

**Hi everyone, welcome to Infinite Women. I'm your host, Allison Tyra, and today we're talking about Sybil Ludington and Laura Secord.**

Thanks to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, every American child grows up hearing about the midnight ride of Paul Revere. Imagine if, instead, he'd chosen to immortalise the story of American Revolutionary heroine Sybil Ludington. Her nighttime ride was the more impressive feat, to be sure - she was 16, to Revere's 41, when she rode 40 miles, compared to Revere's 12.5 miles. Her mission was to warn the roughly 400 militiamen under her father's command that British troops were planning to raid Danbury, Connecticut, where the Continental Army had a supply depot. On the way, she woke people in their homes, yelling "The British are burning Danbury!" Previously, the teen had saved her father from capture by 50 Loyalists. When the mob approached their house, Sybil lit candles around the house and had her siblings march in front of the windows in military fashion, creating the illusion that troops were guarding the house and causing the Loyalists to flee. Yet even the national Daughters of the American Revolution, in 1996, said that the evidence was not strong enough to support their criteria for a war heroine because her story was recorded primarily in her family's oral tradition, and they removed a book about her from their headquarters' bookstore. The DAR chapter near her historic home says that her exploit was documented, and it continues to honor her. As for Longfellow - maybe it's just too hard to find rhymes for "Ludington."

When it comes to travelling long distances to pass military intelligence, we can't forget about Canadian Laura Secord. During the War of 1812, Secord didn't even have a horse when she traversed 20 miles on foot out of American-occupied territory in 1813 to warn British and Mohawk forces of a surprise attack by the Americans. According to legend, she'd overheard billeted soldiers talking about it and set out the next morning. Thanks to her warning, the Mohawk and British troops were able to prepare, and won the subsequent battle.

**Join us next time on the Infinite Women podcast and remember, well-behaved women rarely make history.**