

The Du Sable Grave Project in St. Charles, Missouri

by Timothy E. Baumann

*In all of us, there is a hunger, marrow deep, to know our heritage,
who we are, and where we come from—Alex Haley*

At some level, we are all searching for our own identity and our connections to the past. For those of European descent, tracing your ancestry can be determined with relative ease through census records and other primary documents found on the Internet or at your local historical society. In contrast, people of African descent in search of their personal or community identity have struggled against the legacy of slavery to find names and places linked to their ancestors. As enslaved Africans, most were stripped of their names, the trading block disbursed their families, and few written records were created documenting their lives. Since slavery, many African Americans, like Alex Haley (1976) in his publication *Roots*, have been on a quest to find and celebrate their heritage.

The Du Sable Grave project is another chapter in this search for African-American identity. Initiated by the African Scientific Research Institute (ASRI) at the University of Illinois–Chicago, the Du Sable Grave project was conducted to uncover the physical remains of Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, a person of African descent and the founder of Chicago, in the St. Charles Bor-

romeo Catholic Cemetery of St. Charles, Mo. This research project was not driven by a direct descendent of Du Sable, but by the larger African-American community in search of their collective heritage.

ASRI is a non-profit organization with a mission to trace the historical footsteps of Africans born in the Americas, addressing two fundamental questions for these people: "Who are my ancestors?" and "From where did they come?" With this underlying mission, the Du Sable Grave Project had three components. First, a historical study was conducted of written records to clarify Du Sable's historical significance and to determine the location of his gravesite. Second, an archaeological excavation was conducted to find Du Sable's physical remains to determine his quality of life and physical appearance. Last, a documentary was produced on this project to facilitate K-12 educational programming in the Illinois school system. Ultimately, the project goal was to address not just the life and legacy of Du Sable, but to use his story to open the door to other early settlers of African descent in the Midwest and the roles they played in developing our communities today.

Who Was Du Sable?

The history of Jean Baptiste Point du Sable is still unclear, but most scholars agree that he was the first permanent non-indigenous settler in the vicinity of modern-day Chicago, Ill. (Cortesi 1972; Furer 1974; Meehan 1963; Shaw and Duke 1933; Swenson 1997; Wright 1994). The mystery and controversy about Du Sable concerns his origins prior to his settlement in the Illinois Country, which was centered in the contemporary states of Illinois and Missouri. Most publications state that Du Sable was Haitian born in 1745 from African and French parentage, and that he came to the Illinois Country through New Orleans and up the Mississippi River (Cortesi 1972; Katz 1996; Magafas 1979; Miller 1995; Pelz 1990; Shaw and Duke 1933; Thompson-Peters 1986). Du Sable's father was a French seaman and his mother was a Haitian of African ancestry. Du Sable's mother died when he was young in Haiti, after which his father took him to France to be "Paris-educated" and he became "an admirer of European art" (Katz 1996:12). He arrived in New Orleans along with his

lifelong friend Jacques Clemorgan after a shipwreck in the Gulf of Mexico. Because of his African heritage, Du Sable sought refuge with the local Jesuit priests to protect himself from enslavement since he had lost his identity papers in the wreck. These same Jesuit priests then assisted Du Sable and his friend up the Mississippi River into the Illinois Country, where he began his life in the fur trade.

Some scholars argue that the above account is completely fabricated, arguing instead that he was not from Haiti at all, but from Quebec, Canada, like most of the other early French settlers into the Illinois Country (Quaife 1933; Swenson 1997). For example, Milo Quaife (1933) suggested that Du Sable instead was born in France within a prominent French family from the union of a French father and African mother. Others like John Swenson (1997:1-2), a retired lawyer and historian in Chicago who is currently completing a book on the life of Du Sable, have argued that Du Sable was the son of a French soldier of African descent, and was born in or near Montreal, Canada, in 1756 or 1757. After Du Sable's service in the military, his father was employed in the fur trade between Quebec and the Illinois Country. Du Sable followed in his father's footsteps and became a well-respected and successful fur trader and farmer in this same region. Unlike traditional accounts, Swenson suggests that Du Sable was illiterate and not educated in France at all.

By whatever means Du Sable arrived in the Illinois Country, he quickly befriended the indigenous population and settled with the Potawatomi near contemporary Peoria, Ill. He then married a Potawatomi named Kittihawa (Catherine) with whom he had two children (Suzanne and Jean). Du Sable worked in the fur trade and as a farmer near Peoria and Cahokia, Ill., as well as at Fort Michilmackinac until after the American Revolution. By the late 1780s, Du Sable had established a prosperous farm and trading post along the Chicago River, at the present site of Chicago, Ill. It is because of this permanent trading post that Du Sable has been identified today as the "Father of Chicago."

On May 17, 1800, Du Sable sold his land and trading post along the Chicago River to Jean LeLime for 6,000 livres. Three years later LeLime sold this property to John Kinzie. The original bill of sale according to Cortesi (1972:4) consisted of:

A mansion house that included four glass doors, eleven copper kettles, and a French cabinet of walnut. A long low building [trading post] with a piazza along the front of it, 24' by 40', ranging in depth to four or five rooms...two barns 24' by 30' and 28' by 40'...A bakehouse 18' by 20'...Several outhouses, a poultry house, a smoke house, blacksmith shop, and cut lumber for a third stable...Eight axes, seven saws, seven scythes, eight sickles, three carts, one plow, a ring saw, a cross cut saw with 7" blade... Livestock of two mules, two calves, two oxen, thirty head of cattle, thirty hogs, and forty-four hens.

After selling his property, Du Sable moved to St. Charles, Mo. Why he left Chicago remains unknown, though a number of scenarios have been posited.

Du Sable in St. Charles, Missouri

Despite having a successful trading post and over 800 acres of land in the 1790s, Du Sable left the Chicago River and moved to St. Charles around 1800. It was here that he spent the last 18 years of his life until his death on August 28, 1818. As stated, the reason Du Sable sold his property and moved to Missouri is unclear. The range of possibilities could have been due to political, kinship and/or ethnic relationships, the expanding fur trade, or a combination of all these.

During the Revolutionary War, it has been debated whether Du Sable remained loyal to the British government or if he was a colonial spy. Du Sable worked for and traded frequently with the British. If he was a loyal British subject, then after the colonial victory Du Sable's trading post would have been within the American-controlled Northwest Territory. As a result, Du Sable may have voted with his feet against the new American government and moved west of the Mississippi River to the Spanish-controlled, but French-populated, Louisiana Territory.

On the other hand, written records indicate that in 1779 Du Sable was arrested by the British "on the suspicion of treasonable intercourse with the enemy" (Magafas 1979). For this offense he was imprisoned for a short period of time but was released after a number of respected fur traders and British soldiers vouched for his character. After which he worked at Fort Michilmackinac for its commanding officer, Lt. Governor Capt. Patrick Sinclair. Prior to his

arrest in 1778, Du Sable was described by Colonel Arent Schuyler de Peyster, the previous commander of Fort Michilmackinac as "a handsome Negro, well educated and settled in trade at Eschikagou [Chicago]. However, he is much in the French interest" (Cortesi 1972:3). The latter sentence may imply his true allegiance to France or his French comrades in the fur trade. Swenson (1997:5) argued instead that the "French interest" phrase might have been in reference to his father, "a trader and former French soldier."

A second reason for his movement may relate to his ethnic and personal ties to the St. Louis region. St. Louis and St. Charles were both founded as French settlements, and Du Sable may have migrated to this region to be with people of his own cultural heritage as well as family members and former business partners. In particular, he had business and personal ties to this area dating back to 1775. For example, Du Sable, according to Swenson (1997:6), worked with Pierre Durand between 1775 and 1779 in the Illinois River valley, including time at Cahokia and Peoria, Ill. In 1788, Du Sable and his wife also went to Cahokia to be officially married at the Holy Family Church. On October 7, 1790, Du Sable's first grandchild, Eulalie, from the union of his daughter, Suzanne, and a Frenchman by the name of Jean Baptiste Pelletier was baptized in St. Louis's Old Cathedral. Du Sable's only son, Jean Baptiste, was also recorded as living in the area of St. Charles starting in the early 1800s, and is listed in 1812 and 1813 as an employee of the Missouri Fur Company of St. Louis (Swenson 1997:8). Thus, Du Sable may have simply moved to St. Charles to be with his family in his older age. This movement may have also been initiated by the death of his wife Kittihawa, which occurred sometime before he moved in 1800. With his wife deceased and his daughter and son grown and gone, he may have simply sold the trading post and farm in present-day Chicago to be with his family and friends in the St. Louis area. Finally, Du Sable may have been enticed by the booming fur trade industry and the expanding frontier from St. Louis. If this was the case, Du Sable may have moved to St. Charles not only to be with his family, but also to possibly invest in new trading businesses in this thriving economic hub.

Whatever the reason(s) for his move, after Du Sable arrived in St. Charles, he purchased a lot on City Block No. 72 on Second and Clay streets and all of

City Block No. 96 in 1805. In 1814, Du Sable's son died in St. Charles with very few personal belongings and no heirs, and was buried in the St. Charles Borromeo Cemetery. Nothing is known of his daughter Suzanne and his granddaughter Eulalie at this time, but her husband, Jean Baptiste Pelletier, was still living in 1815 (Swenson 1997:8). In 1813, Du Sable must have had no immediate family living permanently in St. Charles because he conveyed all of his property to Eulalie Barada, a neighbor and wife of Michael De Roi, in consideration for her promise to care for him during his illness and to arrange for his burial in the catholic cemetery in St. Charles (Buse 1998:16; Swenson 1997:9). Swenson (1997:9) observed that Eulalie Barada is often confused for Du Sable's granddaughter, but according to written records she was the daughter of "Louis Barada (Barata) of St. Charles, a butcher, baker, and large landowner, and Marie Bequet, a native of Cahokia."

On August 28, 1818, Du Sable died nearly destitute. He was buried on the 29th in the St. Charles Borromeo parish cemetery located on City Block No. 28 at Main and Jackson streets adjacent to the original parish church (est. 1791). Du Sable's burial was recorded in the original parish documents as simply a "negre, not mulatre (mulatto)" (Swenson 1997:9). "Unlike the usual burial register of this period, there is no mention of his origin, parents, relatives, or people present at the ceremony" (Swenson 1997:9).

Archaeological Investigation

According to the oral history and current records and of the Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Du Sable was moved twice from his original gravesite on Main Street in St. Charles (Figure 1). He was first moved after 1828 to the second parish graveyard on City Block No. 122 at Fifth and Decatur streets and then moved again after 1854 to the current and third parish cemetery of the St. Charles Borromeo Church in Grave No. 5 in Lot No. 212 of Block No. 1. Grave numbers four (4) and six (6) in this same grave lot and on either side of Du Sable's marked grave were unused with all three graves encompassing 80 ft² or a 10-x-8-ft area.

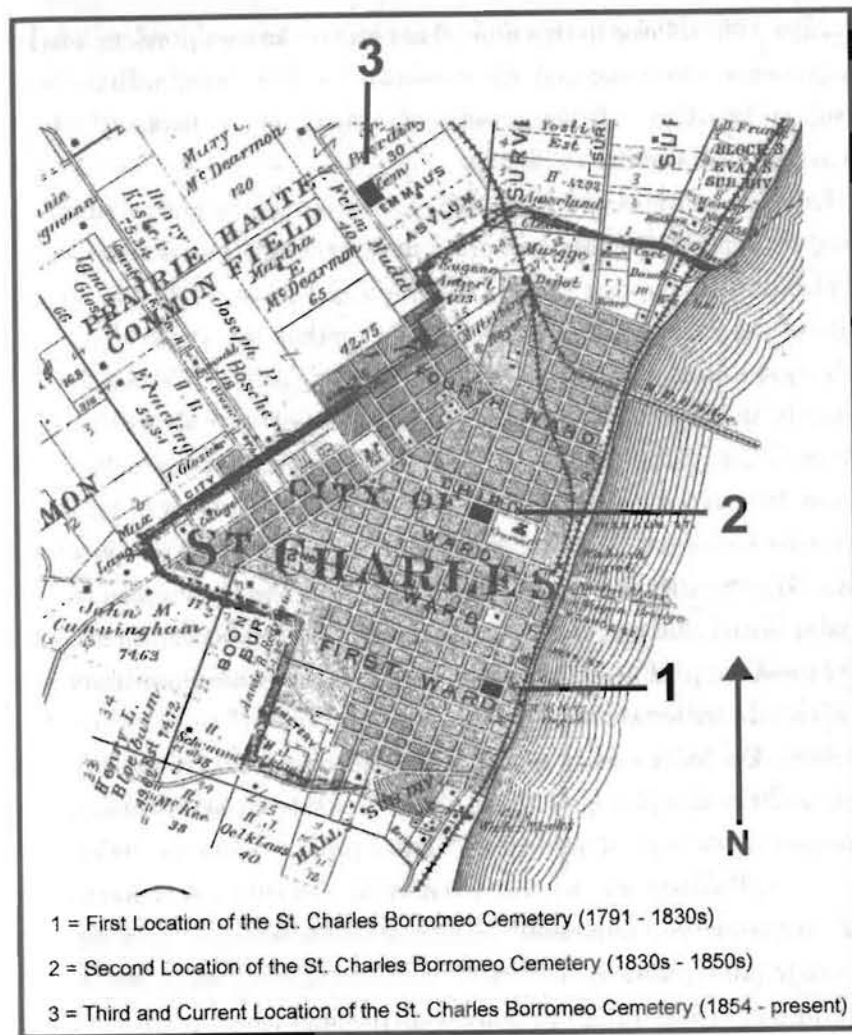


Figure 1. Historical locations of the St. Charles Borromeo Cemetery in St. Charles, Mo. (source: map adapted from Northwest Publishing Company 1905).

On October 12, 1968, Du Sable's grave was marked with a large granite ledger by the Illinois Sesquicentennial Commission in a memorial ceremony attended by over 100 people including students from Du Sable High School in Chicago and Dr. Fritz Etienne, a descendant of Du Sable (St. Louis Post-

Dispatch 1968). Prior to this time, there was no known previous marker at this gravesite. This memorial celebration also corresponded with the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago's official recognition on October 25, 1968 of Du Sable as the founder of Chicago.

Excavations were conducted in May 2002 at the third graveyard at the site of the 1968 memorial ledger in order to determine if this was the final resting place of Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable and if so, to conduct a biocultural study of Du Sable's physical remains. To conduct this project, permission, both legal and ethical, was requested from the Catholic Cemeteries of the St. Louis Archdiocese, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' State Historic Preservation Office (MDNR SHPO), and the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Monsignor Robert McCarthy, Archdiocesan Director of the St. Louis Catholic Cemeteries, was the primary contact within the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Traditionally, the Church has supported scientific research of skeletal remains in St. Louis and was fully supportive of this project (Harl et al. 1996). They provided paid personnel and the use of their ground-penetrating radar equipment, a trailer, and a backhoe.

Since Du Sable's grave was in a marked cemetery, it was protected by Missouri State Law (Chapter 214, RSMo). The MDNR SHPO was contacted to consult on the state requirements for this project as well the federal law of NAGPRA. The latter was determined necessary as Du Sable was married to a Potawatomi wife and thus could be considered a member of this tribe. John A. Barrett, Jr. (2002), Chairman of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, was contacted regarding this project and he replied with the following:

On behalf of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, your request to exhume the remains of John Baptiste Pointe Du Sable for the purpose of scientific and historical research is approved. I hope that your project will provide the evidence and analysis needed to unravel the enigma surrounding the life of Du Sable. The reconstruction of Du Sable's life and his place in history will no doubt be an important contribution to the African American community and that of the Potawatomi community as well. Du Sable's place in history is important to us all and it is with great satisfaction that we are able to participate in this process of scientific and historical discovery that will put Du Sable's life in the proper historical context it deserves.

Funding for this project was obtained with a grant from the State of Illinois. The project budget included the archaeological excavation, skeletal analysis and facial reconstruction, a video documentary, and new curriculum for the Illinois school system. The latter two were coordinated by KRT Productions, Inc. and Virtual Learning Systems, Inc., both of Schaumburg, Ill. These are affiliated firms that often work together to create documentaries and companion educational programming.

The field project was led by Timothy Baumann, an archaeologist at UMSL. Baumann provided both a professional viewpoint and a personal perspective. Professionally, Baumann has spent much of his career focusing on African-American archaeology in Missouri (Baumann 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001). This project would continue this research. On a personal level, Baumann is a fifth generation resident of St. Charles, Mo., and was raised in the St. Charles Borromeo Parish with family members buried in the same cemetery as Du Sable.

The field methodology incorporated ground-penetrating radar (GPR) and hand-excavated units. Steve Cardimona, from the Department of Geophysics at the University of Missouri-Rolla, was also hired to conduct the GPR testing, which has been proven to be a reliable method for identifying historical graves and other subsurface features (Conyers and Goodman 1997; Conyers et al. 2002; Garrison 1996; Ubelaker 1995; Waters 2000). If and when skeletal remains were uncovered, the elements and associated grave offerings were photographed, mapped, and a preliminary field analysis was conducted by Nicholas Herrmann, a bioarchaeologist at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. The skeletal elements would then be packaged in Tupperware with polyethylene padding for shipment to ARSI for additional analysis under the direction of Jihad Muhammad, a facial reconstruction expert. This research was designed to record metric and non-metric data, to document any pathologies, to collect DNA samples, and to attempt facial reconstruction utilizing both clay and computer digitization techniques.

Before excavations began, priests and parishioners of the current St. Charles Borromeo church led a blessing ceremony over the gravesite celebrating the life of Du Sable and supporting the archaeological project at hand. With the assistance of the Catholic Cemeteries of the St. Louis Archdiocese,

a backhoe was then used to remove the 4,000-pound granite ledger covering Du Sable's grave, but a concrete footer of equal size was left in place for an initial GPR survey utilizing a GSSI SIR-2000 radar system with a 400MHz antenna. This initial GPR survey was conducted at one-foot intervals on and around Du Sable's gravesite including adjacent graves within a 40-x-50-ft area. This survey extended beyond the Du Sable gravesite in order to calibrate the instrumentation to the depth and character of known graves.

The results of this initial survey over the Du Sable grave identified the visible concrete footer, but also recorded a shallow anomaly at the head of the gravesite, which was later determined to be a cinder layer at approximately 0.5 ft below the surface. This cinder layer made the area around the grave appear (to the radar) as a disrupted zone, suggestive of the expected burial site.

A backhoe was then used to lift the concrete footer from the Du Sable grave resulting in a depression that measured approximately 6.5 x 3.5 x 1.5 ft. A 9-x-9-ft block excavation was then conducted over the Du Sable burial site covering Grave No. Five (5) in Lot No. 212 of Block No. One (1), as well as adjacent grave numbers four (4) and six (6), which are marked as empty lots by the St. Louis Archdiocese (Figure 2). Excavations were conducted at one-foot arbitrary levels, unless natural or cultural soil changes were identified. The majority of the soil was removed via shovel skimming and trowel sorting for artifacts, but a ¼-inch screen was utilized in some instances to collect apparent artifact concentrations or to examine the contents of feature fill. Excavations continued until the 9-x-9-ft excavation block reached the base of the cement footer depression (approximately 1.5 ft below the surface).

After the block excavations reached the base of the footer depression, no cultural features were visible that would indicate a burial shaft. A second GPR scan was then conducted only within the 9-x-9-ft block excavation reaching approximately 6 ft below the surface which revealed sharp anomalies in association with the Du Sable burial site. These anomalies were determined to be approximately a foot farther down in subunit 1b.

Excavations to this depth determined that these anomalies were large tree roots or "false positives" and not a human burial. Most of the roots closer to the surface did not show such sharp radar anomalies, however these more

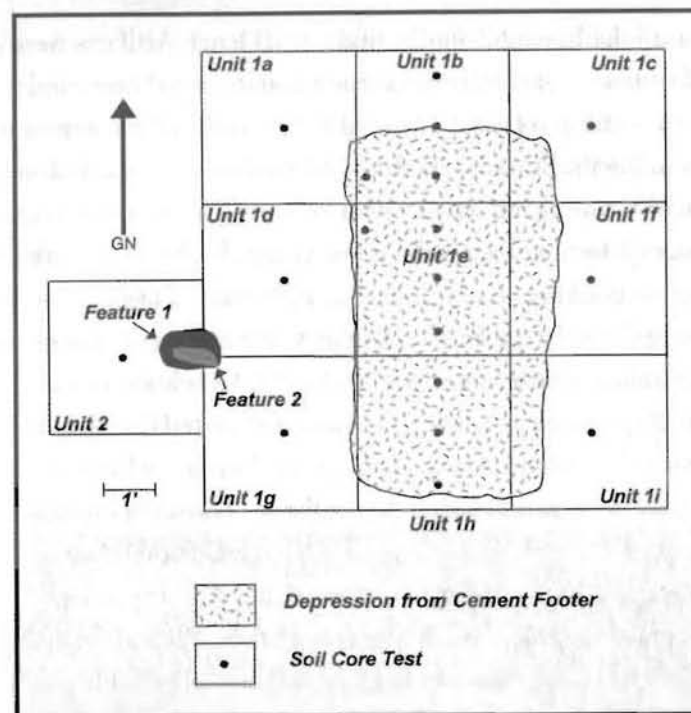


Figure 2. Planview (1.5 ft below the surface) of the Du Sable gravesite at the St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Cemetery in St. Charles, Mo.

shallow roots were in the silty soil near the surface, whereas the deeper roots were surrounded by a very clayey soil. A third GPR scan was then conducted below this root disturbance resulting in no additional anomalies indicative of cultural deposits.

Despite not finding Du Sable's physical remains, evidence for Du Sable's burial location may have been identified in the west profile wall of Unit 1, as a rough-cut piece of limestone. This limestone slab was visible beginning in Zone 1 (0.5 ft below surface [b.s.]) and extending to the base of Zone 3 (1.5 ft b.s.). This stone was recorded as Feature 1 and may have been a simple gravestone marker for Du Sable's burial site prior to the 1968 memorial granite ledger. To determine this, a second unit, measuring 3 x 3 ft was excavated into the south profile to expose this feature. Excavations were conducted via trowel and shovel

scraping until the base of Zone 2 (cinder/coal lens). Artifacts were collected from the first two zones by trowel sorting and included only cinder/coal and 20th-century bottle glass. At the base of Zone 2, a small pit feature was identified surrounding the limestone slab and labeled as Feature 2. Feature 2 fill was removed with a trowel and sifted with a ¼-inch wire-mesh screen resulting in the exposure of the limestone slab for inspection. Unfortunately, the limestone had no visible markings recording a name or date of any individual and no artifacts were found in the Feature 2 matrix. In speaking to the grounds crew for the Catholic Cemeteries of the St. Louis Archdiocese, who have been working at this cemetery for over 15 years, they stated that they were trained to bury broken headstones found on the ground surface where they are located rather than collecting and storing them off-site. Thus, the limestone slab and associated pit feature may have been a broken headstone that was buried by the grounds crew. In the end, it is unclear if this slab was designated to mark Du Sable's grave or another burial site as both the GPR and the archaeological data suggest that no one has ever been buried at the Du Sable gravesite in the St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Cemetery.

African-American Burial Practices

Despite not finding any human remains or a burial shaft, a number of artifacts were recovered during the excavation. These artifacts included: cinder/coal (n = 1762), curved glass (n = 17), faunal remains (n = 15), a limestone marble (n = 1), metal fragments (n = 2), mortar fragments (n = 2), plastic (n = 2), and prehistoric flakes (n = 2). At approximately 0.5 ft b.s. a thin layer of cinder and coal was encountered, with only a sample taken for collection. This lens seemed to concentrate just around the memorial marker and may have been laid down in 1968 during the memorial ceremony to protect attendees from stepping into mud. The curved glass included fragments of 20th-century beer bottles found within the top few inches of excavation. These were likely the result of teenage and young adult drinking activities within the cemetery. The two prehistoric flakes were found approximately 1–1.5 ft b.s. suggesting that the stratigraphy was undisturbed. Of the faunal remains, four were pig bones and

11 were conch-shell fragments (Figure 3). The latter were the most intriguing artifacts found during these excavation because of their possible association with African and African-American burial practices (Jeane 1987; Jordan 1982; Nigh 1997; Thompson 1983, 1990; Vlach 1977, 1990, 1991).

Shells are frequently used to cover or outline the graves of West Africans and African Americans. In the New World, this custom is most prevalent in the Deep South and the Caribbean, but examples of this practice have been seen in the St. Louis area (McKoy 1986). The best local example has been documented in Greenwood Cemetery, the oldest, non-sectarian African-American cemetery in St. Louis where a 1933 grave is covered with nine conch shells.

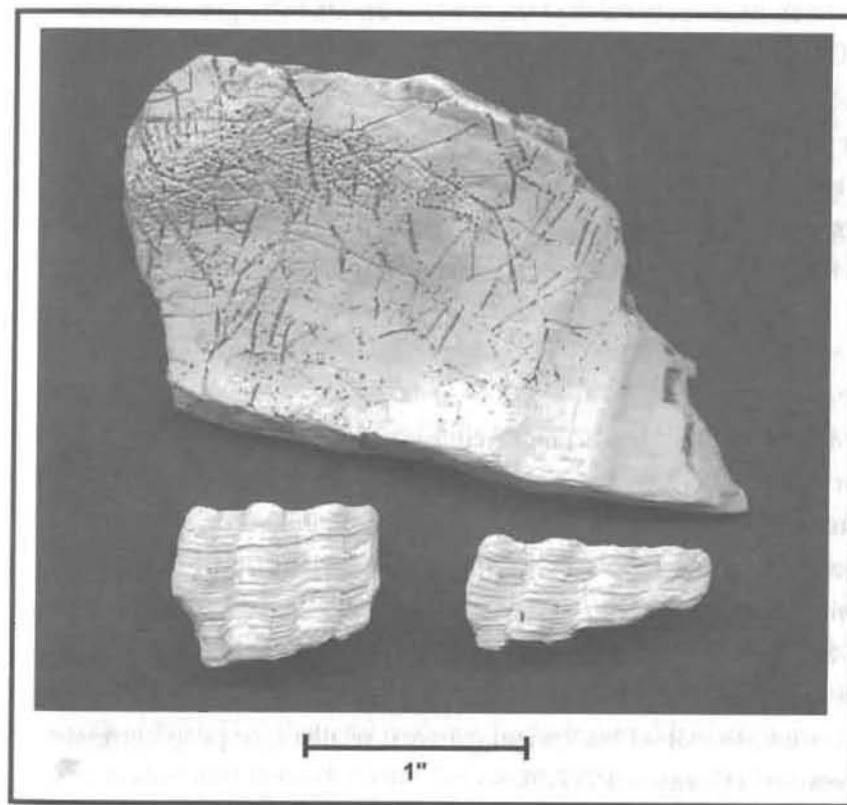


Figure 3. Conch-shell fragments recovered from the Du Sable gravesite.

The likely cultural meaning of these shells may be best explained by Andre Pierre, a priest in the national religion of Haiti, who stated during an interview with Robert F. Thompson (1990:173) that: "shells symbolize the existence of spirit in the sea: the body is dead but the spirit continues on its way. The shell encloses elements of water, earth, and wind. It is a world in miniature. It symbolizes the animation of succeeding generations by the spirit of the ancestors. It indicates the island in the sea to which we all shall journey." Similarly in the Deep South, Thompson (1990:174) highlighted an interview with an African-American woman from St. Simons Island, Ga., who stated: "The shells stand for the sea. The sea brought us, the sea shall take us back. So the shells upon our graves stand for water, the means of glory and the land of demise."

Thus, finding conch-shell fragments at the Du Sable gravesite in the current St. Charles Borromeo cemetery may imply that someone knew of Du Sable's African origins and placed a conch shell at this gravesite to symbolize his heritage and his journey to the afterlife. But when was this conch shell placed at the site? All the shell fragments were found within the first 0.5 ft of excavations suggesting that this shell was likely placed at the gravesite during or after the 1968 memorial ceremony when the granite ledger was installed at the site.

Was Du Sable Really Moved?

Du Sable may have been moved to the third cemetery, but the exact location is not known at this time as excavations at the marked gravesite revealed no human remains or even a burial shaft. In order for Du Sable to be reburied twice, this would have required the help of family and friends to properly identify his grave and to make sure that it was moved. The likelihood that Du Sable had any friends or relatives still living in St. Charles at the time of reburial seems unlikely because even at his original burial, the burial register makes no mention of his "origin, parents, relatives, or people present at the ceremony" (Swenson 1997:9).

Du Sable may have been moved correctly twice and to the third cemetery on Randolph Street in St. Charles, but the written records that would have documented his reburial have either been destroyed, misplaced, or they never

existed. Thus, the chances of finding Du Sable's physical remains in the current cemetery are nearly impossible at this time, unless further written records are found.

Despite the oral tradition that Du Sable was moved properly to the second and then to the current cemetery, there have been a number of instances over the past 150 years that indicate that Du Sable and other members of the St. Charles Borromeo parish and the St. Louis Archdiocese were never properly moved. These instances are best documented in Jo Ann Brown's (1991) history of the St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in St. Charles.

Referring to the practice of grave movement by the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Brown (1991:66) stated:

It is helpful to consider what happened in St. Louis when the first graveyard was closed in 1830 to make way for construction of the Old Cathedral. A St. Louis undertaker who assisted in the removal of the graves later wrote that friends and relatives of those buried at this site claimed the remains of their loved ones, and had them reinterred at a newer cemetery outside the city limits. Those burials left unclaimed, he wrote, were placed in a pit where the cathedral was eventually built. This story was contradicted nearly a century later by a church historian, who claimed that all graves had been moved west to a newer cemetery.

This "newer" cemetery was the second Catholic cemetery of St. Louis that, according to oral tradition by the Catholic Church, was also later moved to the Calvary Cemetery in north St. Louis County. In 1990, a new St. Louis City police station was in construction at the location of the second Catholic cemetery when a backhoe operator noticed a number of coffins and human bones. Construction was halted and archaeologists from UMSL were hired to excavate any additional burials that were in the footprint of the new police station (Harl et al. 1996; Herrmann 1999). In the end, over 80 single interments and a mass grave with over 30 individuals were uncovered at this former cemetery site (23SL733) that oral tradition had suggested had been moved.

Brown's (1991:66) research on the movement of graves from the St. Charles Borromeo cemeteries concluded that:

In St. Charles all graves were clearly not moved off Block 28 [the first cemetery]...the parish's [St. Charles Borromeo's] *rather sketchy records*

make no mention of an exhumation [emphasis added]. Given the lack of documentation, it cannot be assumed without further proof that there was a concerted effort to move all graves, but it is likely that the families and friends of some deceased parishioners moved their loved ones from the old cemetery. This same question arises concerning whether the parish later removed all burials from Block 122 [the second cemetery] to the present cemetery on Randolph Street.

In 1981, evidence that the first cemetery on City Block No. 28 was not completely moved became clear when human remains were disturbed during the construction of a rear addition at 407 Main Street (Brown 1991:65). In 1990, UMSL conducted an archaeological excavation at 401–405 Main Street in the hopes of locating the original parish church erected in 1791 and possibly any burials from the first cemetery, but this was unsuccessful.

In October 1828, Bishop Rosati consecrated a new parish church on City Block No. 64 as well as a new cemetery on City Block No. 122 (Brown 1991:58,64). Du Sable's physical remains and the other interments were supposed to have been moved to this new cemetery. Over the next two decades, this second cemetery filled up quickly because of "two cholera epidemics and probably other outbreaks of fatal illnesses" (Brown 1991:76). In 1853 Father Verhaegen, the pastor at that time, purchased 11 acres for \$350 to be used as a new or third cemetery. Oral tradition of the St. Charles Borromeo Church suggests that the first burial occurred in 1854. Burials from the second cemetery on City Block No. 122 were supposedly moved in the 1860s for the construction of a third parish church on this same block that was completed by 1872 (Brown 1991:92–93).

If an attempt was made to move all of the graves from the second cemetery, it is not clear in the written records. It is clear though from later activities on City Block No. 122, that not all the burials were moved. In 1875, the Jesuit priests at the parish cleared an area for a garden measuring 125 x 100 ft between the priest's rectory and the new church (Brown 1991:96). During gardening activities, a number of unmoved graves were uncovered, which was recorded in *Historia Domus* that same year as follows:

This year also [1875] the coadjutor brothers planted a garden near the house and church. Since twenty years ago this ground was possibly still a burial

place, and the bodies buried there may have only partly been moved to the new cemetery and may have partly returned to dust; however many bones are still found are deposited under the church. (Brown 1991:96)

On May 15, 1899, construction for a new school building addition was underway on City Block No. 122 when several skeletons were again encountered by workmen (Brown 1991:112). These remains from the second cemetery were then moved to the present burial ground.

After a tornado destroyed the 1872 church on July 7th, 1915, a new church was immediately rebuilt with a new cornerstone laid on April 16, 1916 and the church completed on May 27, 1917. During the reconstruction of this church, the *St. Charles Cosmos-Monitor* recorded at this time that:

Workmen excavating for the new Borromeo Church are making some gruesome [sic] finds in the old church yard which was for many years used as cemetery... They are finding skeletons and tomb stones under the ground. The bones are being carefully preserved and will be buried in the cemetery of the church." (Brown 1991:129–30)

Overall, the proper reburial of Du Sable's remains was contingent on two factors. First, did the 19th-century church parishioners see Du Sable as historically significant enough to move him? Second, were there family members to make sure he was reburied properly? Based on his destitute status and his apparent lack of family in St. Charles at the time of his death in 1818, it is hard to believe that he would have been moved properly not just once, but twice, between 1828 and 1869. Du Sable's title as "Founder of Chicago" is a 20th-century accolade that was only formally recognized by the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois in 1968. Prior to this time, John Kinzie, the Euro-American who purchased Du Sable's trading post along the Chicago River, was given this title. Today, it seems clear that Du Sable's remains may have never been moved. He and other members of the St. Charles Borromeo parish are likely still at the first and second cemetery locations.

Conclusion

If Du Sable's remains were still in the first or second cemetery in St. Charles, then future excavations would be like looking for the proverbial "needle in

a haystack." New testing could be started at these earlier cemeteries, but if we find a burial, then how do we prove that it is indeed Du Sable and not a different parishioner who was also forgotten about? DNA from a Du Sable descendant may help to clarify any future remains, but without the discovery of additional burial records to illuminate Du Sable's last resting place and additional funds to pay for this new research, we will probably never locate Du Sable's remains. Despite this daunting task, preliminary GPR surveys were conducted on portions of the first and second cemetery locations to evaluate the potential for intact burials. Surveys at both locations exhibited subsurface anomalies, but nothing was identifiable as burials.

In the end, was the Du Sable Grave Project a success or failure? If this was contingent upon finding Du Sable's physical remains, then this project was not successful. But, if you gauge the success on our ultimate goal, which was to use this project as a stepping stone to raise public awareness and knowledge of Du Sable and others like him in the Illinois Country, then we would argue that it has been a success. The best evidence of this was the documentary produced by KRT Productions, which has aired multiple times in Chicago. This film covered not only the Du Sable Grave project in St. Charles but has also highlighted two current archaeology projects on Freedman's communities in Illinois. The towns of New Philadelphia in Pike County and Miller's Grove in the Shawnee National Forest tell the unheard stories of former enslaved African Americans struggling to obtain equal citizenship in pre-Civil War Illinois (Martin et al. 2004; McCorvie 2004; Shackel et al. 2004). Overall, as frustrating as it was that Du Sable's remains were not located, the very act of this project resulted in a raised historical consciousness of African-American identity. The life of Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable and the story of this project will help to clarify the role African Americans played in the past and their impact on the present.