

## **Pierpoint Community Workshop Breakout Table Discussion Summary – December 1, 2022, Elora Community Centre (Prepared by ASI)**

The following is a brief and preliminary summary of what we heard as part of the breakout table discussions held at the community workshop. More detailed and refined descriptions of each table's contributions will be included in the final reporting.

### **What is significant about Richard Pierpoint and his property? What are the stories that should be protected and shared?**

The most common response to this question was the story of Richard Pierpoint's military service and the general history of Black Loyalists and other servicemen, including how Pierpoint gained his freedom and land grants through his military service, both in the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

Pierpoint's role as an early settler in the area, with some focusing on the settlement requirements and his advanced age during this time, as well as his role and influence in joining people together through the Griot tradition of oral stories were also highlighted as important stories to be protected and shared.

In regards to Pierpoint's land grant in Garafraxa, a number of groups highlighted the property's use as a stopping point on the route north for Black travelers as an important story to tell. The Indigenous history of the area was also mentioned, including how Pierpoint's land grant intersects with treaty lands in the area.

The history of strict restrictions on Black land ownership in Ontario was also recommended as an important story to be protected and shared. The petition from the group of Black men in Niagara, Pierpoint among them, to be granted land together to create a settlement was specifically highlighted. The story should focus on the vision and agency of these Black individuals, rather than on the restrictions imposed upon them.

Stories that extend beyond Pierpoint and his land grant in Garafraxa were also suggested, including Black history in general, the transatlantic slave trade, the underground railroad, the role played by Black men in the various 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century wars, the settlement of Niagara, and Pierpoint's relationship with the British.

### **How should the stories be told? Where should they be told?**

### **What are some potential interpretive tools that could be used to recognize and broaden awareness of Pierpoint's significance and history in the Township and beyond?**

The most common responses to these questions related to plaques, informational signage, interpretation panels, and wayfinding signs that could be installed in the Pierpoint Fly Fishing Nature Reserve and/or other areas. Recommendations for installations focused on the park entrance or along the pathway, and it was suggested that signs in the park not be intrusive, but

informative and interactive (QR codes). Signage or posts could also be installed at the four corners of Pierpoint's land grant and wayfinding signs could also be installed further away, directing visitors to the area of his land grant and the park.

As Pierpoint's property was seen as a resting place for travelers, a passive area with benches to be able to pay respect could be created. Oral histories could be used to interpret the site and a multisensory experience could be incorporated into any interpretation.

Other site-specific installations that were suggested include public art, such as murals or sculptures. Provost Lane, the post office, and the John Black School were mentioned as potential locations and artist Meredith Blackmore was recommended as a possible artist to approach.

A permanent exhibit at the local museum was suggested, with the possibility of connecting directly to the site in some way. Education was highlighted as a great way to broaden awareness of Pierpoint's significance and history. Pierpoint's story and related history should be taught in schools, and especially in local schools. It was also suggested that the school located within Pierpoint's land grant could be renamed after Pierpoint and that a scholarship could be created in his name.

To reach broader audiences, information on Pierpoint could be made available online through the municipal website, archives, or local libraries. Information on Pierpoint could be further disseminated through social media, historical apps, tourism brochures/pamphlets, books, and through a "Heritage Minute." Productions about Pierpoint's life were also suggested, ranging from theatrical or musical productions to a movie or television series. The story of his life can be shared through music and the written word. To celebrate Pierpoint's role as an oral storyteller and recognize the art of communicating, an oral storytelling workshop could be held including both Indigenous voices and Griot voices.

A larger interpretation effort that connects with other municipalities, regions, and sites focusing on Black history was suggested, including the development of walking/bicycle trails and tours, driving tours, geocaching, and historical day trips connecting sites of interest. An interpretive centre was also suggested, as well as the building of a cabin representative of Pierpoint's cabin.

A ground penetrating radar study was suggested as a potential way to learn more about the site. It was suggested that the park land should not be disturbed to preserve the possibility of archaeological research. It was also suggested that the apple trees on the site could be of historical significance.