

Take part in the discovery

"Uncovering the Early Struggles for Freedom in Illinois"

"Eschikagou"-Du Sable and Beyond to New Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Hopkins Park Village, Ton House, Calumet Canal, Cairo, Peoria, and East Saint Louis

NEW PHILADELPHIA

New Philadelphia, Illinois, recognized as the first incorporated African American town in the United States, was located, purchased, founded and governed by a former enslaved man named Free Frank McWorter in 1831. It soon became an enclave that attracted free men, women and scores of white Americans between 1831 and 1888. In the late 1850s the village reached its pinnacle becoming one of the most significant communities in western Illinois with a post office, boarding house, and several businesses. As a cradle for black pride and self-determination as well as racial cooperation New Philadelphia thrived. Sadly however, the demise of the town began in the 1870s when the village leaders could not influence the railroad system to route its tracks through the black town. Minus the railroad New Philadelphia, rapidly declined as villagers moved to more prosperous areas. By 1888 this black community had virtually become a ghost town.

HOPKINS PARK VILLAGE – PEMBROKE TOWNSHIP

Old Hopkins Park, Illinois, a town settled by former enslaved Africans escaping to the north prior to and during the Civil War [1861-65], was located, purchased, founded, and governed by a former enslaved man named Matthew Joseph Tetter. According to documents from files found at the Kankakee Historical Society, Illinois census [1850s], and State of Illinois Historical Society, Hopkins Park was a settlement of largely free African American Illinoisans. These African Americans were likely active in the abolitionist movement and made available their village as one of the conduits of the Underground Railroad network. Historians began recording the movement of people west into Illinois through what is now Pembroke Township, located on the Vincennes Trail from Vincennes, Indiana. There is reason to believe that Hopkins Park Village and Pembroke Township were involved in protecting runaway slaves and families during that era.

High School: \$5.00 per day

College: \$10.00 per day

General Public: \$15.00 per day /\$60.00 conference

ASRI Members: \$5.00 per day /\$25.00 conference

For more information contact:

The African Scientific Research Institute

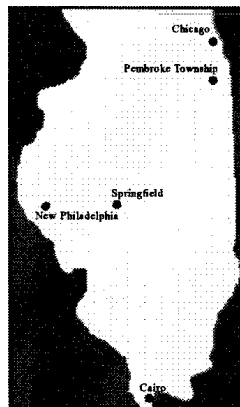
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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable, a fur trader of African descent settled on the northern bank of the Chicago River. He had no neighbors nearby, but it was a good spot to do business with fur traders passing through, to build a home for his family, and to farm some land. By 1800, when the man now regarded as the founder of Chicago sold his homestead, his Potawatomi wife Catherine apparently had died. His daughter Susanne had married and had a daughter of her own. That may account for Pointe du Sable's decision to sell a homestead that included a house, horse-drawn mill, bake oven, dairy, smoke house, hen house, workshop, stable, barn, cattle, plough, carts, tools and furnishings. Seven years after Pointe du Sable sold his Chicago homestead, his name began appearing in records in St. Charles, Missouri. *

We do not know why Chicago's first non-Native American settler moved to a village three hundred miles away. But like his Chicago homestead and Peoria, where he and his family had also lived—St. Charles was a place where fur traders lived between trips and bartered furs for provisions. Perhaps he chose St. Charles because the fur trade seemed to be shifting to lands farther west, along the Missouri River.

Perhaps he chose St. Charles because his son, about whom we know only that he was a fur trader as well, was there—his name (distinguishable from his father's in The St. Charles records by the addition of *filis*, the French word for son) begins appearing on documents in St. Charles at the same time. He quickly befriended the Potawatomi Indians near Peoria, Illinois and married a Potawatomi wife with whom he had two children.



Venue

The Field Museum of Natural History,
1400 South Lake Shore Drive,
Chicago, IL 60605

Date

September 26th-29, 2005

Visit

<http://www.uic.edu/orgs/asri/temp1/sym-theme.htm>

for further information.

*The State of Illinois, An advocate for
Ethnic and Cultural Diversity*

*Reconstructing Forgotten African Pioneers,
Native Americans and Abolitionists*

*Rediscovering Uncovering the Early Struggle
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Focusing on the era circa 1779-1895

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Exploring the Underground Railroad Networks as we search and uncover Illinois' African-American Towns (1779-1895).

Rediscovering Forgotten African Pioneers, "The Frank McWorter Family/ Community and links to Abolitionist networks which impacted the Midwestern States beyond the Mississippi Basin .