

1772

JEAN-BAPTISTE POINTE DUSABLE MOVES IN



Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable. Depiction from *History of Chicago* (1884) by Alfred Theodore Andreas. Available from Wikimedia Commons file: Jean_Baptiste_Point_du_Sable_Andreas_1884.jpg, accessed August 20, 2013.

Background

In the year 2010, the population of greater Chicago was more than nine million. In 1790, the permanent population of this area was four—Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable, his wife Catherine, and their two children. Missionaries and explorers had passed through, and Native Americans lived nearby, but this man, probably from Haiti, and his family were the only permanent residents. They lived near the mouth of the Chicago River.

Very little is known about DuSable and his wife, but records indicate that he was a trader and a farmer. He had a large house along with many smaller houses, a barn, and animals.

Check out the display devoted to Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable at the *Chicago: Crossroads of America* exhibit at the Chicago History Museum.

Search online at the Encyclopedia of Chicago on the Chicago History Museum's website to discover more photos, articles, and facts about this early pioneer.

Visit the website of the DuSable Museum of African American History.

Now write a concise summary on the life and accomplishments of Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable.

Remember

DuSable must have been a hardworking fellow: he lived off the land, started his own business, and labored long hours—all at the mercy of nature.

Who is one of the hardest working, most productive people that you know? Explain why you consider this person to be so hardworking. Here are some questions to get you started:

- 1 How do you know this person?
- 2 In what areas of his or her life is this person hardworking?
- 3 What is a good example of this person's impressive efforts?
- 4 What is another example?
- 5 How has this person's life been affected by these efforts?
- 6 How does this person relate to others?
- 7 What would be a perfect job for this person?
- 8 What would be a terrible job?
- 9 What might change this person's attitude toward work?
- 10 Who might this person's role model be?

Combine your answers into a profile of this remarkable individual.

Go Online

Go to chicago.writethroughamerica.com/dusable to access useful links and student writing samples for the Discover and Decide prompts.

Discover

A What was the life of a fur trader like? Learn more about the subject; then write a report entitled “A Day in the Life of a Fur Trader.”

B Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable’s wife Catherine was a member of the Potawatomi nation, Native Americans who inhabited much of the Great Lakes region. By 1840, however, the Potawtomi were gone from Illinois. Read about the culture of these people. Then create a timeline poster about their history to use as a visual aid for a speech.

C Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable, a black man, was Chicago’s first permanent resident. One hundred and thirty years later, the Great Migration of more than a million African Americans from the rural South began. Many made their way to Chicago and settled in communities such as Bronzeville. Learn more about the rich history of Bronzeville. Then write a free verse poem or collection of haiku capturing the feel of this community.

D The commemorative marker devoted to Jean-Baptiste and Catherine DuSable at the corner of Kinzie and Pine Streets is just one of many such memorials dedicated to famous Chicagoans. Scattered throughout the city, these memorials form a rich and varied source of local history. Take a camera to a number of these sites and create a PowerPoint presentation on these tributes.

Decide

A In your opinion, what made DuSable’s life especially difficult? Write an essay presenting the five biggest obstacles he faced.

B Write an essay arguing that the city founded by Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable turned out to be a wonderful place to live.

Imagine

You decide to travel back in time to have a conversation with Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable. But before you actually meet him, you write him a letter telling him what downtown Chicago looks like today—more than 200 years later.

What are you going to tell him about...

- 1 First impressions. 2 Buildings. 3 Various groups of people.
- 4 Clothing. 5 Noises and smells. 6 Work and occupations.
- 7 Food. 8 Parks. 9 Entertainment. 10 Anything else he would find bewildering.

Shape these answers and any other pertinent information into a friendly letter to Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable. Remember that he has no idea what Chicago looks like today. When he looks out of the window of his house, he sees water and prairies and forest, and that is it.

AUGUST 15, 1812

GARRISON AMBUSHED! FORT DEARBORN BURNED!



Detail from Fort Dearborn Massacre Monument. Carl Rohl-Smith (1912). Available from Wikimedia Commons file: Carl_Rohl-Smith_Fort_Dearborn_Massacre 1893.jpg, accessed August 20, 2013.

Background

By 1803 the area we call Chicago had added a few more families. The land, though not yet part of a state, was officially under the control of the United States government. That year the government decided to build a fort on the Chicago River. It was completed the next year, and a small settlement formed around it. A young man named John Kinzie was the head of the settlement.

In 1812 a war between the United States and Great Britain and its local Indian allies had broken out. The U.S. government thought it would be better for the small group of people living at Fort Dearborn to abandon the area. The group, made up of soldiers, women, and children, numbered 148.

They left on August 15, 1812, but they were attacked by 500 Potawatomi Indians, and 86 members of the group were killed. The commander of the fort and his wife were captured and ransomed. The next day the Indians burned the fort to the ground. It was rebuilt in 1816.

Check out the display devoted to Fort Dearborn at the *Chicago: Crossroads of America* exhibit at the Chicago History Museum.

Search online at the Encyclopedia of Chicago on the Chicago History Museum's website to discover more illustrations, articles, and facts about the conflict at Fort Dearborn.

Now that you have familiarized yourself with the subject, write a concise summary of the event.

Remember

For reasons that are not totally clear, the Indians resorted to violence, and the results were tragic. Violence, unfortunately, has been a big part of Chicago's history. What opinions have you formed about violence from...

- 1 The news?
- 2 Television and movies?
- 3 Books?
- 4 Video games?
- 5 Competitive sports?
- 6 Sports fans?
- 7 Ancient history?
- 8 Recent history?
- 9 Behavior of young children?
- 10 Behavior of students at your school?

Consider at least three of these sources, and then write a short, personal essay explaining your attitude. Write in the present tense. Do you consider violence inevitable? Desirable? Correctable? Would you ever resort to violence?

Go Online

Go to chicago.writethroughamerica.com/dearborn to access useful links and student writing samples for the Discover and Decide prompts.

Discover

A The flag of Chicago has four stars, each representing a significant event in Chicago history: Fort Dearborn, the Chicago Fire, the World's Columbian Exposition, and the Century of Progress Exposition. Examine a timeline of Chicago history; then select four alternative events to replace the original four.

B The events that transpired at Fort Dearborn took place in the larger context of the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain. Learn more about Great Britain's most powerful Shawnee ally, Tecumseh. Create a poster or PowerPoint presentation on Tecumseh and his connection to the fighting on the American frontier.

C Although by 1840 the Potawatomi had abandoned the Chicago area, descendants of more than 50 Native American cultures currently call Chicago home. Learn more about the Native American people living in Chicago by visiting the website of the American Indian Center of Chicago, and design a brochure for the center.

D On February 22, 2007, officials at the University of Illinois decided to discontinue using Chief Illiniwek as the official mascot of the university. Learn more about the reasons behind the university's decision. Interview classmates, family members, and friends to determine their perspectives on the Chief Illiniwek controversy. Write an article on what you have discovered, and submit it to your school or local newspaper.

Decide

A Examine the photo of Carl Rohl-Smith's memorial to the Fort Dearborn Massacre/Battle, *Black Partridge Saving Mrs. Helm*, at the top of this section. Although this statue was once a famous Chicago landmark, it now sits in storage in a warehouse. Research information on the incident it depicts and the controversy that surrounds the statue.

Given what you have discovered in your research, what would you consider to be an appropriate acknowledgement of the events of August 15, 1812? Design and justify a fitting memorial to the events at Fort Dearborn.

B In 1899 Simon Pokagon, a 19th-century Potawatomi writer whose father was present at the Battle of Fort Dearborn, declared, "When whites are killed, it is a massacre; when Indians are killed, it is a fight." Are the controversial events of August 15, 1812, best left forgotten, or is there something worthwhile to be learned from revisiting them? Further research the "battle" vs. "massacre" controversy, and write an essay arguing for or against the significance of this debate.

Imagine

You survive the Indian attack near Fort Dearborn and somehow make it to safety. Tell your story, making sure to include...

- 1 Who you are and why you were at Fort Dearborn.
- 2 Some friendly Indians.
- 3 Some not-so-friendly Indians.
- 4 Midwestern summer heat.
- 5 Hunger.
- 6 Flat terrain.
- 7 Lake Michigan.
- 8 Memories of the massacre.
- 9 Some incidents of good luck.
- 10 An encounter with a friendly trapper.

Write this in the present tense as a diary entry. Describe your feelings. Use your imagination to invent credible details.