

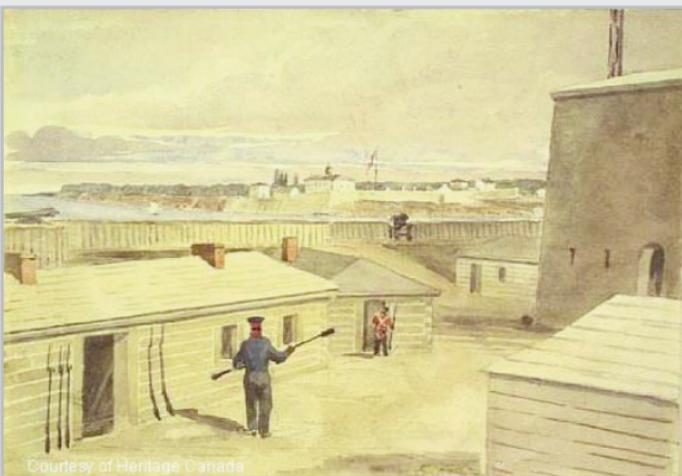


Richard Pierpoint, *United Empire Loyalist* Illustration by Malcolm Jones, 2005 (Canadian War Museum, 1.E.2.4-CGR2)
<http://www.eighteentwelve.ca>

Black-Canadians

Black United Empire Loyalists had settled predominantly in the Maritimes in 1783-85 but there was a pocket of retired Butler's Rangers in the Niagara area. When the War of 1812 broke out, one of these loyalists, Richard Pierpoint, offered General Brock that he would raise a Corps of

Men of Colour. The declined offer was reconsidered when the Americans crossed into Canada at Detroit. An all black company was formed as part of the 1st Lincoln Militia. The experienced Pierpoint, in spite of his initiative, was passed over for command by a white tavern keeper from Jordan, who had also served during the American Revolution. Not daunted, the old trooper Pierpoint volunteered and served as a private from September 1812 to March 1815. The Coloured Corps saw action at the *Battle of Queenston Heights* and was involved in heavy fighting during the siege of Fort George. Near the end of the war the Corps was amalgamated with two other volunteer groups to become the Corps of Provincial Artificers attached to the Royal Sappers and Miners (Engineers). They were used for labour or garrison duty, stationed either at Fort Mississauga or Fort George.



Courtesy of Heritage Canada

Camp Mississauga, Heritage Canada



In 1813, we were given a dangerous task. We had built Fort Mississauga just in front of Fort Niagara on the other side of the river. With this fort, the Americans were prevented from using Lake Ontario to bring supplies to Fort Niagara. This was a dangerous task. And often we had to work nights to avoid being fired on. But we succeeded, and Fort Mississauga stood proudly, with its stone and brick tower surrounded by its walls, a six-foot moat and four large cannons. (Transcript of a Citizenship and Immigration Canada video “Richard Pierpoint Monologue” for Black History Month)

With Americans not just knocking at the border in 1812 but also crossing it and ready to take North America as their own, Black Canadians were eager to fight. Their bottom line was—FREEDOM.

French-Canadians, former Americans and Blacks took up arms for different reasons, yet whatever their reasons, their willingness to do so contributed to the successful defense of the Canadas. The Americans declared war, invaded and were repulsed!