

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
**Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable Homesite**  
AND/OR COMMON  
**Pioneer Court**

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
**401 North Michigan Avenue**

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN  
**Chicago**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
**7**

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE  
**Illinois**

CODE  
**17**

COUNTY  
**Cook**

CODE  
**031**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME **Equitable Life Insurance Company & The Chicago Tribune Company**  
**Contact: Willard N. Nelson, Assistant Building Manager, Equitable Life Insurance**

STREET & NUMBER  
**401-435 North Michigan Avenue**

CITY, TOWN  
**Chicago**

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE  
**Illinois**

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Cook County Recorder of Deeds**

STREET & NUMBER  
**County Building, Clark & Washington Streets**

CITY, TOWN  
**Chicago**

STATE  
**Illinois**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
**None Known**

DATE

\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_ STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site of Du Sable's house is now partially occupied by the Pioneer Court Plaza. Pioneer Court Plaza, dedicated June 23, 1965, is a 100,000 square foot public open space developed jointly by the Equitable Life Insurance Company and the Chicago Tribune Company, both of whom own sections of the property utilized for the court. The area is a flat mall surfaced with red paving brick, incorporating a large fountain inscribed with the names of pioneers (including Du Sable) and civic leaders of Chicago. The Court, with its numerous planters filled with trees and other foliage, is the largest private landscaped area in Chicago.

The Court is situated on the east side of Michigan Avenue and runs from the Tribune Building on the north to the Chicago River on the south. At the river's edge is a small landscaped park area with benches. A long curved stairway winds upward from the park to the sidewalk along Michigan Avenue. The Court is contiguous with the sidewalk on the west and continues east around the sides of the Equitable Building. A glassed enclosure on the Court contains a stairway to the lower level of the area containing a restaurant. Just outside of the glassed area on the Court level is a marble block containing four bronze plaques inscribed with the history of the site. It includes the names of Du Sable (spelled "de Saible" on the plaque), Lalime (also "LeMai") and Kinzie, the latter being the last resident of the log home built on the site by Du Sable.

The Kinzie plaque struck by Chicago's Charter Jubilee in 1937 and authenticated by the Chicago Historical Society, has the following inscription:

### KINZIE MANSION

Near this site stood Kinzie Mansion,  
 1784-1832, home of Pointe Du Saible,  
 Le Mai, and John Kinzie, Chicago's  
 "first civilian," here was born in 1805,  
 the city's first white child Ellen Marion  
 Kinzie.

(The first non-Indian child born, however, was Eulalie Pelletier, born in 1796 and Du Sable's granddaughter.)

Legal description: Parts of blocks 7 & 9, Kinzie's Addition to Chicago, being a subdivision of the north fraction of Sec. 10, 39, 14. (W<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Sec. 10, 39, 14)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

Afro-American History

SPECIFIC DATES **c. 1779 (Establishment of Du Sable trading post)** BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable is of national historical importance as one of the most prominent pioneers, fur traders, and independent entrepreneurs of the colonial and revolutionary eras. By building his trading post at the important portage between the Chicago and the Des Plaines rivers, he laid the foundation for the future development of Chicago--America's second largest city. Du Sable is representative of contributions of Afro-Americans in the initial economic and developmental stages of the nation's growth.

Pionner Court is the site of the Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable trading post which later became the site of the city of Chicago. The original Du Sable estate, now recorded as the Kinzie Addition, included not only the Pioneer Court area but also the rich real estate extending from the bank of the Chicago River north to Chicago Avenue and from State Street east to Lake Michigan. Pioneer Court is the largest private landscaped area in Chicago. The Court, which bears plaques marking the historic past of the site and the city and mentions Du Sable among many other Chicagoans, extends along the east side of North Michigan Avenue from the Chicago River to Tribune Tower and fronts on the Equitable Life Insurance Company building. Pionner Court is jointly owned by the Equitable Life Insurance Company and the Chicago Tribune Company and is readily accessible to public use.

Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable, also spelled "Pointe de Sable," "au Sable," and "de Saible," was a pioneer farmer and trader who was widely known in the American West during the colonial era both for his skills as a fur trapper and his ease in getting along with Indians. But his place in history is based upon his establishment in the 1770s of a trading post at the mouth of the Chicago River which became the site of the city of Chicago. Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable was the first permanent non-Indian settler and founder of what became America's second largest city--Chicago.

Du Sable was born in 1745 in Haiti to a French mariner father and a Negro mother. As a young man he migrated to Louisiana and later to the Northwest where he became a fur trapper. There he and his friend Jacques Clamorgan settled near the land of the Peorias on the left bank of the Mississippi River near Spanish-ruled St. Louis. Clamorgan remained in St. Louis and received large land grants from the Spanish government. Du Sable, however, apparently much in sympathy with the French, moved among the Pottawatomies of Chicago. In 1771 he married a Pottawatomie woman named Catherine in an Indian ceremony. The couple had a son, Jean, and a daughter, Suzanne, and were later married again in a Catholic ceremony officiated by a priest at Cahokia, Illinois, in 1778.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Luffig, John C. Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri, 1812-1813.  
Edited by Stella M. Drum. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1920

Meehan, Thomas A. "Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, the First Chicagoan." Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, 56 (1963), 439-453.

(PARTIAL LISTING)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1,6 | | 4,48 | 2,8,0 | | 4,6 | 3,7 | 5,0,0 |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Du Sable Homesite is bounded on the west by Michigan Avenue, to the south lies the Chicago River, on the east and north sides are various buildings. This area comprises approximately one acre.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Lynne Gomez Graves, Historical Projects Director

October 30, 1975

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation

462-2519

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1420 N Street, Northwest

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington

D.C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE      ITEM NUMBER #8      PAGE TWO

Land records show that Du Sable settled in Peoria and Old Peoria, Illinois, as early as 1773 where he cultivated land and built a house between the old fort, above the present Mary Street, and the new settlement, below the present Liberty Street. In 1778 he proved to the land commissioners that he had cultivated a thirty-acre plot in the New Village while also farming in the Old Village. The Du Sable family made their home and maintained the two farms in Peoria for about a decade, off and on, while he also ran trading posts elsewhere in the region.

Some time prior to 1779, Du Sable set up a trading post at the important portage between the Chicago and Des Plaines rivers, which linked the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. As early as September 1673, however, there had been Frenchmen in the area. These Frenchmen, returning to Mackinac after exploring the Mississippi as a possible route to the Pacific, had ascended the Illinois and Des Plaines rivers, portaged across a short swampy tract in the southwest section of the present city of Chicago, and paddled down the South Branch and the Chicago River into Lake Michigan. They had failed in their original quest, but they had discovered something quite as important - the Chicago portage, a principal key to the continent.

No Indian settlement appears to have been made in this region until the arrival of the Miami, about 1696. The stream was known to them as the Checagou, signifying something big, strong, or powerful. But as the river was ever a small and sluggish stream, the "strong" probably referred to the pungent wild garlic that grew in profusion along its banks.

Ambitious French schemes to colonize the Illinois Valley failed as hostile Indians closed the Chicago portage for long periods of time. When possession of the entire region passed to the British in 1763, there remained in Chicago no permanent marks of the ninety years of French rule.

Chicago had been British soil fourteen years before there is any record of a person "curious" enough to penetrate the country north of the Illinois and make a home on the shore of Lake Michigan. It was Du Sable who settled there and made the marshy, unpromising spot in the wilderness a frontier commercial center. The home he built at this new trading post was no mere log cabin, although it was made of logs. It measured twenty-two feet by forty feet and was filled with paintings and fine furniture. During his early years on the site he added two barns, a horse mill, a bakehouse, a workshop, a diary, a poultry house, and a smokehouse. He built a thriving establishment around which white traders and Indians settled. Besides trading in furs, Du Sable was a miller, a cooper, a husbandman, and whatever else that was needed around the settlement.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER #8 PAGE THREE

The energetic Du Sable continued to operate his two farms in Peoria and established and managed other trading posts at Michigan City and near Port Huron, Michigan, after settling at Chicago. However it was to the Chicago post that he moved his family and after 1784 he concentrated his efforts there. In 1790 his daughter married a man named Pelletier. Their child, Eulalie, was born at Chicago in 1796, the first non-Indian birth on record there. While living in Chicago Du Sable was closely aligned with the Indians of the region and once tried unsuccessfully to run for election as chief of the neighboring tribes.

The first historical reference to Du Sable's settlement in Chicago appeared in the journal of the British commandant at Michilimackinac (Mackinaw), Colonel Arent Schuyler de Peyster. On July 4, 1779, Colonel de Peyster recorded, "Baptiste Point De Saible, a handsome negro, well educated and settled at Eschikagou; but much in the French interest." De Peyster's suspicion of Du Sable's "French interest" led to his arrest for "treasonable intercourse with the enemy." Du Sable, however, apparently had little interest in the issues of the war between the British and the French and so convinced the British that he was no threat to them. Still, capitalizing on Du Sable's position of respect and honor throughout the area, de Peyster threatened a council of "Great Chiefs" in a "Speech to the Western Indians." In it he warned they must become allies of the British

Or, he will send them "tout au diable,"  
As he did Baptist "Poin de Saible."

In September 1779 Du Sable was released, the official record stating: ". . .the Negro Baptiste point au Sable brought prisoner from the River Du Chemin . . .has in every respect behaved with a manner becoming a man in his situation, has many friends, who give him a good character." Later, at the request of some Indians in the British settlement on the St. Clair River south of Port Huron, Du Sable was named overseer of the area, replacing the French overseer.

A later reference to Du Sable's settlement in Chicago is found in the "Recollections" of Augustin Grignon, a grandchild of Sieur Charles De Landlade, the first permanent white settler of Wisconsin.

At a very early period there was a negro lived there (Chicago) named Baptiste Point De Saible. My brother, Perish Grignon, visited Chicago about 1794, and told me that Point De Saible was a large man; that he had a commission for some office, but for what particular office or from what Government, I cannot now recollect. He was a trader, pretty wealthy, and drank freely. I know not what became of him.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE FOUR

---

(The "commission" referred to by Mr. Grignon may have been Du Sable's appointment as overseer of a British Indian Settlement on the St. Clair River which he received in 1780.)

In 1800, he sold his post to Jean Lalime for twelve hundred dollars. By then, it consisted of then buildings, more than one hundred livestock, and elaborate furnishings as described on the deed inventory recorded in Detroit.

It is believed that Du Sable rejoined his friend Jacques Clamorgan for a period after leaving Chicago. In 1805, however, he purchased some land in St. Charles County, Missouri, from a black man named Rondin. The records show, from this time on until June 1813, several transfers of property in the city and county of St. Charles were made jointly by Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable and "Baptiste Pointsable," as the names were usually written to distinguish father and son.

In June 1813, Du Sable conveyed a lot and house in the city of St. Charles, together with all of his other property of various kinds to Eulalia Barada, wife of Michael Derais. He was probably ill at the time, as the consideration mentioned was her promise to care for him in his illness and to bury him in the Catholic Cemetery at St. Charles.

Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable died August 28, 1818. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Charles Borromeo Church, St. Charles, Missouri.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET BIBLIOGRAPHY      ITEM NUMBER 9      PAGE TWO

---

Point Sable, J. Bte. Inventory Sale of Property Sold by Point Sable to Jean Lalime. May 7, 1800.

Quaife, Milo M. Checagou: From Indian Wigwam to Modern City, 1673-1835. Chicago:  
University of Chicago Press, 1933.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET RESEARCHERS

ITEM NUMBER #11

PAGE TWO

---

Mr. Thomas G. Yanul  
Field Surveyor  
Illinois Historic Structures Survey  
1736 West 104th Place  
Chicago, Illinois