

Chicago's First Leader

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.

Before there was a city of Chicago, a brave man moved here. It was tough to live here then. There were no stores. There were no settlers. It was very cold in the winter and hot in the summer. There was a lot of snow in winter, too. So, it was hard to travel then. In spring, there was a lot of rain and mud, and that made it hard to travel as well.

Then an early Chicago leader came here. His name was Jean Baptiste Point DuSable. He was the first person who was not a Native American to settle here. He was African American. DuSable built a cabin on the Chicago River. He started a business by trading with Native Americans. He opened a trading post here in the late 1770s. At first, it was just a small home. But he stayed for more than 20 years. He added to it. It became the most important part of the area.

Getting things to Chicago was hard. Chicago was a very small town. It was many miles away from any other city. At first, DuSable traded only with the Native Americans and explorers. He would give them tools and other goods and he would get back things that they grew, hunted, or made. As more people moved here, his trading post became more important. Settlers bought goods, too.

DuSable's trading post helped explorers to keep going. They could buy supplies at his post. This would let them travel further. That trading post helped start Chicago as a city. When families moved to Chicago, they could get what they needed at the trading post.

Settlers bought many things from the trading post. DuSable sold blankets, butter, furs, knives, cloth, and guns. Settlers and Native Americans traded or paid money for those things.

Jean Baptiste Point DuSable sold his trading post to a settler named Jean LaLime in 1800. Jean LaLime kept the post open for a few years. Then he sold it to John Kinzie. He moved here in 1804.

DuSable was the first person to help people come to Chicago. He helped them stay here, too. That is why Chicago called him the "father" of the city. He made it possible to settle here.

Today there is a harbor named for DuSable. There is a park too. That park is near where he started the first Chicago business. Probably the biggest legacy from DuSable is where the city is. His post was the starting point for making the town that became today's big city.

Support the Main Idea

What is the main idea of this passage?

Underline five sentences in the passage that support that idea.