

= Jean Baptiste Point du Sable =

Jean Baptiste Point du Sable (or Point de Sable , Point au Sable , Point Sable , Pointe DuSable) (before 1750 ? August 28 , 1818) is regarded as the first permanent resident of what became Chicago , Illinois . Little is known of his life prior to the 1770s . In 1779 , he was living on the site of present @-@ day Michigan City , Indiana , when he was arrested by the British military on suspicion of being an American sympathizer in the American Revolutionary War . In the early 1780s he worked for the British lieutenant @-@ governor of Michilimackinac on an estate at what is now the city of St. Clair , Michigan , before moving to settle at the mouth of the Chicago River . He is first recorded living in Chicago in early 1790 , having apparently become established sometime earlier . He sold his property in Chicago in 1800 and moved to St. Charles , Missouri , where he died in 1818 .

Point du Sable has become known as the " Founder of Chicago " . In Chicago , a school , museum , harbor , park and bridge have been named , or renamed , in his honor ; and the place where he settled at the mouth of the Chicago River in the 1780s is recognized as a National Historic Landmark , now located in Pioneer Court .

= = Biography = =

There is no known record of Point du Sable 's life prior to the 1770s ; his birth year , place of birth , and parents are unknown , though he is known from contemporary sources to have been of African descent . Juliette Kinzie , another early pioneer of Chicago , Illinois , never met Point du Sable but stated in her 1856 memoir that he was " a native of St. Domingo " (the island of Hispaniola) . This became generally accepted by scholars as his place of birth . Historian Milo Milton Quaife , however , regarded Kinzie 's account of Point du Sable as " largely fictitious and wholly unauthenticated " . Quaife later put forward a theory that he was of French @-@ Canadian origin . A historical novel published in 1953 (see below) helped to popularize the commonly recited claim that he was born in 1745 in Saint @-@ Marc in Saint @-@ Domingue (now Haiti) . Point du Sable married a Potawatomi woman named Kitiawa (Christianized to Catherine) on October 27 , 1788 in a Catholic ceremony in Cahokia , an old French missionary town on the Mississippi River . , though they were likely married earlier in the 1770s in the Native American tradition . They had a son named Jean and a daughter named Susanne .

In a footnote to a poem titled Speech to the Western Indians , Arent DePeyster , British commandant at Fort Michilimackinac from 1774 to 1779 (a former French fort in what was by then the British Quebec Territory) , noted that " Baptist Point de Saible " was " handsome " , " well educated " , and " settled in Eschecagou " . When he published this poem in 1813 , DePeyster presented it as a speech that he had made at the Indian village of Abercroche (now Harbor Springs , Michigan) on July 4 , 1779 . This footnote has led many scholars to assume that Point du Sable had settled in Chicago by 1779 , however letters written by traders in the late 1770s suggest that Point du Sable was at this time settled at the mouth of Trail Creek (Rivière du Chemin) at what is now Michigan City , Indiana . In August 1779 , Point du Sable was arrested at Trail Creek by British troops and imprisoned briefly at Fort Michilimackinac . From the summer of 1780 until May 1784 , Point du Sable managed the Pinery , a tract of woodlands claimed by British Lt. Patrick Sinclair on the St. Clair River in eastern Michigan . Point du Sable and his family lived at a cabin at the mouth of the Pine River in what is now the city of St. Clair .

Point du Sable settled on the north bank of the Chicago River close to its mouth at some time in the 1780s . The earliest known record of Point du Sable living in Chicago is an entry that Hugh Heward made in his journal on May 10 , 1790 during a journey from Detroit across Michigan and through Illinois . Heward 's party stopped at Pointe du Sable 's house en route to the Chicago portage ; they swapped their canoe for a pirogue that belonged to Point du Sable , and they bought bread , flour and pork from him . Perrish Grignon , who visited Chicago in about 1794 , described Point du Sable as a large man who was a wealthy trader . In 1800 he sold his farm to John Kinzie 's frontman , Jean La Lime , for 6 @,@ 000 livres ; the bill of sale , which was rediscovered in 1913 in an archive

in Detroit , outlined all of the property Point du Sable owned as well as many of his personal artifacts . This included a house , two barns , a horse drawn mill , a bakehouse , a poultry house , a dairy and a smokehouse . The house was a 22 @-@ by @-@ 40 @-@ foot (6 @.@ 7 m × 12 @.@ 2 m) log cabin filled with fine furniture and paintings .

After Point du Sable sold his property in Chicago he moved to St. Charles , Missouri , where he was commissioned by the colonial governor to operate a ferry across the Missouri River . He died in 1818 , and was buried in St. Charles , in an unmarked grave in St. Charles Borromeo Cemetery . His entry in the parish burial register does not mention his origins , parents , or relatives , it simply describes him as negre (French for black) . The St. Charles Borromeo Cemetery was moved twice in the 19th century , and oral tradition and records of the Archdiocese of St. Louis suggested that Point du Sable 's remains were also moved . On October 12 , 1968 , the Illinois Sesquicentennial Commission erected a granite marker at the site believed to be Point du Sable 's grave in the third St. Charles Borromeo Cemetery . In 2002 an archaeological investigation of the grave site was initiated by the African Scientific Research Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago . Researchers using a combination of ground penetrating radar surveys and excavation of a 9 @-@ by @-@ 9 @-@ foot (2 @.@ 7 m × 2 @.@ 7 m) area did not find any evidence of any burials at the supposed grave site , leading the archaeologists to conclude that Point du Sable 's remains may not have been moved from one of the two previous cemeteries .

= = Theories and legends = =

= = = Early life = = =

Though there is little historical evidence regarding Point du Sable 's life before the 1770s , there are a number of theories and legends that give accounts of his early life . Writing in 1933 , Milo Milton Quaife identified a French immigrant to Canada , Pierre Dandonneau , who acquired the title " Sieur de Sable " and whose descendants were known by both the names Dandonneau and Du Sable . Quaife was unable to find a direct link to Point du Sable , but identified descendants of Pierre Dandonneau living around the Great Lakes region in Detroit , Mackinac , and St Joseph , leading him to speculate that Point du Sable 's father was a member of this family , whilst his mother was a slave . In 1951 a pamphlet by Joseph Jeremie , a native of Haiti , was published in which he claimed to be the great grandson of Point du Sable . Based on family recollections and tombstone inscriptions he claimed that Point du Sable was born in Saint @-@ Marc in Haiti , studied in France , returned to Haiti to deal coffee before traveling to French Louisiana . Historian and Point du Sable biographer John F. Swenson has called these claims " elaborate , undocumented assertions ... in a fanciful biography " . In 1953 Shirley Graham built on the work of Quaife and Jeremie in a historical novel of Point du Sable that she described as " not accurate history nor pure fiction " , but rather " an imaginative interpretation of all the known facts " . This book presented Point du Sable as the son of the mate on a pirate ship , the Black Sea Gull , and a freed slave called Suzanne . Despite lack of evidence , and the continued debate about Point du Sable 's early life , parentage , and birthplace , this popular story is widely presented as being definitive .

= = = Peoria = = =

In 1815 a land claim that had been submitted by Nicholas Jarrot to the land commissioners at Kaskaskia , Illinois Territory was approved . In the claim Jarrot asserted that a " Jean Baptiste Pointstable " had been " head of a family at Peoria in the year 1783 , and before and after that year " , and that he " had a house built and cultivated land between the Old Fort and the new settlement in the year 1780 " . This document has been taken by Quaife and other historians as evidence that Point du Sable lived at Peoria prior to his arrival at Chicago , however , records show that Point du Sable was living at the Pinery in Michigan in the early 1780s . In addition , the Kaskaskia land commissioners identified many fraudulent land claims , including two previously submitted in the

name of Point du Sable . Nicholas Jarrot , the claimant , was involved in many fraudulent land claims , and Swenson suggests that this claim was also fraudulent , made without the knowledge of Point du Sable . Although apparently in conflict with some of the above information , some historical records contend that DuSable bought land in Peoria from J.B.Maillet in March 13 , 1773 and sold it to Isaac Darneille in 1783 when he moved to be the first " permanent " European resident of Chicago .

= = = Departure from Chicago = = =

Point du Sable left Chicago in 1800 . Point du Sable sold his property to John Kinzie and moved to Missouri , at that time part of French Louisiana . The reason for his departure is unknown . In her memoir , Juliette Kinzie suggested that " perhaps he was disgusted at not being elected to a similar dignity [great chief] by the Pottowattamies . " In 1874 Nehemiah Matson elaborated on this story , claiming that Point du Sable was a slave from Virginia who had moved with his master to Lexington , Kentucky in 1790 . According to Matson , Point du Sable became a zealous Catholic in order to convince a Jesuit missionary to declare him chief of the local Native Americans , and left Chicago when the natives refused to accept him as their chief . Quaife dismisses both these stories as being fictional .

In her 1953 novel Graham suggests that Point du Sable left Chicago because he was angered with the United States government , which wanted him to buy the land on which he had lived and called his own for the previous two decades . The 1795 Treaty of Greenville and the subsequent westward migration of Indians away from the Chicago area might also have influenced his decision .

= = Legacy and honors = =

= = = Founder of Chicago = = =

Point du Sable is the earliest recorded resident of the settlement close to the mouth of the Chicago River that grew to become the city of Chicago . He is therefore widely regarded as the first permanent resident of Chicago and given the appellation " Founder of Chicago " .

The expedition headed by Louis Jolliet and Jacques Marquette in 1673 , though probably not the first Europeans to visit the area , are the first recorded to have crossed the Chicago Portage and travelled along the Chicago River . Marquette returned in 1674 , camped a few days near the mouth of the river , then moved on to the portage , where he stayed through the winter of 1674 ? 75 . Joliet and Marquette did not report any Indians living near the Chicago River area at this time , though archaeologists have since discovered numerous Indian village sites elsewhere in the greater Chicago area . Two of La Salle 's men built a stockade at the portage in the winter of 1682 / 1683 . However , in 1697 Henri Tonti , Michel Accault , and François de La Forêt received permission from Governor Frontenac to establish a fortified trading post at Chicagou managed by Pierre de Liette , Tonti 's cousin , a Franco -@- Italian , which lasted until c.1705. De Liette kept a journal of his experiences living with the Illinois natives for those years he lived with them at the Chicago trading post . De Liette , describes in his writings the game of lacrosse played by the Indians on the extensive meadow behind these villages . In Chicago De Liette ran the trading post in partnership with François Daupin de La Forêt , Michel Accault , and Henri de Tonti [located probably near today's Tribune Tower] which he had to close , leaving in 1705 after the king revoked his trading license .

The Mission of the Guardian Angel was somewhere in the vicinity of Chicago from 1696 until it was abandoned in around 1700 . The Fox Wars effectively closed the Chicago area to Europeans in the first part of the 18th century . The first non -@- native to re -@- settle in the area may have been a trader named Guillory , who might have had a trading -@- post near Wolf Point on the Chicago River in around 1778 . After Point du Sable , Antoine Ouilmette is the next recorded resident of Chicago ; he claimed to have settled at the mouth of the Chicago River in July 1790 , a few months

after Hugh Heward visited Point du Sable .

= = = Memorials = = =

By the 1850s , historians of Chicago recognized Point du Sable as the city 's earliest non @-@ native permanent settler . For a long time , however , the city did not honor him in the same manner as other pioneers . A plaque was erected by the city in 1913 at the corner of Kinzie and Pine Streets to commemorate his homestead . In the planning stages of the 1933 ? 1934 Century of Progress International Exposition a number of African @-@ American groups campaigned for Point du Sable to be honored at the fair . At this time , few Chicagoans had even heard of Point du Sable and the fair 's organizers presented the 1803 construction of Fort Dearborn as the city 's historical beginning . The campaign was successful however , and a replica of Point du Sable 's cabin was presented as part of the " background of the history of Chicago . "

In 1965 a plaza called Pioneer Court was built on the site of Point du Sable 's homestead as part of the construction of the Equitable Life Assurance Society of America building . The Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable Homesite was designated as a National Historic Landmark on May 11 , 1976 , as a site deemed to have " exceptional value to the nation . " Pioneer Court is located at what is now 401 N. Michigan Avenue in the Near North Side of Chicago . In 2009 , the City of Chicago and a private donor erected there a large bronze bust of Point du Sable by Chicago @-@ born sculptor Erik Blome . In February 2016 the bust was temporarily relocated to 400 N. Michigan Ave for the construction of a new Apple Store , but will return to its original location once construction is completed . In October 2010 , the Michigan Avenue Bridge was renamed DuSable Bridge in honor of Point du Sable . Previously a small street named De Saible Street had been named after him .

A number of Chicago institutions have been named in honor of Point du Sable . DuSable High School opened in Bronzeville in 1934 . Today it is a building for three schools : Daniel Hale Williams Prep School of Medicine , the Bronzeville Scholastic Institute , and the DuSable Leadership Academy . Dr. Margaret Taylor @-@ Burroughs , a prominent African @-@ American artist and writer taught at the school for twenty @-@ three years . She and her husband co @-@ founded the DuSable Museum of African American History , located on Chicago 's South Side , which was renamed in honor of Point du Sable in 1968 . DuSable Harbor is located in the heart of downtown Chicago at the foot of Randolph Street , and DuSable Park is an urban park (3 @. @ 24 acres (13 @, @ 100 m2)) in Chicago currently awaiting redevelopment . It was originally announced in 1987 by Mayor Harold Washington . The US Postal Service has also honored Point du Sable with the issue of a Black Heritage Series , 22 @-@ cent postage stamp on February 20 , 1987 .