

# Dick's Creek

Richard Pierpoint "Captain Dick" Courageous Leader, Soldier, Hero

To the West of Merritt Street, St.Catharines running along side present day Oakdale Avenue within Canal Valley, is **Dick's Creek**. Its waterway tells a discordant series of tales that informs that which we see today on Merritt Street. The first and second Welland canals followed Dick's Creek as they left the boundary of St. Catharines (as it was in 1829 to 1915) and travelled south toward the town of Merrittton and the Niagara Escarpment. The First Welland Canal finished in 1829 and used for fifteen years, and the Second Welland Canal finished in 1845 and used until 1915 both follow the main branch of **Dick's Creek** and its southerly tributary that parallels Oakdale and Merritt Street for about 2.5 kilometers.

**Dick's Creek** was named after respected, well-liked, Richard "Captain Dick" Pierpoint, who in his life-time was captured by or sold by local slave traders to an America bound British slave ship at 16, escaped American slavery by joining the Loyalist militia in 1780 at 36, acquired in recognition of his brave service a large land grant in 1791 encompassing Dick's Creek at 47, voluntarily fought in the war of 1812 on behalf of Upper Canada against the Americans as a member of the Coloured Militia he co-founded at 68, received and fulfilled the harsh conditions of acquiring a further land grant in Fergus at the age of 82, and then returned to the area of Dick's Creek now actively used as part of the Welland Canal where he lived nobly until his death in 1838 at the distinguished age of 94.

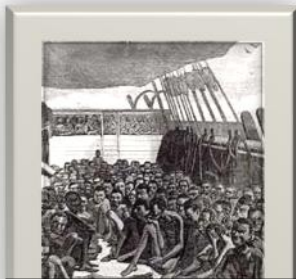
## Early Life of "Pierpoint" in Bondu, Senegambia, West Africa 1744-1760

What do we know of the life of this young person in his first 16 years in his homeland? An African baby boy was born in Bondu, Senegambia, West Africa in 1744. In 1760, that boy as a 16-year-old African teenager, whose birth name was lost to history, was captured in *Bondu (aka Bundu)*, a small nation about 160 miles from the Atlantic ocean, just north of the Gambia River in what is now the Republic of Senegal<sup>1</sup>, sold to the British and shipped to New England on a British slave ship and purchased at a slave auction by a British colonial officer named Pierpoint. The slave name given to the young African was Richard "Pierpoint". It is the name we used here because Pierpoint continued to use the name throughout his life.

It is said by some that "Pierpoint" was born into the Fulani<sup>2</sup> tribe, a migratory people, heavily represented in the Senegambia region of Senegal. Many Fula were taken captive to the Americas from the 16th through the 19th century as part of the Atlantic slave trade and they were largely captured from Senegal. The Fulani moved from Mauritania and settled in Futa Tooro, Futa Djallon, and subsequently throughout the



Another young African circa 1860s cruelly enslaved like Pierpoint from a century before.



Upper deck, British Slave ship with Black Africans from West African ports like Senegal. circa 1750s.



Map of Bondu, West Africa, 1760

<sup>1</sup> Senegal is a multilingual country: Ethnologue lists 36 languages, *Wolof* being the most widely spoken language.

French, which was inherited from the colonial era, is the official language of Senegal. It is used by the administration and understood by about 15–20% of all males and about 1–2% of all women. Senegal is a member State of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. A Senegalese, Abdou Diouf, held the position of its Executive Secretary between 2003 and 2014. Several of the Senegalese languages have the status of "national languages": Balanta-Ganja, Hassaniya Arabic, Jola-Fonyi, Mandinka, Mandjak, Mankanya, Noon (Serer-Noon), Pulaar, Serer, Soninke, and Wolof. In terms of usage, *Wolof is the lingua franca and the most widely spoken language in Senegal*, as a first or second language (80%). Mande languages spoken include Soninke, and Mandinka. Jola (Diola) is a main language in the Casamance region. The Guinea Creole dialect, based on Portuguese is also spoken in that region.

<sup>2</sup> The Fula people or Fulani or Fulbe (Fula: Fulbe; French: Peul; Hausa: Fulani or Hilani; Portuguese: Fula; Wolof: Pël; Bambara: Fulaw), numbering between 20 and 25 million people in total, are one of the largest ethnic groups in the Sahel and West Africa, widely dispersed across the region. The Fula people are traditionally believed to have roots in peoples from North Africa and the Middle East, who later intermingled with local West African ethnic groups. As an ethnic group, they are bound together by the Fula language and their Islamic religious affiliation their history and their culture. Inhabiting many countries, they live mainly in West Africa and northern parts of Central Africa, but also in Chad, Sudan and regions near the Red Sea.

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rest of West Africa including Bondu. By the 14th century CE, the Fulani people had largely converted to Islam.

Was “Pierpoint” a Muslim or did he adhere to the earlier African “animism” tradition?<sup>3</sup> We don't know. We have, however, some background on the religious traditions of Bondu, now called Senegal. Islam started in the Bondu/Senegal region before the Fulani presence. Trans Saharan trade with North Africa in 1040 is said to have lead to the conversion of the King of Takrur, War Jabi and to his efforts at conversion. Resistance to Islam in favor of their traditional “animist” religious practices that previously dominated, however, was still maintained in some communities, particularly among the *Serer* people of the region. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Islam was used as a structure of power and militarism. In the 17th century, Islam became the religion of the elite and merchant classes of Africa. The elites worked to convert “pagan” regions and establish Muslim theocratic states. During the 1670s the Fulani declared jihads on non-Muslims. Several states were formed from these jihadist wars, including Bundu (variously spelled Bondu/Bhundu/Bondu). It was in 1670 that the Fulani people gained control of Bhundu in Senegal.

What is the character of African “animist” traditional beliefs that predate Islam and Christianity in Senegal and the rest of Africa? The traditional beliefs and practices of African people are highly diverse and include various ethnic religions. Generally, these traditions are *oral* rather than *scriptural*, include belief in a supreme creator, belief in spirits, veneration of the dead, use of magic and traditional medicine. The role of humanity is generally seen as one of harmonising nature with the supernatural. The Serer people of Senegal (throughout the Senegambia region in western Africa where Pierpoint was born in 1744) practised the traditional a fat Roog (“the way of the Divine”), their original religion. The Serer people believe in a universal supreme deity called Roog (or Rog). In the Cangin languages, Roog is referred to as Koox (var: Kooh), Kopé Tiatie Cac, Kokh Kox, etc.. Serer religious practices encompass ancient chants and poems, veneration of and offerings to deities as well as spirits (pangool), astronomy, Initiation rites, medicine, and cosmology. Practitioners of traditional religion in Africa are estimated to number over 100 million, or at least 10 percent of the population of the continent.

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<sup>3</sup> He may or may not have been Muslim. He was unable to read and write English script as we see from his use of the X or his thumb print for executing petitions and his last will and testament, but may perhaps have had training in Arabic in Bondu. There is limited evidence to support this position. One author claims Richard was captured and taken to James Fort where he was sold to Europeans. He was branded with a hot iron, treated as their property and forced aboard a ship. The trip across the ocean to Barbados, chained to another man and slept with the next bunk only inches above his head. Once he arrived in Barbados in June 1760 he was taken to a slave market somewhere on the mainland and made to look a little better. They cleaned him up and then put him on market. He was bought by a British soldier, Richard Peirpoint, and named. He lost his freedom, home, family, religion and even his name. <https://www.preceden.com/timelines/31602-richard-pierpoint> ; The Tubman Institute web site claims Pierpoint was muslim. “Born in Bondu, a nation state in current-day Senegal, Pierpoint was raised as a Muslim.” <http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/richard-pierpoint/> For the history of notable Muslims from West Africa sold into slavery at this time in the Americas see <https://religion.columbian.gwu.edu/notable-muslim-slaves-america> ; West Africa, according to several historians was strongly Islamic at the time of the slave trade. Nathan Murphy in his article “Were My African American Ancestors Muslims?”, July 8, 2013 (<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/african-american-ancestors-muslims>) states: “At the time Columbus discovered America, Islamic Empires held greater power in the Western World than European kingdoms. They controlled the overland trading routes that transported oriental goods from the Far East to Europe, ruling from India to Western Africa. According to Allan D. Austin in African Muslims in Antebellum America, Islam had penetrated areas such as Senegal, Timbuktu, and the Lake Chad area in Africa by 1100 A.D. From these localities westward to the Atlantic Ocean, slave traders kidnapped the majority of their victims. The rise of European maritime trade in the 16th and 17th centuries triggered the decline of Islamic political supremacy and introduced new nations as world leaders.” Note that at a more limited scale there had been a slave trade with the Arab world in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (<http://www.thomasclarkson.org/resources/clarkson1.pdf>). “For centuries before the European transatlantic trade, there had been trade, particularly with the Arabs, across the Sahara Desert. As well as gold and slaves going North there were cloth, leather, ivory, and kola nuts. Coming South were glass, glass beads, copper, high quality textiles and cowrie shells. Goods needed to be easily portable and to make a high profit, particularly as the journey took 70-90 days. Slaves would carry the goods and be sold at the end of the journey.”

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Pierpoint, if a Fula person at birth, was likely Muslim, because Bondu was Islamized by jihadist movements in the 1670s, about 75 years before his birth. The Fula, those who speak the Fula language, are today the second most populous group in modern Senegal. They represent 23.8% of the country's population. About 92% of the Senegalese population is Muslim, and this population practices Sunni Islam based on the Ash'arite theology, the Malikite jurisprudence. In 1744 when Pierpoint was born, traditional animism still played a significant but diminishing role. We have no historical records to confirm whether he was a traditional "pagan" or Muslim in his first 16 years in Bondu or whether he was literate in Arabic writing. His use of the thumb print or X to mark his signature on documents suggests he was not literate.



What would Pierpoint's life have been like before his enslavement in America in 1760? In the Senegambia region, between 1300 and 1900 one-third of the population was already enslaved, typically as a result of captives taken in warfare.<sup>4</sup> The practice of Slavery was widespread in Africa, the Islamic world, and later in Europe, and finally in America. It had been an ongoing practice.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20141006131931/http://www.britannica.com/blackhistory/article-24157>

Early Slavery: "It is probable that the Ottoman Empire, and especially its centre in Turkey, should be termed a slave society. Slaves from both the white Slavic north and the black African south flowed into Turkish cities for half a millennium after the Turks seized control of much of the Balkans in the 14th century. The proportion of the population that was slave ranged from about one-fifth in Istanbul, the capital, to much less in remoter provincial areas. Perhaps only people such as the slave owners of the circum-Caribbean sugar islands and the American South were as preoccupied with slaves as were the Ottomans.

Slaves in the Ottoman Empire served in various capacities. They were janissary soldiers (see below), and they ran the empire, manned its ships, generated much of its handicraft product, and served as domestic servants and in harems. Contemporaries believed that the absolute power of the ruler was based on his military and administrative slaves. The Tanzimat enlightenment movement of the mid-19th century initiated the abolition of slavery; by the 1890s only a few slaves were being smuggled illegally into the empire, and the slave population was greatly reduced.

Other prominent Islamic slave societies were on the east coast of Africa in the 19th century. The Arab-Swahili slave systems have been well studied, and it is known that, depending on the date, 65 to 90 percent of the population of Zanzibar was enslaved. Close to 90 percent of the population on the Kenya coast was also enslaved, and in Madagascar half the population was enslaved. It may be assumed that similar situations prevailed elsewhere in the vicinity and also earlier, but studies to verify the proposition have not been undertaken.

Another notable Islamic slave society was that of the Sokoto caliphate formed by Hausas in sub-Saharan Africa (northern Nigeria and Cameroon) in the 19th century. At least half the population was enslaved. That was only the most notable of the Fulani jihad states of the western and central Sudan, where between 1750 and 1900 from one- to two-thirds of the entire population consisted of slaves. In Islamic Ghana, between 1076 and 1600, about a third of the population were slaves. The same was true among other early states of the western Sudan, including Mali (1200–1500), Segou (1720–1861), and Songhai (1464–1720). It should be noted that slavery was prominent in Ghana and Mali, and presumably elsewhere in Africa in areas for which information is not available, long before the beginnings of the transatlantic slave trade. The population of the notorious slave-trading state of the central Sudan, Ouidah (Whydah), was half-slave in the 19th century. It was about a third in Kanem (1600–1800) and perhaps 40 percent in Bornu (1580–1890).

Most slaves probably were acquired by raiding neighbouring peoples, but others entered slavery because of criminal convictions or defaulting on debts (often not their own); subsequently, many of those people were sold into the international slave trade. After the limiting and then abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, a number of these African societies put slaves to work in activities such as mining gold and raising peanuts, coconuts (palm oil), sesame, and millet for the market.

Among some of the various Islamic Berber Tuareg peoples of the Sahara and Sahel, slavery persisted at least until 1975. The proportions of slaves ranged from around 15 percent among the Adrar to perhaps 75 percent among the Gurma. In Senegambia, between 1300 and 1900, about a third of the population consisted of slaves. In Sierra Leone in the 19th century close to half the population was enslaved. In

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In 1821 at the age of 77 he petitioned the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada describes how he left Bondu and that he seeks help to purchase fare to return to his homeland, Bondu. He states that he "is a native of Bondon in Africa; that *he was conveyed to America about the year 1760 and sold to a British officer*; that he ... is now old and without property that he finds it difficult to obtain a livelihood ... *that he is above all things desirous to return to his native country*; that .... he wishes if may be affording him the means to proceed to England and from hence *to a Settlement near the Gambia or Senegal Rivers, from whence he could return to Bondon.*"

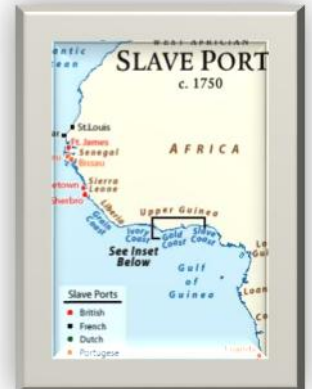


We do know that the British Slave Traders use a port located at modern day Senegal to purchase Africans from African Slave Traders. The picture to the left shows five captured men in West Africa and their two native captors circa 1750s. An estimated 10 to 12 million Africans ... were sold into slavery from the 13th through the 19th Centuries to all countries including America.<sup>5</sup>



"Along the west coast of Africa, from the Cameroons in the south to Senegal in the north, Europeans built sixty forts that served as trading posts. European sailors seeking riches brought rum, cloth, guns, and other goods to these posts and traded them for human beings. This human cargo was transported across the Atlantic Ocean and sold to New World slave owners, who bought slaves to work their crops. ... African traders transported slaves from the interior of Africa to these trading posts. After kidnapping potential slaves, merchants forced them to walk in slave caravans to the European coastal forts. ... Roughly 54,000 voyages were made by Europeans to buy and sell slaves."<sup>6</sup>

To have the utmost desire to return to his native country in 1821 at the age of 77 Pierpoint must have believed he would be well treated upon his return to his homeland Bondu.



## Languages Spoken in Bondu in 1744-1760

What language would Pierpoint have spoken in Bondu as a child? Wolof is the *lingua franca* today. Pulaar is spoken by the Fulas and Toucouleur. The Serer language is widely spoken by both Serers and non-Serers. Senegal has a wide variety of ethnic groups and, as in most West African countries, several languages are widely spoken. The Wolof are the largest single ethnic group in Senegal at 43 percent; the

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the Vai Paramount chiefdoms in the 19th century as much as three-quarters of the population consisted of slaves. Among the Ashanti and Yoruba a third were enslaved. In the 19th century over half the population consisted of slaves among the Duala of the Cameroon, the Ibo and other peoples of the lower Niger, the Kongo, and the Kasanje kingdom and Chokwe of Angola."

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1narr4.html>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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Fula and Toucouleur (also known as Halpulaar'en, literally "Pulaar-speakers") (24%) are the second biggest group, followed by the Serer (14.7%).

## PIERPOINT NAME

Peirpoint<sup>7</sup> is an English surname of Norman- French origins meaning stone bridge from the Olde French word "*pierre*" meaning *stone* and "pont" meaning *bridge*. History indicates that by practices of the day the newly enslaved young man was assigned his purchaser's surname. The officer gave the young enslaved man the first name of "*Richard*".<sup>8</sup> "**Richard Pierpoint**" served his slave master faithfully in the 13 American colonies for 20 years.<sup>9</sup>

Richard Pierpoint escaped slavery at the age of 36 by joining a British Loyalist militia group to help the British defend against revolting colonists called Patriots. In November 1775 Virginia governor, Lord Dunmore, trapped in Norfolk by hundreds of Patriots, freed Blacks from Slavery if they were prepared to fight with the British Loyalists against the Patriots, who included in their numbers slave owners.

Pierpoint first appeared on the muster roll of people serving the Loyalist supporting **Butler's Rangers** in 1780. He fought with Butler's Rangers for more than three years in many areas including upstate New York near Niagara. The British forces gave Pierpoint an honourable discharge in 1784. He was freed of control by a master in 1780. He was freed of control by an army commander in 1784. During this time he was named **Captain Dick** by those with whom he so ably and bravely fought.



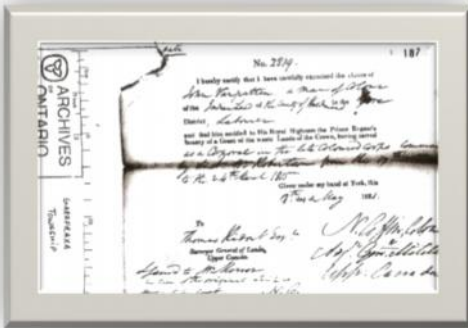
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<sup>7</sup> Recorded in several modern forms including Pierpoint, Pierrepoint, Pierrepont. The latin motto for the name is "pie ripone te" "in pious confidence", a quiet confidence that Captain Dick certainly lived.

<sup>8</sup> The name Richard is thought by most etymologists to derive from the Proto-Germanic 'Rikharthu', meaning more or less "hard ruler" ('Rik-' meaning 'ruler' and '-harthu' meaning 'hard'). This was adopted into Old High German as 'Ricohard', and from there to Old French, then Old English as 'Richeard'. No one's quite sure how the word dick made its subsequent jump from the hapless everyman to genitalia, but we are fairly sure that it first appeared as British military slang in the late 19th century. And given that British soldiers of the time also coined the terms "peter" and "willy" for their members, dick likely took on its most vulgar meaning simply and unremarkably because it was another good, common men's name that could be used euphemistically to refer to one's own second brain and little soldier, helmeted and ready for war. <https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/344805/evolution-of-the-word-dick> Richard became known as Captain Dick during his years with Bulters Rangers. "The great arc of dicks in the English language, it would seem, begins with the Norman conquest of England in 1066 and the conquerors' introduction of the strong, Germanic name "Richard" into our lexicon. As the name became popular over the next two centuries, it was often shortened in writing to "Ric," easing the work of the scribes and saving space on valuable parchment. From that abbreviation, many apparently adopted the nickname "Rick" as a standard diminutive of "Richard." But the English of the era were fond of rhyming nicknames (a tradition preserved in modern singsong Cockney slang), and so they transformed "Rick" into the pet name "Dick."" Note that Captain Dick also had the nick name "Black Dick". The nick name Black Dick has a markedly different connotation today than in 1780-84 when it was acquired and used until 1838 to reference Captain Dick as a black person. It did not have its vulgar sexual sense until the late 1800s long after the death of Captain Dick. "The earliest citation for dick in the sense of "penis" in J.E. Lighter, The Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang (1997) is from a book titled Stag Party, published circa 1888, according to Lighter. The cited example there unmistakably uses dick in its genital sense.""

<sup>9</sup> Sources include the two following excellent books available for purchase online: Sources: Pitt, Steve. **To Stand and Fight Together: Richard Pierpoint and the Coloured Corps of Upper Canada** (Canadians at War) (An illustration of Black Loyalist Richard Pierpoint, artwork by Malcolm Jones, courtesy Canadian War Museum/1.E.2.4-CGR2). Dundurn. Meyler, David. **A Stolen Life: Searching for Richard Pierpoint**. Dundurn.

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Lieutenant-Colonel John Butler 1725-1796, the commander of Butler's Rangers was born in London, England, and became an Officer from the year 1755. After 29 years of service he was tasked in 1784 with disbanding of the Corps of Rangers, or Butler's Rangers. Butler is depicted in the sketch to the right preserved by the Niagara Historical Society, and has a historical plaque in Niagara on the Lake.<sup>10</sup>



In 1784 Pierpoint crossed from the eastern shore of the Niagara River from the lands of the newly created United States of America to the western shore of the Niagara River and to what would become in 1791 Upper Canada.

For enlisting and faithfully fighting in the British military, the British government purchased in May 1784 most of the lands in Niagara from the Mississauga, negotiated by Lieutenant Colonel Butler, who in turn made conditional land grants to honourable members of the now disbanded Butler's Rangers.

Pierpoint obtained conditional title to 200 acres in 1791 by Crown Granting process.<sup>11</sup> British gave land grants in Upper Canada to loyal ex-soldiers to help it stave off further expected American attacks.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The plaque reads: "Born in New London, Connecticut, Butler settled in the Mohawk Valley, New York, in 1742. Commissioned in the British Indian Department in 1755, he served in the Seven Years' War. At the outbreak of the American Revolution, he was compelled to leave his estates and was ordered to Fort Niagara. In 1777 he organized the Loyalist corps known as Butler's Rangers. By the end of war, this unit with British regulars and Indian allies, had effectively contributed to the establishment of British control south of the Great Lakes. The Rangers were disbanded in 1784, and led by their former commander, many settled in the Niagara Peninsula. Butler remained active in Indian affairs until his death at Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake)."

<sup>11</sup> Richard Pierpoint Grantham Township Land Grant, 1791, 208, British Military and Naval Records "C" Series, RG 8, vol. 1701, LAC microfilm C-3839, AO. Note speculation around Pierpoint getting a grant for 200 rather than 100 acres. "Under normal circumstances, a private would have only received a grant of 100 acres (0.40 km<sup>2</sup>) so the reason for the additional 100 acres (0.40 km<sup>2</sup>) of the grant is open to speculation. His commanding officer John Butler may have considered him to have been an NCO (non-commissioned officer), such men being entitled to 200 acres (0.81 km<sup>2</sup>). Additionally, he might have been considered a United Empire Loyalist and thereby entitled to an additional 100 acres (0.40 km<sup>2</sup>). Alternatively, he may have had family with him, each family member being allotted an additional 50 acres (200,000 m<sup>2</sup>). There is some evidence that Pierpoint did not arrive alone as victualling records from 1786 indicate that a woman accompanied him. Pierpoint didn't appear on either an assessment or census and no documentary evidence exists to explain the situation. Conversely, his participation in the Petition of Free Negroes and subsequent sale or abandonment of his grant suggests he may have been single, at least by 1794."

<sup>12</sup> NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONT. NO. 39 RECORDS OF NIAGARA, 1784 – 1787 Collected and Edited By BRIG. GENERAL E. A. CRUIKSHANK "DISBANDED RANGERS A - Adams, William; Anguish, Jacob; Arner, Jacob; Arnold, Oliver; Austin, Joel. B - Basset, John; Bebee, Adin; Bell, Derick; Ben, Tom; Benson, Thomas; Berger, Frederick; Bowman, Adam; Bowman, Jacob; Bowman, Peter; Boyce, John; Bradt, Minart; Brown, John; Brown, William; Burns, John; Bush, Peter. C - Campbell, James; Campbell, Thomas; Cassady, Daniel; Cassady, Luke; Chambers, Francis; Chorus, Castel; Coghill, George; Conway, Patrick; Countryman, Jos.; Cox Samuel; Cummings, Thomas. D - Doyle, Benjamin F - Farrell, John; Field, Gilbert; Fields, Nathan; Fleming, Patrick; Foryea, John Foskit, Silas; Fridenburg, Matthew; G - Gahagan, Oliver; George, John; Gould, John; Goulding, Thomas, Grellinger, John. H - Hargison, William; Hare, Peter, Volun.: Hare, William, Vol: Harper, Thomas; Harris, Henry, William; Hicks, Benjamin; Hicks, Edward; Higbie, Chris; Hohandoran, Herms.; Hollenbake, Henry; Hombeck, Lodk.; Horton, Edmund; Houghdeline, James; House, George; Hoverland, Andrew; Hudson, John. J - Jackson, James; Jacobs, John A.C.; Jago, Henry; Jones, James. K - Cairns, Mathias; Kooman, (Vrooman) Mends. L - Lampert, Aiker; Laraway, Abram; Laraway, Jonas; Laraway, Peter; Lazear, Hyatt. Mc - McDonell, Christy; McDonell, William; McLeod, Norman; McMichael, John; McPherson, James; M - Maycock, John; Millard, Dan; Millard, Jesse; Millard Thomas; Marseles, John B.; Mitchell, Gilbert. N - Napp, Benjamin P - Page, Joseph; Parks, John; Phillips, Nicholas; **Pierpoint, Richard**; Poole, Hendrick; Prout, Shuman. Q - Quick, Benjamin; Quick, Solomon. R - Ramsay, Henry; Rowe, John. S - Schram, VanAlstyne; Segoe, Frederick; Segoe, Jacob; Shelding, John; Shoulitz, Frederick; Sips, Andrew; Skuse, John; Smith, Adam;

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## How did the British Acquire Lands in Niagara from which Land Grants were made to Pierpoint and other British Loyalists?

How did the British acquire the Land which formed the subject matter of conditional Land grants to Pierpoint and other loyal British soldiers and officers? The land, including the 200 acres surrounding Dick's Creek, was originally occupied by First Nations people who did not have a system of private land ownership.

On the 15th day of March 1784, Butler's superior, General Haldimand, wrote to Sir John Johnson Head Quarters, Quebec, Haldimand advising "*Col. Butler is persuaded he can purchase the Right of the Lands from the Messessagues [including Niagara] for a very trifling consideration -- You have therefore my Authority to instruct him upon that subject whenever it shall be thought best ...*"<sup>13</sup>.

On the 23rd March 1784 General Haldimand wrote further to Sir John Johnson "you will please therefore to give Lieut. Col. Butler the necessary directions for purchasing without loss of Time, the Tract of Country as described in the enclosed, Viz. The Land situated between the Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron, satisfied that you will be very particular in your Instructions to Col. Butler respecting the Terms of the purchase, I shall only observe that the Utmost Attention to Economy must be paid in this, & all future *Expences* in a Department which has so great a share in exhausting the Public Treasure..."<sup>14</sup>

On the 29th March, 1784 General Haldimand wrote to Lieut.-Colonel A.S. De Peyste, Head Quarters, Quebec

"I have to desire that you will be in readiness on the shortest notice ... to disband the Corps of Rangers commanded by Lieut. Col. Butler, .... *As it is my intention to settle such part of Lieut. Col. Butler's Rangers on the Tract of Land opposite to Niagara purchased from the Messessague Indians as it will contain & the rest at the Head of Lake Ontario, ...* I shall send a Proper Person when the Reduction takes place to distribute the Lands agreeably to the King's Instructions when the Lotts will be numbered and regularly drawn for, necessary preparations for the general good may, in the mean Time be making, by a Judicious Distribution of the Corps to which Colo. Butler is very equal, & will, I persuade myself, cheerfully give every aid and attention in his power. ... at the time of its being disbanded, you will take down the names of the Officers and Men who wish to settle there. Their Desire must be signed by themselves, to prevent future claims, or Retraction which would otherwise happen if they are so fickle as the Loyalists here and you will perceive by the Instructions that Lotts are only to be given to those who will cultivate them & not for the purpose of Land Jobbing which was the case after the last War, ... ."

Colonel John Butler wrote to Major Robert Matthews, dated at Niagara, on May 8th, 1784 of his concern that the Mississauga will be greatly surprised and fear we want to purchase the whole Country. "I have received His Excellency's Speech thro' Sir John Johnson, which I have delivered to the Indians. I also received orders to purchase all the Lands between the three Lakes Huron, Erie & Ontario, in consequence of which I have sent for the Mississaugoes & Chippawas, ... **I am persuaded that the**

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Snider, John; Spencer, Robert; Springer, Richard; Springsteen, Caspar; Stedman, William; Stuffle, John; Sutton, Thomas. T - Topp, John; Townshend, James; TUrbull, William. V - VanAlstyne, Jacob; Vandecar, John; Vandyke, Graus; VanEvery, Benjamin; Van Every, McGregor. W - Walker, Jacob; Wheeler, Samuel; WIndecker, Hendrick; Wormwood, Mathias; Wormwood, Peter."

<sup>13</sup> Niagara Historical ... B. 63, pp.128-9

<sup>14</sup> "You will please therefore to **appropriate fifteen Hundred Pounds New York Currency to that Purpose**, until His Majesty's Pleasure shall be known --"

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Indians will be greatly surprised, (and I fear will alarm others who are not concerned), when they find that we want to purchase the whole Country."<sup>15</sup>

Butler succeeded in obtaining a large tract of Land in Niagara from the Mississaugas and more, containing, it was estimated at the time, 2,842,840 acres and the price paid was about one-tenth of a penny per acre. At the Indian Council A Meeting held at Niagara, 22nd May, 1784 with the Mississaga Indians Accompanied by the Chiefs and Warriors of the Six Nations, Delawares &c. Present Lieut. Colonel Hoyes, 34th Regiment, Capt. Forbes, 34th Regiment, Lt.Col. John Butler, Dy Agent, Indian Affairs, et al Pokquan a *Mississaga* Chief stated: *"We the Mississagas ... have agreed and are willing to transfer our right of soil & property to the King our Father, for the use of his People Father."*

Lieut. Colonel John Butler Responded. *"Children: I have received the Commander In Chief's order thro' Sir John Johnson, to purchase some Land, the property of you, the Mississagas, laying between the Lakes Ontario, Huron & Erie, for ... an intended Settlement for such of His Majesty's faithful Subjects who have assisted him during the late War, as wish to settle and improve the same;"*

The Pokquan Mississaga Speaker blessed the proposed transaction:

*"We have considered your Request. Father. We the Mississagas ...have agreed and are willing to transfer our right of soil & property to the King our Father, for the use of his People, ... from the Head of the Lake Ontario, or the Creek Waghquata to the River LaTranche, then down that River until a South Course will strike the Mouth of Catfish Creek on Lake Erie, this tract of Land we imagine will be quite sufficient ... for the King's People; Your request or proposal does not give us that trouble or concern, that you might imagine from some of our people the other day, that difficulty is intirely removed... ."*

In accordance with their agreement, the *Mississagas* on May 24, 1784 deeded the lands of Niagara to Her Majesty, referred to as the Father, portions of which were deeded to the Butler Rangers.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM COLONEL JOHN BUTLER TO MAJOR ROBERT MATTHEWS, DATED AT NIAGARA, 8TH MAY, 1784 "Inclosed you receive a list of Farmers and their Improvements agreeable to His Excellency's former order, exclusive of those about eighty of my Corps have made a beginning and cleared Lands, expecting the Commander in Chief will permit them to enjoy their improvements, amongst which I am one, but worse situated as the Lands that myself and four or five Officers have cultivated and built good Farm Houses thereon falls within the limits ordered by His Excellency to be reserved for the King's use, but hope this will not prevent us possessing those improvements for should any part of these lots he hereafter wanted, a clause if agreeable might be made in the Deeds to that purpose, for my own part, I have already been at a considerable expence and am daily adding and mean to continue doing so till I have the pleasure of hearing from you. I shall be greatly obliged to you by acquainting His Excellency with my present situation regarding these Lands, also wish to know whether Deeds will be given for the Lands already cultivated and those that are to be given hereafter, my reason for being so very anxious on the subject is that I cannot point out anything better than the Plough for my two sons at the present."

I have received His Excellency's Speech thro' Sir John Johnson, which I have delivered to the Indians. I also received orders to purchase all the Lands between the three Lakes Huron, Erie & Ontario, in consequence of which I have sent for the Mississaugoes & Chippawas, a few of the former is already here, & the Chiefs of whom tells me that a part of this Tract only belongs to the two Nations, that the other part is the property of the Hurons, Ottawas & a few Chippawas near Detroit -- and to some that are farther west than Michilimackinac and to the Northwards, a part belongs to the Indians that Hunt near Cataraqui. I am persuaded that the Indians will be greatly surprised, (and I fear will alarm others who are not concerned), when they find that we want to purchase the whole Country. However, I shall in a few days make the Proposal to them and their Answer I shall immediately transmit to Sir John Johnson." (B. 105, pp.412-5.)

<sup>16</sup> DEED OF LAND FROM THE MISSISSAGAS TO HER MAJESTY: **This Indenture made at Niagara the Twenty Second Day of May in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Seven Hundred & Eighty Four**, Between Wabakanyne, Nannisbosure, Poquan, Nanaghkagwiskam, Peapamaw, Tebandan, Sawarmaneck, Peasonish, Wapamonisschisqua, Wapeanoghqua, Sachems, War Chiefs and Principal Women of the Mississaga Indian Nation on the one Part, and our Sovereign Lord, George the Third by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c., &c., on the other Part, Witnesseth, that the said Wabakanyne, the above-mentioned Sachems, War Chiefs & Principal Women, for and in Consideration of Eleven hundred and Eighty Pounds Seven Shillings & four Pence, Lawfull money of Great Britain To Them the said Wabakanyne, the Sachems War Chiefs and Principal Women in hand well and truly paid, at or before the Sealing & Delivery of these presents, the Receipt Whereof they the said Wabakanyne, the Sachems, War Chiefs and Principal Women doth hereby Acknowledge, and therefore doth Acquit, Release, Evonerate, and forever Discharge His Britannic Majesty, His Heirs & Successors and Every of them, by these presents, hath granted, Bargained doth Grant, Bargain, Sell, Alien, Release & Confirm unto His Britannic Majesty, and to His Heirs & Successors, all that TRACT or Parcel of Land, laying & being between the Lakes Ontario and Erie, beginning at Lake Ontario, four miles South westerly from the Point opposite to Niagara Fort, known by the name of Mississaga Point and running from thence along said Lake to the Creek that falls from a Small Lake into the Said Lake Ontario, known by the Name of Waghquata, from thence a North West Course until it Strikes the River La Tranche, or New River, then down the Stream of said River to that part or Place, where a due South Course will lead to the mouth of Catfish Creek emptying into Lake Erie and from the above mentioned part or Place of the aforesaid River La Tranche following the South Course to the Mouth of the said Cat Fish Creek, thence down Lake Erie to the Lands heretofore Purchased from the Nation of Mississaga Indians, and from thence along the Said Purchase to Lake Ontario at the Place of Beginning as above mentioned, together with the Woods, Ways, Paths, Waters, Water Courses advantages, emoluments and Hereditaments whatsoever, to the said Tract or Parcel of Land, Situated as Above Mentioned, belonging or in any wise apertaining, or which to and with the same now are, or at any time heretofore have been held, used, occupied, Accepted, reported, taken or known, as part parcel, or member thereof, or any Part thereof, and the Issues and Profits of all and Singular, the said Premises, and Every Part & Parcel thereof, with the appurtenances;



# Dick's Creek

## Challenges in Finalizing the Land Grants of Niagara to those honourably discharged

To finalize the conditional Crown Patent Grant of land,<sup>17</sup> Pierpoint, like all veterans, had to clear at least five acres of the heavily forested inaccessible land within two years of the conditional grant, raise a fence around it, build a road way to connecting houses and put up a house in order to gain title. This was painstaking, demanding work, for which Pierpoint had limited labour and equipment resources.

Black Loyalists like Richard Pierpoint had little help to earn their Crown Patent. As escaped slaves with no families and limited support, they needed help to develop their lands. Pierpoint and 18 other Black Loyalists sent a "Petition of Free Negroes" in 1794 to Upper Canada lieutenant-governor John Graves Simcoe stating: "*Your Petitioners are desirous of settling adjacent to each other in order that they may be enabled to give assistance (in work) amongst them who may want it.*" Similar petitions by other groups were approved, but not the Pierpoint petition.

Richard Pierpoint was finally able to obtain his full Crown Patent Grand of ownership on the 200 acres in 1804 (13 years after he first was granted conditional rights to the acreage). The earliest map of Grantham Township shows a "Richard Pierpont" on Lots 12 and 13 (other records site Lots 13 & 14) on Concession 6. Pierpoint's lands included a small tributary of Twelve Mile Creek that came to be known as "Dick's Creek."<sup>18</sup> By the end of 1806, at the age of 62, after 18 years of conditional and finally full

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and also all the Estate, Right, Title, Interest, Property Claim, and Demand whatsoever of them the said Wabakanyne, the Sachems, War Chiefs and Principal Women, of, in and to all and Singular the said Premises above mentioned, and of, in, and Every Part and Parcel thereof, with the Appurtenances; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, all the Singular the said TRACT or Parcel of LAND, hereditaments and Premises in and by these Presents released and Confirmed, and Every Part & Parcel thereof, with the Appurtenances, Unto his Britannic Majesty, his heirs and Successors forever, and to and for no other use, intent, or purpose Whatsoever; and the said Wabakanyne, The Sachems, War Chiefs and Principal Women for them Selves, their Heirs and Successors doth Covenant, Grant, Promise and Agree to and with His Britannic Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, that they the said Wabakanyne, the Sachems War Chiefs & Principal Women now are the true Lawfull and rightful Owners of all and Singular the Said TRACT or Parcel of LAND, hereditaments and premises above mentioned, and of Every Part or Parcel thereof, with the Appurtenances; and at the time of Sealing & delivery of these Presents, are Lawfully and rightfully Seized in their own right of a Good, Sure, Perfect, Absolute, and Indefeasible Estate of Inheritance in fee simple of and in all & Singular the said premises above mentioned, with the Appurtenances, without any Manner of Condition, Limitation of use or uses, or matter, cause or thing Whatsoever to alter, change, charge or Determine the Same; and also that His Majesty, his heirs and Successors Shall and may at all times for ever hereafter, Peaceably and quietly have, hold, Occupy, Possess, and enjoy all and Singular the said Tract or Parcel of LAND, hereditaments and Premises aforesaid with the Appurtenances and every Part or Parcel thereof, without trouble, hindrance, molestation, interruption, or disturbance, of them the Said Wabakanyne, the Sachems, &c., their Heirs, or Successors, or any other Person or Persons Lawfully claiming, or to claim, by, from, or under them, are any of them, and Freed, Discharged, and kept harmless and Indemnified of, from, and against all former and other Gifts or Grants Whatsoever. In Witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and Seals the Day and Date above mentioned. Witness Present. Robt. Hoyes, Maj'r, 34th Regt. , Wabaka and others."

<sup>17</sup> A Crown Patent is the original transfer of ownership of land from the government to an individual and is known as a Grant. A typical Patent transfers rights, title and interests in a parcel of land from the Crown (the "Grantor" or seller) to the "Grantee" (the buyer) and guarantees protection of those rights, title and interests, subject to certain conditions at the time of transfer. See Crown Land Record Archives of Ontario, "From Grant to Patent: A Guide to Early Land Settlement Records, ca.1790 to ca.1850, 215 Research Guide Most Recent Update: February 2013; Understanding the Crown Land Granting Process: The Crown Land Records of Upper Canada date back to the eighteenth century. Then, due to the American Revolution, a flood of immigrants from the American colonies wanted to settle on British territory. The land that was to become known under the Constitutional Act of 1791 as "Upper Canada" was to be distributed under the control of, and according to regulations that the Crown or its representatives made. By 1795, there was a complex system of land titles and ownership under the direction of the surveyor general. Throughout the pre-Confederation period (before 1867), land policy and distribution was a central activity of the Crown Lands Department.

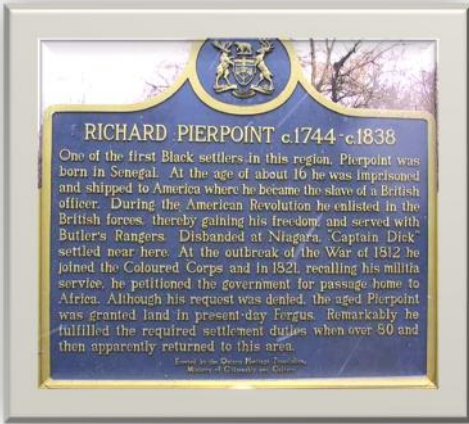
The Crown's system for granting land changed a lot over the years. In very general terms, this is how people obtained Crown land:

- A person who wanted to apply for a land grant from the Crown may have submitted a petition (application) to the Crown.
- If the petition was successful, the Crown would issue a land grant to the petitioner who then became a settler. Receiving a land grant was a complex process. Many offices were involved. Each office (Executive Council Office, Receiver General's Office, Attorney General's Office, Surveyor General's Office, Provincial Secretary's Office, etc.) had its own numbering system for the land grant documents it created or received. ☑ If the settler took up residence on the land and fulfilled certain settlement duties, he or she would have ended up owning the land. Then, the Crown issued a patent to the settler, indicating that the ownership of the land had passed from the Crown to a private individual. ☑ If there were any later transactions relating to that property (e.g., sale to another individual, taking out a mortgage on the property, etc.), this was documented in the records of the county Land Registry Offices (LROs).

<sup>18</sup> On 10 Mar 1804, the Crown granted a patent to Richard Pierpoint for all 100 acres in Lot 13 Concession 6 Grantham Twp. On 10 Mar 1804 the Crown granted a patent to Richard Pierpoint for all 100 acres in Lot 14 Concession 6 Grantham Twp.

# Dick's Creek

ownership he sold his 200 acres in Grantham (100 acres in Lot 13 Concession 6 Grantham Township to Robert Hamilton, 100 acres to Garret Schram, the son of Frederick Schram, a former Butler's Ranger).



From Schram he obtained 100 acres in Township of Louth made up of part of lots 7 and 8 on the second concession. Historians believe that Captain Dick lost the Louth property in questionable dealings and made his living working from 1806 to 1812 as a labourer for local White farmers in and around the Dick's Creek lands that he once owned. Pierpoint continued to be known in the community as **Captain Dick** for his heroism with the Butler's Rangers. Captain Dick's name lives today in the area of his original land claim from 1791 in Dick's Creek, a small tributary of Twelve Mile Creek, that runs through his land grant. The plaque shown to the left in honour of Pierpoint is fittingly located in the park at the parking lot off Oakdale Avenue north of Westchester Avenue, St.

Catharines on the Grantham lands once owned by him that surround Dick's Creek named after him. Pierpoint's acreage and his home was close to the Iroquois Trail that ran alongside the crest of the hill beside Dick's Creek. The Iroquois Trail later became St. Paul Street, while Dick's Creek became part of the first and second Welland Canals. Captain Dick's lands, upon which the Pierpoint Plaza stands today, is over 200 years later still a hub of community activity.

In 1812, the United States was threatening the freedom of Upper Canada and particularly African Canadians. Richard Pierpoint proposed to Upper Canada that he would gather a militia company of African men in the Niagara region to defend our community, the Coloured Militia. Captain Dick was respected among Upper Canada's African community as a *griot*.<sup>19</sup> Pierpoint first sent a petition to

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On 12 Mar 1804 Acting Surveyors General Chewett and Ridout prepared an undated surveyor's assignment for Richard Pierpoint of Grantham Twp., M. C. for 200 acres of land in Lots 13 and 14 Concession 6 in the Township of Grantham. (Grantham Township Papers 0437)

On 11 Nov 1806 (Reg 8 Dec 1806) Richard Pierpoint sold to Robert Hamilton 100 acres in Lot 13 Concession 6 Grantham Twp. (1176)

On 11 Nov 1806 (Reg 26 Jan 1807) Richard Pierpoint sold to Garret Schram 100 acres in Lot 14 Concession 6 Grantham Twp. (1191)

On November 11, 1806 Pierpoint traded lot 12 to Garret Schram, the son of Frederick Schram, a former Ranger. In return, the aging African received 100 acres made up of part of lots 7 and 8 on the second concession in the neighbouring Township of Louth.

Sometime after, however, Pierpoint lost this land. The land records do not show how or when. registration date of July 30, 1834 for the sale of the land by a John Thompson to Adam Haynes on July 5, 1826 is the next entry on the land registry ledger.<sup>1</sup>

On 16 Jul 1829 Acting Surveyors General Chewett and Ridout prepared a surveyor's assignment for Alexander Nickerson of Grantham Twp., yeoman for 100 acres of land in Lot 14 Concession 7 in the Township of Grantham under an Order in Council dated 2 Jul 1829, originally described as transferred from Richard Pierpoint. (Grantham Township Papers 0631)

On 26 Nov 1844 James Cahill Esq. Wrote to the Surveyor General stating the heir of Richard "Parepoint" claims a title to Lot No. 13 in the 8th Concession of Grantham. Richard Parepoint was one of the old Rangers (he went by the name of Captain Dick). This old Ranger said he got this lot from the Government for his services, but now it is claimed by some stranger who never did any service. The canal runs through a part of it. Cahill asked whether Richard Parepoint ever had any claim for this lot from the Government and if so whether he sold it to any person.

(Grantham Township Papers 0690)

<sup>19</sup> *Griot, Mande jeli or jali, Wolof gewel*, West African troubadour-historian. The griot profession is hereditary and has long been a part of West African culture. The griots' role has traditionally been to preserve the genealogies, historical narratives, and oral traditions of their people; praise songs are also part of the griot's repertoire. Many griots play the kora, a long-necked harp lute with 21 strings. In addition to serving as the primary storytellers of their people, griots have also served as advisers and diplomats. Over the centuries their advisory and diplomatic roles have diminished somewhat, and their entertainment appeal has become more widespread.

Griot is also explained [<http://www.seckoukeita.com/my-story/my-culture>] "A griot is a West African storyteller, singer, musician, and oral historian. They train to excel as orators, lyricists and musicians. The griot keeps records of all the births, deaths, marriages through the generations of the village or family. Master of the oral traditions, the griot plays a key role in west African society. Griots originated in the 13th century in the Mande empire of Mali. For centuries they have told and retold the history of the empire, keeping their stories and traditions alive. They tell their stories to music, using instruments such as the ngoni, the kora or the balafon."

# Dick's Creek

General Brock in 1812 seeking permission to raise a “to raise a Corps of Men of Colour on the Niagara Frontier ... to stand and fight together.” The lieutenant-governor first rejected but later accepted the noble offer, subject to it being led by a white tavern owner eventually adopted it at Isaac Brock’s urging. Consisting of several dozen black men, the Coloured Corps defended the freedom and livelihood of

Upper Canada’s African residents against American invasion, which threatened their burgeoning identity as Canadians—and as a free people. The plaque in honour of the Corps at in the park at the parking lot off Oakdale Avenue north of Westchester Avenue, St. Catharines Queenston Heights<sup>20</sup> is shown to the left as is Cameron Porteous depiction of “Runchey’s Coloured Corps”.<sup>21</sup>



Americans declared war on Great Britain in 1812 because they wanted more land for settlement in the western and northern parts of North America, and Great Britain was not expected to mount a strong defence because of its preoccupation in Europe with Napoleon. First Nations peoples who were friendly with the British did not want more European pioneers living on their land, so together they fought back in a series of skirmishes, battles, and raids on pioneer communities.

Even though the Americans had a much larger army, General Isaac Brock and his brilliant ally, the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh, tricked General Hull into believing there were far more men on the British-Canadian side than there really were. General Hull surrendered on August 16, 1812.

African Canadians fought in several military units with British and First Nations troops. For instance, African born John Hall served as a scout for Chief Tecumseh. Tecumseh was not happy with the transfer of substantial Indian lands to Her Majesty for nominal consideration by Lieutenant Colonel Butler and others.

At the age of 68, on September 1, 1812, Pierpoint heroically enlisted in the Coloured Militia and served until his honourable discharge at the age of 71. Although eligible for a further conditional land grant in the Niagara area, he initially refused seeking instead a chance to go home.

In 1821 Pierpoint sent Sir Peregrine Maitland, the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, a petition to return to Bondon, the homeland of his birth, a petition which was denied:

*“The Petition of Richard Pierpoint, now of the Town of Niagara, a Man of Color, a native of Africa and an Inhabitant of this Province since the year 1780. Most humbly Sheweth, That Your Excellency’s Petitioner is a native of Bondon in Africa; that he was conveyed to America about the year 1760 and sold to a British officer; that he served his Majesty during the American Revolutionary War in the Corps called Butler’s Rangers; and again during the late American War in a Corps of Color raised on the Niagara Frontier. That your Excellency’s Petitioner is now old and without property that he finds it difficult to obtain a livelihood by his labour; that he is above all things desirous to return to his native country; that His Majesty’s Government be graciously pleased to grant him any relief; he wishes if may be affording him the means to proceed to England and from hence to a Settlement near the Gambia or Senegal Rivers, from whence he could return to Bondon. Your Excellency’s Petitioner therefore humbly prays that Your Excellency will be*

<sup>20</sup> The plaque located on Oakdale Avenue south of Queenston Avenue in St. Catharines reads: “When the War of 1812 began, people of African descent in the Niagara peninsular feared an American invasion. They were anxious to preserve their freedom and prove their loyalty to Britain. Many joined the militia; others offered to raise their own militia company. Authorities responded by forming a “Colored Corps” of about thirty men commanded by white officers. Based in the Niagara region throughout the war, it fought at Queenston Heights in October 1812 and at the siege of Fort George in May 1813. The corps was disbanded soon after the peace, but had nonetheless set a precedent. Black units were a feature of the Canadian military until the First World War.”

<sup>21</sup> “Runchey’s Coloured Corps” by Cameron Porteous, Image courtesy of canadianartcards.com. 1812 1 20N.

# Dick's Creek

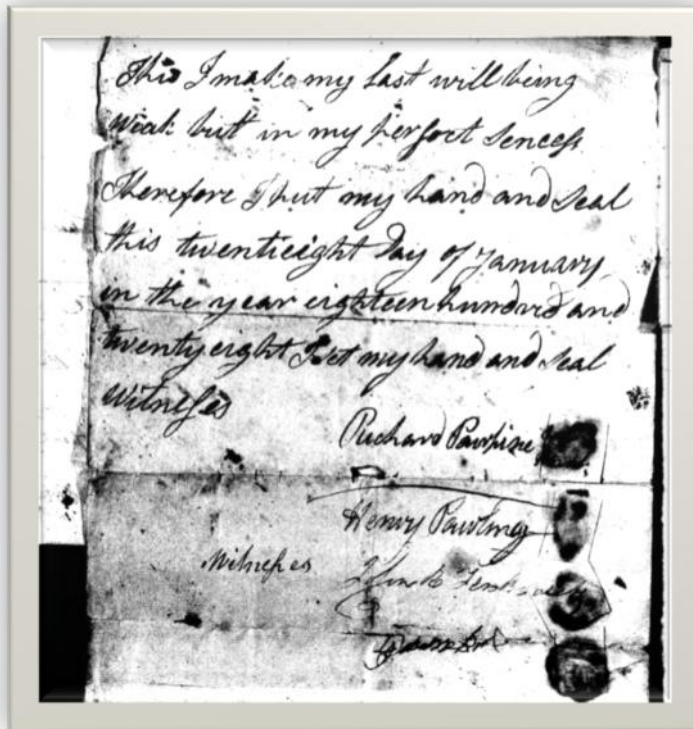
*graciously pleased to take his case into your favorable consideration and order such steps to be taken to have him sent as to Your Excellency may be graciously pleased to order. [Signed with an X beside Richard Pierpoint's name.]*

Pierpoint was given a conditional Crown patent land grant in Garafraxa, near modern-day Fergus, in 1821. The Meyler brothers authored *A Stolen Life: Searching for Richard Pierpoint*, and worked with the



Ontario Heritage Foundation to have a plaque placed in his honour in Fergus. In accordance with the terms of the conditional grant, Pierpoint, as of 1826 at the age of 82 had cleared the required 5 acres of heavily forested land and built a home stead, such that he acquired title to the land.

Pierpoint spent his summers in Fergus and winters in the milder Niagara Region. Pierpoint executed his will shown here in 1828 by marking his thumbprint beside a misspelling of his name. "On 28 Jan. 1828 Captain Dick made out his will, witnessed by sons of two former officers in Butler's Rangers. The lone black in a settlement of whites, he had "no heirs nor relations."



"This I make my last will being weak but in perfect senses. Therefore I put my hand and seal this twenty-eight day of January in the year eighteen hundred and twenty eight..." . Pierpoint by the terms of the will left his farm and a claim to one of his former lots in Grantham to a resident of Halton County, Lemuel Brown. "Unfortunately Pierpoint had given the wrong concession number for the Grantham property and the Surveyor General's Office reported the claim unsubstantiated."<sup>22</sup>

We believe that he died in Merritton, but there are no records of his grave.<sup>23</sup> Pierpoint's will was proven in Court in St.Catharines, Ontario, on 27 Sept. 1838. We presume he died that year.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id\\_nbr=3606](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id_nbr=3606)

<sup>23</sup> Tubman Institute states: "It is believed that he spent the winter months in the Niagara region where he had many friends and where the winters were not as harsh. In 1828, around the age of 84, he had his last will and testament drawn up, signing his name with an "X."" <http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/richard-pierpoint/>

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id\\_nbr=3606](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id_nbr=3606)

# Dick's Creek

Dick's Creek, the plaque at Oakdale Avenue, and the literature about Pierpoint honour the heroic role he played in our community, his courageous struggles, the trials he endured, and the challenging obstacles he surmounted in a life well lived.



*Richard Pierpoint thumb print in his final will.*

*RG 22-235, Archives of Ontario microfilm MS 8416.*

*This compilation contains errors & omissions and is respectfully a work in progress.*