leg to hold up a sock or stocking |

- 30 **shift** – white cotton undergarment that hangs loose from the shoulders to mid-calf and also serves as a nightgown
- 30 **petticoat** – woman’s undergarment or skirt
- 33 **plucky** – showing courage in the face of difficulties or danger
- 35 **fugitives** – a person who leaves or hides or runs away
- 38 **cambric** – fine linen
- 40 **musket** – long-barrelled gun
- 40 **beau** – boyfriend, escort or sweetheart of a woman or girl
- 42 **powder horn** – hollow cow’s horn filled with gunpowder
- 56 **maid-of-all** – “maid of all work”; a maid who does all types of housework
- 56 **quelled** – to suppress or beat down
- 64 **sloop** – single-masted sailing vessel
- 68 **schooner** – sailing vessel with at least two masts
- 71 **teamsters** – driver of a team of horses used for haulage
- 76 **clapboard** – wooden siding on a house
- 82 **mercantile** – commercial, trades or traders
- 96 **bedraggled** – to make hair and clothing untidy, or dirty with rain or mud
- 98 **portage** - transport boats and supplies overland between waterways
- 107 **courting** - dating
- 116 **quill pen** – old-fashioned pen made from a bird’s feather
- 130 **mob cap** – a woman’s cotton cap worn at all times
- 138 **smallpox** – an acute, highly contagious viral disease often fatal with high fever and disfiguring sores
- 140 **blockaded** – something that prevents access or progress
- 145 **cowpox** – a contagious viral disease of cows, causing small pustules on their udders; the vaccine for smallpox was formerly obtained from cowpox
- 151 **Brigadier-General** – an officer who holds a rank junior to a major general, but senior or a colonel, usually commanding a brigade
- 151 **plunder** – to steal from by force in time of war; loot
- 155 **bedstead** – a wooden or metal framework of a bed
- 170 **parley** – a discussion
- 185 **dragoons** – cavalry soldiers
- 186 **Yanks** – a slang word for an American
- 186 **skirmishes** – a brisk clash or encounter
- 186 **fortifications** – a place that can be militarily defended
- 188 **gun salute** – a tribute of shooting guns into the air
- 189 **war hawks** – leaders eager for war
- 190 **frigate** – a warship
- 191 **looting** – taking goods from the enemy; booty
- 191 **magazine** – a place used for storage of weapons and ammunition
- 193 **skakos** – form of military hat, more or less symmetrical, with peak or upright plum or tuft
- 235 **cease fire** – stop fighting while enemies parley
- 246 **iron spider frying pan** – big cast iron frying pan that sits on four feet, so it can be used over an open fire

After the Reading

All of the projects are designed so students can explore historical events, controversial issues, and themes through close reading of the novel and research. Activities are directed to the students. These activities might be options for culminating tasks. Activities can be completed individually or in groups. Both fiction and non-fiction options are suggested for individuals, pairs, or small groups. Students can express themselves through written reports, oral reports, short stories, newspaper articles, music, artwork, guest speakers, power point presentations, slide shows, drama, and videos.

When students are conducting research it is important they use reliable and credible sources. They need to complete a formal bibliography of print and internet sources. Be sure to state the learning objectives for the assignments clearly, and provide students with detailed rubrics for marking. The quality of projects will be much higher if the students know exactly what is expected.

2012 is the Bicentennial Anniversary of the War of 1812. Look up events and celebrations in your area. Consider organizing your own school event. Suggestions: reenactment of a battle, costumed characters, readings, display of projects from this novel study, and a Laura Secord bake sale.

1. Contact the Laura Secord Chocolates and research the company's history. How did Laura Secord become a name brand? What does it have to do with the real woman and her courageous actions in Canadian history? Prepare a presentation to share your findings with the class. Choose your own style of presentation: video, power point, etc. If possible, bring in a guest speaker from Laura Secord Candy Store to talk about the product and the branding.
2. Make a memory box for one character in the novel. Include 10 to 15 items that relate to the character and events in the novel. Write a paragraph about each item explaining why it was so important to the character. Write in first person, as if you are the character. Present your memory box to the class. Make the box and objects look like they came from the nineteenth century.
3. Work in a group to create a reenactment video of one scene or series of scenes from the novel. You will need dialogue, costumes, props and a suitable location to film. Set your video to music. Show your video to the class.
4. Write and perform a song telling the story of Laura Secord. Set it to music and share it with the class in a live performance or videotape yourself performing the song. For an example, refer to *Secord's Warning* on an album called Sullivan's Shivarree by Tanglefoot; available to watch on Youtube.
5. Research one historical figure mentioned in the novel. Present your character to the class in a creative manner. For example, you could dress up as that character and present in first person, or create a multi-media presentation. Choose one of

the following: Lieutenant Governor Simcoe, Captain Brant, James Secord, Isaac Brock, Colonel Macdonell, Captain Runchey, Major General Sheaffe, James FitzGibbon, Laura Secord.

6. Complete a detailed timeline of events leading up to and during the War of 1812. Include “cut away” details with diagrams, pictures and short descriptions of events listed on the timeline.
7. Write newspaper articles and make a newspaper to celebrate some of the important moments of the War of 1812. See your teacher to make sure you write the articles in proper newspaper form. Make the newspaper look like it is from the early 19th century. Research newspapers of the time for authentic examples.
8. How can two sides claim victory in the same battle or war? Use the internet and print sources to read accounts of events for specific battles in the War of 1812, from the Canadian perspective, and then from the point of view of the Americans. Present your findings to the class based on one battle or event that strikes you as particularly interesting based on the two different points of view.
9. The First Nations were particularly important to the success of the War of 1812 for Canadians. Research the specific contributions of First Nations in the War of 1812 in each of the major battles. Who were the major leaders? Create a dynamic multi-media presentation to share your findings with class. How, if at all, were soldiers of First Nations rewarded for their contributions in the war.
10. Captain Runchey and his company of Black soldiers contributed to the success of Canada in the War of 1812. Research their role in each battle. Who were their leaders? Why was the Black community in Canada eager to help Canadians defeat the Americans? Were Black soldiers treated the same as their white counterparts? How, if at all, were Black soldiers rewarded for their contributions in the war? Create a dynamic presentation to share your findings with the class.
11. Read another historical fiction novel about one of the topics or personalities in *Acts of Courage*. Write a review of the novel. See your teacher for the proper format and length requirements. Present your review to the class in a creative fashion. A couple of good references are the following:

Fryer, Mary Beacock. *Bold, Brave, and Born to Lead, Major General Isaac Brock and the Canadas*. Toronto: Dundurn, 2004.

Mallory, Enid. *Captain Fitz: FitzGibbon, Green Tiger of the War of 1812*. Toronto: Dundurn, 2011.