



Women and the War of 1812

Many Canadians can identify Laura Secord as a woman who played a role in the War of 1812. But that's about as far as it goes. Very little has been written about women in the War of 1812. Yet women were as deeply involved and affected by the war as their men.

Some women accompanied their soldier-husbands on campaigns, serving as cooks, nurses, laundresses. They endured all the hazards of military life -- poor food, little privacy, primitive conditions -- and occasionally also came under enemy fire.

Other women stayed home while their men served in the militia. They took over all the duties of running the household or farm. Some took on extra duties as well -- baking bread for British-Canadian troops, or acting as informants.

Women were sometimes left alone to face the enemy. With their husbands and sons serving in the British Army or in the Upper Canadian militia, they experienced the stress of an enemy invasion, watched as their personal possessions were damaged or stolen, or their houses put to the torch.

Drawing on eyewitness accounts, contemporary newspapers and other sources, Cheryl MacDonald explores the lives of Upper Canadian women during the chaos and drama of the War of 1812.

A writer, historian and re-enactor, Cheryl has written more than 24 books on Canadian history, including *Laura Secord: The Heroic Adventures of a Canadian Legend* and, with co-author Bob Blakeley, *Norfolk, Haldimand and the War of 1812, including the Six Nations*

Women and the War of 1812 runs about 45 minutes and includes anecdotes about various women: Laura Secord, who warned of a planned American attack; Theresa Nichol, whose family connections may have influenced the British-Canadian victory at Detroit; Sarah Miller, who was willing to face death rather than give up one of her chickens; Phoebe McQueen, whose house was saved from destruction after she fed American invaders; Amelia Ryerse, whose own house was destroyed by the enemy; and many others.