

Chicago Legacy: DuSable's Choices and Changes

Common Core Anchor Reading Standard 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

What choices and changes did Jean Baptiste Point DuSable make?

Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable came to Chicago more than 220 years ago. Chicago was a very small place then. Only about 350 people lived here. It must have been hard to live in Chicago then. Winters were snowy. In spring the ground was muddy. There were no stores. People had to build their own homes.

DuSable chose to come here because it was a place where he could build a trading post. A trading post is a kind of business. People get things they need there. They trade other things for them.

DuSable built his trading post himself. He had plan how the trading post would look. He had to find and cut the wood he needed to build it. It was hard work.

DuSable chose a good location for the trading post. He built it at the river near the lake. That way people could get to it by boat. In those days, people traveled by foot or by boat or by horse.. When DuSable built it, it was a very different place.

DuSable traded with the Potawatomi. They are Native Americans. They had lived here for many years. He traded tools to them for furs. The Native Americans were able to get things they did not have by trading.

DuSable traded with settlers, too. A settler is a person who moves to a place and builds a home. Settlers bring some things with them. But they need many things to build their homes. They needed furniture and food. DuSable made furniture and sold food. They found what they needed at the trading post. His trading post was very important. It helped people get what they needed to live here. If there were no trading post, it would have been very hard to stay here. People needed the supplies they could get at his trading post.

DuSable probably knew Chicago was going to grow. He saw more settlers moving here every year. His business was an important place to all of them.

DuSable left Chicago in 1800. He sold the trading post. So the business he started was still open. People could get what they needed to live in Chicago. That business was the most important place in Chicago. It was a very small town. But it would grow.

A legacy is what someone leaves to other people. DuSable's legacy is important. His trading post started Chicago's progress. His choice to come here made a big difference. He helped people come here to stay. 1968 Chicago called him the "Father of Chicago". Today there is a museum named for him. There is a DuSable Park, too. People remember what he did.

Draw History

Draw a picture showing what Chicago might have looked like when DuSable started his business. Draw what you think the trading post looked like. Then write about your picture. Tell why the trading post was important.