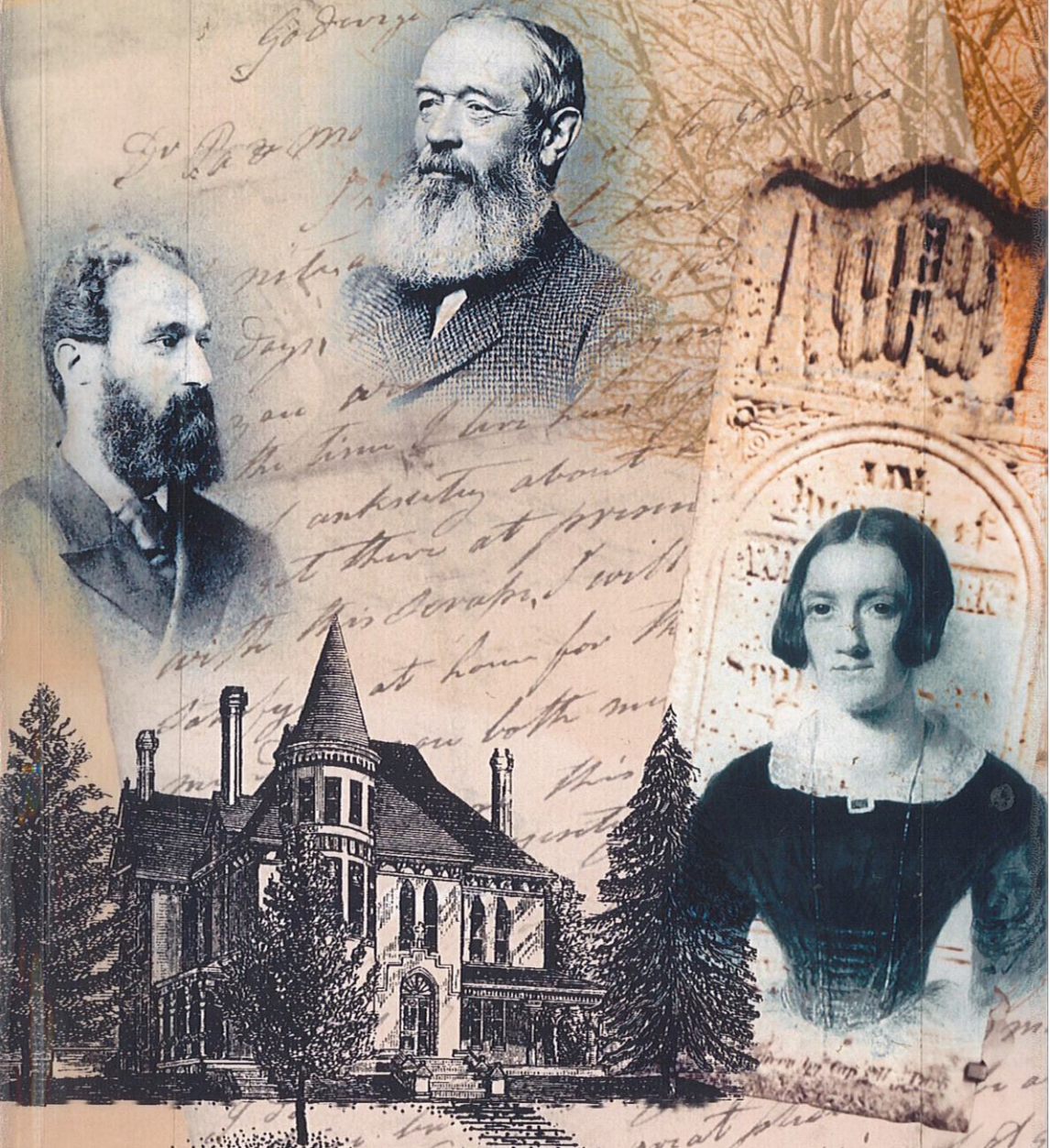


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# No Smiling Path

Catherine B. McEwen



# NO SMILING PATH

by

CATHERINE B. McEWEN

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Four bronze name-plaques were fixed to the sides, but they disappeared long ago – only their outlines remain stained on the gray stone. This monument was moved to section S in Woodland Cemetery after the closure of the old burying ground. The only name that survives on it is “W. ELLIOTT” carved into the stone.



*“W. Elliott” on Park monument.*

## *The Ingersoll Infusion*



“Su. a fesse, dancettée, erm., betw. six trefoils, slipped, or,

“Crest: A griffin’s head, gu., gorged with a fesse, dancettée, erm., betw. two wings, displayed, or.”

*Ingersoll family crest.*



The third generation of Gearys and Parks began its march to the altar in 1862 when Mary Jane Geary married Justus Ingersoll of St. Marys. While the early spelling of the town's name contained an apostrophe, the later version eliminated it. The Rev. Charles C. Brough, rector of St. John the Divine Church in London Township, recorded the wrong date for their marriage in the church register. Busy clergymen often made rough notes, retrieving them later from coat pockets or the pages of prayer books for entry into the church records. If a considerable period of time had elapsed, an entry might be misread or inserted out of chronological order.

Archdeacon Brough dated the Ingersoll-Geary wedding as "May 18" in the register, whereas Justus and Mary Jane were actually married on March 18. "Mar." and "May" can look remarkably similar in a handwritten scrawl. The *St. Mary's Argus* reported the nuptials on March 27, 1862, when it printed this announcement: "On the 18th inst., by the Rev. Archdeacon Brough, Justis Ingersoll, Esq., of St. Mary's, C.W., to Mary Jane, daughter of John Geary, Esq., London Township, C.W."

Justus Ingersoll's family had bestowed its name on a town in West Oxford Township in Oxford County and had founded St. Marys in Perth County. His grandfather, Thomas Ingersoll, was in the fifth generation of a family that had emigrated from Bedford, England, in 1629 and settled in Salem, Massachusetts. Thomas was born in Westfield, Mass., in 1749, but by 1774 he had moved to Great Barrington in Berkshire County, near the New York border. He began a successful career as a merchant in the village and married seventeen-year-old Elizabeth Dewey on February 28, 1775. Their first child, Laura, was born on September 13th that year.

While some of his relatives remained loyal to Britain during the American Revolution, Thomas supported the republican side. Hard times followed the war and the dissatisfaction of many citizens culminated in Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786. Ingersoll was a captain in the militia at the time of that trouble and subsequently received a promotion to major. Later, he began to disapprove of the harsh treatment handed out to his fellow citizens who had retained their feelings of loyalty to the British crown.

Thomas and Elizabeth's family grew with the birth of three more daughters – Elizabeth Franks in 1779, Mira in 1781 and Abigail in 1783.

After Elizabeth died in 1784, her aunt took baby Abigail to raise. Great Barrington's Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. Gideon Bostwick, married Thomas Ingersoll and widow Mercy Smith in 1785. She died childless and Rev. Bostwick buried her in May of 1789.

When Ingersoll married a third time, on September 20, 1789, he chose another widow, Sarah (Whiting) Backus, who was the daughter of Gamaliel Whiting and the sister of General John Whiting. Sarah, or Sally as she was often called, had one daughter, Nancy Whiting Backus. Thomas and Sarah had seven children who survived, starting with Charles in 1791, then Charlotte in 1793 and Appalona or Appollonia in 1794 – all in Great Barrington.

In 1792, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe had proclaimed that land was available for settlement in Upper Canada. Ingersoll and several other gentlemen, including Rev. Bostwick, decided to accept the offer after viewing some land in the area of the Thames River. They petitioned for a township on March 23, 1793, and received the grant of Oxford-on-the-Thames. For various reasons, including the sudden death of Bostwick, only Ingersoll carried on with the settlement scheme. Bostwick's children followed their father's intentions when they moved to the London District within a few years, although they settled south and west of Oxford.

Under part of the agreement with the government, Ingersoll undertook to bring in forty settlers within seven years. Each one was to receive up to 200 acres [81 hectares] at a cost of six pence per acre, while the remainder of the tract was to be held in trust for Ingersoll and any of his associates. He had assisted eleven families to move to Oxford by May of 1794, largely at his own expense, but the township needed to be surveyed and roads needed to be built before more settlement could take place.

Ingersoll moved his family to Queen's Town (Queenston) in Upper Canada in 1795, where he bought a tavern which he ran for several years. One of the earliest Masonic lodges, St. John's Lodge of Friendship, No. 2, held its meetings in the spring and summer of 1795 at Fairbank's Tavern and Hind's Hotel, however, the lodge's minutes reveal that it met at "Ingersoll's Tavern, Queen's Town" on November 14th. James Secord joined the lodge that year, while Thomas Ingersoll became a member in 1796, hosting the meetings during the first half of the year. His tavern was recorded as being at "Queen's Town", at



“Ingersoll’s Landing” or “Ingersoll’s Queen’s Town Landing.” Another significant event occurred early that year when the Ingersolls’ second son, Thomas, was born, making him their first Canadian-born child.

Thirteen lodge meetings were held in 1797 in Bowman’s Tavern in Stamford and “Ingersoll’s Tavern, Queenstown” – the last reference to such events there. No one knows when James Secord met Laura Ingersoll for the first time, but it could have been at Queenston and might have been at her father’s tavern.

After Lt.-Gov. Simcoe left Canada in the fall of 1796, the Council at York stopped granting huge tracts of land. Among other things, it was felt that too many Americans with their republican leanings were receiving the bulk of the land. By June of 1797, Ingersoll had brought thirty families to Oxford-on-the-Thames, but the Council had already rescinded its grant of the township to him and it refused to allow him an extension of time to complete his quota of settlers. As a result, on June 14, 1797, Ingersoll applied for the maximum amount of land that the Council would allow him as an individual settler, and five days later, a grant of 1,200 acres was confirmed. He stated in his land petition that he had a family “consisting of a wife and nine children having been near two years in the province & are settled therein.” Another child, possibly a boy named Samuel, must have been born just prior to his petition in 1797 in order to bring his family up to nine children.

In February of 1798, Ingersoll filed a petition with the Council for reimbursement of some of his settlement expenses in Oxford Township. He said that he had spent “about three hundred pounds Halifax [currency] in surveys and making roads nearly thirty miles in length, opening a communication from the Grand River to the Thames”, but the Council would pay him only £53 toward the cost of his surveys. In spite of the lack of financial support from the government, Ingersoll moved his family to their wilderness farm in Oxford in 1798.

According to a family story, James Secord made a good impression on all of the Ingersolls when he and another gentleman called on Thomas Ingersoll on a business matter shortly after the family left Queenston. James and Laura must have been married soon after, for Mary was born no later than 1799. Since Laura’s father was a Justice of the Peace, he could have performed the ceremony, although no record of their marriage has survived.

During the War of 1812, Laura made her arduous walk through

American-occupied territory to warn a British outpost of an impending attack. The Secords accidentally overheard the plan being discussed by several Americans who had entered their house demanding food. James could not go since he was still suffering from severe wounds to his shoulder and knee which he had received at the Battle of Queenston on October 13, 1812. Laura set off at dawn on June 23, 1813, with the information that allowed Lieutenant James FitzGibbon to deploy his forces in time to secure the surrender of the American invaders under Col. Boerstler on June 24th. While FitzGibbon was rewarded with praise and a promotion, Laura’s unsolicited act of bravery brought her no immediate benefits, but did secure her a place in history.

In 1820, James Secord petitioned Sir Peregrine Maitland for a license of occupation of some land containing a stone quarry in the Military Reserve at Queenston. In a successful effort to sway the lieutenant governor in favour of his suit, Secord mentioned that he had been a captain in the Second Regiment of the Lincoln Militia, that he had been wounded at the battle of Queenston and that he had been plundered of all of his moveable property – twice. Feeling that Laura’s exploit should count for something, he reminded the authorities that his “wife embraced an opportunity of rendering some service, at the risk of her life, in going thro the enemies lines to communicate information to a detachment of His Majesty’s troops at the Beaver Dam in the month of June 1813.”

In 1853, when *The Anglo-American Magazine* published a series of articles on the War of 1812, it included an account purporting to be Laura’s own statement of her walk to warn FitzGibbon. Sixteen years later, Benson J. Lossing published his revised edition of *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*. He included a letter from Laura, dated February 18, 1861, from her home in Chippawa in reply to his request for a repeat of her wartime story. Her letter said in part:

It was then I gained the secret plan to capture Captain Fitzgibbon and his party. I was determined, if possible, to save them. I had much difficulty in getting through the American guards. They were ten miles out in the country. When I came to a field belonging to a Mr. De Cou, in the neighbourhood of the Beaver Dams, I then had walked nineteen miles. By that time daylight had left me. I yet had a



swift stream of water to cross over an old fallen tree (Twelve-mile Creek), and to climb a high hill, which fatigued me very much.

Before I arrived at the encampment of the Indians, as I approached they all arose with one of their war-yells, which indeed awed me. You may imagine what my feelings were to behold so many savages. With forced courage I went to one of the chiefs, told him I had great news for his commander, and that he must take me to him, or they would be all lost. He did not understand me, but said, 'Woman! What does woman want here?' The scene by moonlight to some might have been grand, but to a weak woman certainly terrifying. With difficulty I got one of the chiefs to go with me to their commander. With the intelligence I gave him he formed his plans and saved his country.

On at least three occasions, in 1820, 1827 and 1837, FitzGibbon verified Laura's role leading to the capture of the Americans by part of the 49th Regiment and its Indian allies. He stated in the third certificate that:

Mrs. Secord was a person of slight and delicate frame, and made the effort in weather excessively warm, and I dreaded at the time that she must suffer in health in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, ... The attempt was made on my detachment by the enemy; and his detachment, consisting of upwards of 500 men and a field-piece and 50 dragoons, were captured in consequence.

Laura kept this certificate in a safe place, since the first two, which had accompanied petitions to the government, were never returned. Presumably, they still survive among the documents stored in the National Archives at Ottawa.

Fortunately, a few other writers like Sarah Anne Curzon and Emma A. Currie made a point of telling Laura's story. In 1876, Curzon wrote a drama in blank verse about Laura's heroic journey, but it was not published until 1887 when it was included in her book *Laura Secord, the heroine of 1812: a drama, and other poems*. A "Memoir of Mrs.

Secord" was also included in the book. Although Curzon did extensive research in the National Archives, some of her conclusions were not correct; for example, she thought, mistakenly, that Thomas Ingersoll had lived long enough to move back to Oxford Township after the War of 1812.

Prior to the publication of her book, Mrs. Curzon interviewed the Secords' third daughter, eighty-six-year-old Harriet Smith, who remembered her mother setting out from their home in Queenston very early on that summer morning in 1813. She also recalled her father's ill-concealed agitation during that long, trying day. Later, Emma Currie, in *The Story of Laura Secord*, quoted Harriet Smith as saying: "I remember seeing my mother leave the house on that fateful morning, but neither I or my sisters knew on what errand she was bent. A flowered print gown, I think it was brown with orange flowers, at least a yellow tint, is connected with that particular morning."

English-born Sarah Anne Curzon of Toronto was an ardent Canadian patriot and feminist. She became the first president of the Women's Canadian Historical Society in 1895, the year before it received its charter. The society's first secretary was Mary Agnes FitzGibbon, whose father, Charles, was the eldest son of Col. James and Mary (Haley) FitzGibbon, while her mother was Agnes Dunbar Moodie, a daughter of J.W. Dunbar Moodie and his wife Susanna (Strickland). The latter was the youngest daughter in an English family of writers. In Canada, Susanna Moodie was best known for her book, *Roughing it in the Bush*. Her sister, Catharine Parr (Strickland) Traill, was equally renowned for her work, *The Backwoods of Canada*, while their brother, Samuel Strickland, who also authored a book, worked for the Canada Company.

In keeping with the literary tradition of her Strickland ancestors, Mary Agnes FitzGibbon wrote several books, including one about her grandfather titled, *A Veteran of 1812, The Life of James FitzGibbon*, which was published in Toronto in 1894. Her interest in history led her to encourage the formation of the London and Middlesex Historical Society by acting as an interim corresponding secretary until it was inaugurated on October 22, 1901, in London, Ontario. She was featured as the keynote speaker on that occasion.

Laura Secord died on October 17, 1868, having been a widow for 27 years. She and her husband are buried in Drummond Hill Cemetery



on Lundy's Lane in Niagara Falls, Ontario. In 1901, the Ontario Historical Society commissioned Mildred Peel of London to create a bust of Laura which was placed atop a memorial stone in the cemetery. Another memorial to her was erected in 1912 on the crest of the Niagara escarpment at Queenston, not far from Brock's monument.

Prior to his family's move from Queenston to the western division of Oxford-on-the-Thames, Thomas Ingersoll had a log cabin built on his new farm at lot 20, just south of the river. James was born there on September 10, 1801. Since the site of the farm eventually became the village of Ingersoll, he is considered to be its first native-born citizen, although it was known as Oxford Village up to 1832.

An Order in Council was passed on June 11, 1800, in which the Executive Council granted nine unnamed Ingersoll children the right to apply for 400 acres of land each. On July 31, 1804, Thomas Ingersoll submitted a list of his nine children in which he named Laura Secord, Elizabeth, Mira, Abigail, Charles, Thomas, Appalona, Charlotte and James Ingersoll. At the same time, he applied for 200 acres on behalf of Charles. He stated: "I do hereby certify the above nine names to be names of my children mentioned in the order above alluded to." Nine children had been born by 1797 and nine children were alive in 1800. James' birth in 1801 would have made him the tenth child, so one of the other children must have died before Ingersoll submitted his list in 1804.

There is some confusion about the date of birth of Samuel, the youngest surviving son. He was born in the latter half of 1804, not around 1798 as some sources have implied. Most likely, a child who had been born at that time was the one who died. Ingersoll did not name Samuel in the list that he wrote in the summer of 1804 because he had not been born yet. Sarah, the last child, was born early in 1807 at the mouth of the Credit River and died in St. Catharines before her twentieth birthday.

Ingersoll's financial resources became seriously depleted. The Council had rejected most of his pleas for assistance and he was forced to sell two-thirds of his holdings in Oxford. By 1804, Ingersoll's dream had become a nightmare. On September 12th, he was reduced to mortgaging his home farm with Niagara innkeeper Benjamin Gilbert, who had been in charge of the Government House at the River Credit as early as 1801. Part of the mortgage arrangement was that: "Thomas Ingersoll sells and

delivers 50 barrels of good and merchantable salmon at the River Credit, York County, on or before October 1 next ensuing [1804].

The excellent salmon fishery at the Credit had been known for many years. While on a boat trip on Lake Ontario, Mrs. Simcoe had noted in her diary on June 16, 1796: "... we landed at 3 at the River Credit 12 miles from York. .... After dinner we walked by the River of Credit. Numbers of Indians resorted here at this season to fish for salmon ... There is abundance of salmon caught in this river." Simcoe had decided that an inn should be built there to accommodate travellers, but another two years would pass before the government had a log building erected – hence the name "Government House".

Beyond the value of the salmon catch, Ingersoll still owed more money which was due by April 1, 1805. The whole situation became so discouraging that the family left Oxford. They were recorded in the census of Etobicoke Township in March of 1805. In a marriage bond dated "River Credit Decb 18th 1805", Thomas gave his consent for his second daughter, Elizabeth, to marry Daniel Pickett, an itinerant minister from Sophiasburg in the eastern part of the province. The wedding took place on January 15, 1806, but Elizabeth died just five years later.

Ingersoll probably assumed the running of the Government House as a sub-tenant sometime in 1805. The inn, on the future site of Port Credit, was located on the east bank of the mouth of the Credit River, where he started a river-ferry service in 1806. That same year, he applied to lease the inn for seven years at \$2 per annum and he also petitioned for 200 acres of neighbouring land for his second son, ten-year-old Thomas. The land was not granted but the lease was – in 1807.

Prior to the move from Oxford, Mira Ingersoll had met Julius Hitchcock, who was a private in Captain Ingersoll's Company in the Oxford Militia in 1803. He was a son of Daniel and Deborah (Ketchum) Hitchcock. He bought 92 acres at lot 14, concession 1, in the western division of Oxford in 1805. When he sold it on June 1, 1807, the deed of sale made no mention of a wife, but he and Mira were probably married soon after. Hitchcock had bought 26 acres from Jonathan Fuller at lot 8, in the Broken Front concession on April 6, 1807. Their son, Thomas, was born there on June 2, 1808. Julius and Mira sold their property early in 1809 and moved to Connecticut, where Luke was born four years later. They made their final move to Lebanon in Madison



County, New York, where Charles Ingersoll Hitchcock was born in 1819. A daughter, a Mrs. Blair, was still alive in 1901.

Abigail, the fourth daughter from Ingersoll's first marriage, had been raised by her mother's aunt and never came to Canada. She married Guy Woodworth in 1804 and died in 1821. Meanwhile, Thomas and Sarah continued to cater to the needs of the travelling public, but their son Charles struck out on his own and was working as a clerk for merchants Racey and McCormick in Queenston by 1810. Around the same time, their second daughter, Appy, married William Carroll and settled in Oxford.

William was the sixth of eleven children of John and Mariah (Van Alstyne) Carroll. John was an American who had fought for the British during the American Revolution. He came to Upper Canada from New York State in 1784 looking for land. As proper surveys had not been done yet, he could not get a deed. By 1789, he had found a suitable site for a farm on the north side of the River La Tranche (Thames) near the future village of Beachville, but his family, including his oldest son Isaac who was married, did not move to Oxford until February of 1800. When John petitioned for his land that year, he said that he had been "improving" it for eleven years.

On November 12, 1811, Thomas Ingersoll wrote to Major-General Isaac Brock from the mouth of the Credit River, stating his intention of leaving the Government House "the first of June next or before if that meets with your approbation." It is not known whether it was Ingersoll's death or the outbreak of war with the United States on June 19, 1812, that altered the family's plans, but Sarah and her family remained at the Government House throughout the war. Ironically, the Americans did her no harm but she lost considerable property to the British troops. The soldiers appropriated a bull, pigs, one thousand fence rails, blankets, cooking pots, axes, bedding, clothing, a carpet and a hive of bees. She received partial payment from the government many years later after her son, Thomas, petitioned for compensation on her behalf in 1823.

Both Charles and Thomas, Jr., served in the War of 1812, although not in the same unit. Charles became a lieutenant under Captain William Hamilton Merritt in the Niagara Provincial Light Dragoons. This was a mounted troop which Merritt's father, Major Thomas Merritt, had started recruiting, but his son took over its command in March of 1813.

Thomas Ingersoll, Jr., was only sixteen years old when the war started. Apparently he was working in the southwestern part of the province, for he joined Captain John Dolsen's Company in the 1st Regiment of Kent Militia that summer and he was still there in January of 1813. Later, he served in the 2nd Regiment of York Militia, where a muster roll showed that he was paid 20 shillings for serving at Burlington Heights from July 11-30, 1814. A notorious event took place there on July 20th. Eight men who had been convicted of high treason at Ancaster's "Bloody Assize" were hanged and their heads were put on public display as a warning to potential traitors. Crowds came from far and near to witness this gruesome spectacle.

After peace was restored, Sarah Ingersoll petitioned the government on April 12, 1815, saying:

That in the year 1807 your petitioner's late husband was granted a lease of the Government House at the River Credit, and the land appropriated for its use, for the purpose of keeping an inn for the accommodation of travellers, which lease has now expired. That your petitioner having been at great expense in erecting stabling on the said premises and as many repairs are waiting to make the house convenient and comfortable, your petitioner humbly prays that your Honor would be pleased to grant your petitioner a lease of the said house and premises, on which she is still residing with a family of five children, for fourteen years, on her giving security for the payment of an annual rent of five pounds currency.

Just three days later, Sarah withdrew her petition, saying that she intended to move away. She was living in Queenston in July of 1816 when she was visited by her eldest daughter, Nancy, and her husband, David Charles McKinstry, prior to their move to Detroit. Laura Secord and her family were still in Queenston at that time.

Charles Ingersoll and Amos McKenny, who had also been in the Niagara Provincial Light Dragoons, went into business as merchants at St. Catharines after the war. By 1816, that partnership was dissolved and Charles and W.H. Merritt became partners. The firm of Merritt and Ingersoll advertised on November 8th that they had: "just received from



Montreal, in addition to their former stock, a compleat assortment of dry goods, groceries, hardware, etc. and crockery" at their new store. Meanwhile, on September 5th, Charles had married Merritt's sister, Anna Maria.

By the summer of 1817, Sheriff John Bostwick of the London District advertised in various newspapers, including *The Spectator*, that Thomas Ingersoll's original farm would be sold in the fall to satisfy an old claim. The sale was postponed until January 13, 1818, when Charles emerged as the winning bidder. He did not move his family to Oxford until 1821, however, after his brothers had erected new mills and other buildings. In a belated effort to atone for its earlier mistreatment of his father, the government offered Charles an appointment as the area's first postmaster – an offer that he accepted early in the year.

In July of 1818, Sarah Ingersoll's brother, John Whiting, came to Canada to take her back to Great Barrington for a visit. That fall, he wrote a letter to his niece, Mira Hitchcock, in Lebanon, N.Y., in which he recounted his trip.

Noticed that great curiosity of nature, Niagara Falls, then visited my good kind Laura and her husband and family, then went around the head of the lake [past the site of Hamilton on Lake Ontario] and found your good mother and little Samuel alone, in a log house (though a good one). Your brother Charles went with me ..... The next day your sister Charlotte ... and her husband ... came here and spent the day with us. The next day sister started with me for Queenston, leaving Samuel in the family of a friend.

Thomas and Sarah's oldest daughter, Charlotte, had married Thomas Merigold, Jr., a young farmer of Toronto Township. He was a son of Thomas and Elizabeth (Ansley) Merigold who had come to Upper Canada from New Jersey, via New Brunswick, in 1808. They were part of a group of Loyalist families that had settled east of the head of Lake Ontario. An area on the north shore, just west of the Credit River, became known as Merigold's Point. It was within convenient courting-distance of the Ingersolls' Government House.

John Whiting's letter also said: "Thomas was gone to Oxford to build a new house at the old farm where your father used to live, your

brother Charles having bought it. When your mother goes back to Canada she is going there to live." That did not happen before the summer of 1819. Thomas was twenty-two years old in 1818, while James celebrated his seventeenth birthday in September and Samuel turned fourteen that fall.

At the age of seventy-eight, with none of his brothers or sisters still alive to refute his statements, James wrote:

In August 1818 I was sent up to Oxford by my brother to take charge of the premises. On arriving at the old place which I left when I was only five years of age, I had no recollection of it. During the War, all the fences were destroyed and all the boards on the old barn had been removed, but the log house in which I was born was standing and occupied by an old man named Ebenezer Case.

The first improvement undertaken was the building of a saw mill, which was put into operation on the 14th of April 1819, after which we commenced the building of the old Ingersoll House, having sawn our own lumber. In 1820 we began to erect a small grist mill with one pair of stones, and buildings for a store, distillery and ashery, etc.

Although it was Thomas who initially returned to the farm, James, and eventually Samuel, were called on to help with the construction of the community's facilities.

Thomas may have married Gertrude Carroll before he returned to live in Oxford. She was the youngest of John and Mariah's eleven children and had been born in January 1800 in New York, a month before the family moved to Oxford. Thomas and Gertrude's first children may have been twins. While John's precise date of birth is not known, Charles was born on March 29, 1819, and subsequent census records always listed the brothers with identical ages. Maria and Thomas followed, in uncertain order, while Justus was born around 1833 at Ingersoll.

At one time or another, all of Thomas Ingersoll, Sr.'s, sons and three of his daughters lived in Oxford after the move to the Credit River. In addition to being appointed postmaster in 1821, Charles was made a Justice of the Peace for the District of London and was elected



a member of the provincial parliament for the first time in 1824. While James ran the store and ashery, Samuel farmed and eventually operated a tannery and Thomas was involved with the mills.

Many years later, William Merigold wrote the story of the Merigold family for his son Willie. Because of the marriage of his brother to Charlotte Ingersoll, William had a family connection which led to his move to Oxford Village (Ingersoll) in 1827. He said:

... I was nineteen years old, when an opportunity to go as Clerk in a store in the Township of Oxford in the London District and with a person by the name of Ingersoll and his brother, the older a member of Parliament, the other having lost his health. I started the next day on foot with the snow ten feet deep with all my worldly goods tied up in a handkerchief, ... My Brother in law took me to Dundas Street, the main travelled road, ... I had a hard days walk until I reached Ancaster, a small village, where ... one who had a splendid team kindly offered to give me a ride to Brantford 20 miles away. .... The next morning early saw me on the road and I walked nine miles to breakfast slipping back at each step in the giant snow. I then had twenty six miles to go and never got a ride the whole way and was really tired out when I got there, but meeting one of my old playmates there I soon forgot hard days travel, ... The next morning I found myself in a small village founded by one of the oldest and finest settlements in Canada with fine farms ... The village I found was wholly owned by the Ingersolls I had gone to live with. The older gave his time to Parliamentary duties and politics and his brother a grim, unsociable person with [slight?] business qualifications and much out of health. They were the only store for 35 miles and done a large business in Pearl Ash and trusted by everyone throughout that whole Country and receiving in payment from those clearing land in Black Salt made from the ashes produced from burning the timber. I found the establishment in charge of a third brother, the other not being able to attend to business. I found they owned a general store, an Ashery for manufacturing pearl ash, a distillery, a sawmill, grist mill, a

large farm with horses and cattle in abundance, but badly managed in every department. They also had the post office and owned any quantity of wild land generally encumbered and owed considerable money. I was then just out of school, had not the slightest knowledge of business and when I come to look over their affairs they wholly entrusted to me without even an instructor, it looked rather formidable for an inexperienced boy of 19 to manage. Had I had a ledger I would have been alright, but all was new. .... The debts they owed was the great trouble for there was only one way to raise money, that was from our collections and manufacture of ashes. Finally in the Spring the oldest brother came home and the other – so he could stay in the Store. The creditors were pressing and they decided to surrender that large property. They had never consulted me but I heard of it ... and told them ... if they would allow me to manage their affairs and give me the use of the best horse I would straighten things out for them, ... so they got time and I saved all that large property and in four years they were free from debt and set me up in business five miles distant where a small village [Beachville] was starting and in two years I bought their share of the business and in four years from this time I left them. They failed and lost almost all they had but in willing the homestead they never even remembered me in their will.

William Merigold married Ann Eliza Chisholm in 1835 and moved to Galt in the early 1840s where he bought salt mills, a distillery, a sawmill and a foundry. Fortunately, he preserved part of the Ingersolls' story; unfortunately, he did not identify the brothers more clearly.