

Jean-Baptiste Pointe du Sable 1745 - 1818

The founder of Chicago, he was the first non-native settler in the area now known as Chicago. Du Sable also founded the first trading post in Chicago. He was long ignored by historians, partly because he was Haitian and not white, and partly because the early histories of Chicago were written by the friends and descendants of John Kinzie, another early settler.

1730-45–

born in Hatai to a slave and a French pirate mate???

Born to a father from a Quebec mercantile family and whose mother was a Negro slave?

17?? – attended Catholic school in France (after mother killed in a Spanish raid on Haiti?)

Works as a sailor?? Runaway slave? Many theories.

1764 – leaves Haiti with a boyhood friend on a sloop (the Suzanne?) and travels to New Orleans to begin a new life. They find the city in the possession of the Spaniards.

1765 – the pair, accompanied by a Potawatomi Indian named Choctow, begins the 600 miles journey up the Mississippi River to St. Louis.

17?? – establishes himself as a fur and grain trader in the Great Lakes region.

1770's – builds his first house on the banks of the Chicago River. The city's first recorded marriage occurred there, as did the first election.

1772 – establishes first trading post near what is now Pioneer Court

1779, Revolutionary War – briefly imprisoned in Detroit by the British on suspicion of being a U.S. spy.

1780 – 1784 – manages the Pinery, a huge tract of woodland claimed by British Lt. Patrick Sinclair on the St. Clair River in eastern Michigan.

1783 – able to prove American citizenship in order to obtain a government land grant.

1784 – Returns to Chicago and develops a farm near the mouth of the Chicago River where he also did some trading. Builds a spacious 5-room 'mansion' with a long covered porch modeled after French Creole homes in the American Bottom.

1788 – marries Catherine, his long-time companion, (Kittihawa) the daughter of a local Potawatomi chief and has 2 children The

Potawatomi called him "Black Chief," and he became a high ranking member of their tribe.

1893 - A reproduction of Jean's first cabin is reproduced for the World's Columbian Exposition

1800 – sells property to Jean Lalime, a French trader (in 1804 he in turn sells property to John Kinzie).

1800's – Moves to St. Charles, MO OR PEORIA?? and works as a farmer and trader. Moves to Spanish Upper Louisiana near present day St. Charles, MO?????

1804 – Heads to Missouri?????

1805 – makes his last visit to the place he knew as Eschecagou, but he barely recognizes it. Fort Dearborn had been founded and a new generation of pioneers had transformed the once sleepy settlement into a bustling town.

1813 – during an illness he promised to leave his property to his granddaughter, Eulie, on condition she care for him in his last years and see that he was buried in the Catholic Cemetery at St. Charles.

1818 - Dies

* His home in Missouri eventually became the official residence of the first governor of Missouri.

1912 – City of Chicago places a marker in his memory at the corner of Kedzie and Pine streets.

1987 – A commemorative stamp is issued to honor du Sable.

* The DuSable Museum of African American History (founded in 1961), on Chicago's South Side, is named in his honor.

Books/articles about the Person

Jean du Sable, Father of Chicago, Carole Marsh (1998)

Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable, Keenan Heise
The Story of Jean Baptiste du Sable (Stories From the Forgotten West), Robert Miller and Richard Leonard (1995).

Notable Sources

www.wikipedia.org

Field Trips

DuSable Museum

Personal Essays/REMEMBER

* Describe a time or experience when you "discovered" a new place - a secret cave, special beach, nook at the library....

Reports/DISCOVER

+du Sable built an impressive home and business. His home was said to have been influenced by the French Creole style. What is the French Creole style?

Opinions/DECIDE

Some believe that du Sable wasn't originally credited with founding Chicago because of his race. Do you think this is true? How do people today use racial stereotypes to 'judge' others?

Historical Fiction/IMAGINE

* There are many theories on where Jean du Sable was born and how he ended up in Chicago. Write a narrative of how you think the events occurred.

Imagine you are a trader who has just arrived in *Eschecagou*, how do you see yourself interacting with Jean du Sable and the local Indians?