



November 8, 2021

Mayor Kelly Linton and Council  
Township of Centre Wellington  
1 MacDonald Square  
Elora, ON, N0B 1N0

**Re: Opposition to Proposed Highway Bypass at Pierpoint Park**

Dear Mayor and Council,

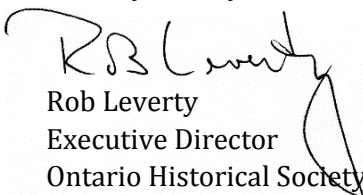
I am writing to you on behalf of the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) and in support of a number of your concerned community members who oppose the proposed highway bypass site that would destroy Pierpoint Park in Fergus, Ontario.

The OHS, founded in 1888, is a not-for-profit corporation and registered charity. The OHS is a non-government group bringing together people of all ages, all walks of life, and all cultural backgrounds interested in preserving and promoting some aspect of Ontario's history. The OHS has 570 member organizations in communities across Ontario.

Richard Pierpoint's story is one of national significance to Canadians, and embodies the struggle that so many Black Canadians have endured and persevered to ensure their stories are shared. Kidnapped and enslaved as a teenager, Richard Pierpoint would eventually win his freedom by fighting as a Black Loyalist on the side of the British during the American Revolution. After settling a farm in Niagara, Pierpoint would go on to fight in the War of 1812 in his sixties as part of the Coloured Corps, after which he was granted more land near present-day Fergus, where he died in his nineties after the most astonishing of lives. Janie Cooper-Wilson, OHS Director and Co-Chair of our Preservation Committee is a direct descendant of Lemuel Brown, a close friend of Richard Pierpoint and the man to whom he left his land in St. Catharines and in Fergus. Richard Pierpoint's legacy as a leader in the early Black Canadian community cannot be overstated. He continually petitioned to improve the lives of the Black Canadians and helped found a rich and diverse society amid prejudice and discrimination.

Pierpoint Park remains the only physical acknowledgement of Richard Pierpoint in the Fergus area, despite the importance of this man to the town's history, and the OHS was very disappointed to learn of the proposed bypass and bridge through it, effectively decimating the park. We strongly encourage the Mayor and Council to consider alternative sites and protect the legacy of Black Canadian history in our province.

Thank you for your consideration. Yours sincerely,

  
Rob Leverty  
Executive Director  
Ontario Historical Society

C.C.

Ted Arnott, MPP, Wellington-Halton Hills

Michael Chong, MP, Wellington-Halton Hills

Janie Cooper-Wilson, Director, Ontario Historical Society