

The Early Chicago Environment and People

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.

The city you know is only about 150 years old. Long ago, before it was a city, people lived in this area. They were Native Americans. They figured out how to live in Chicago before it had this name.

They actually named it. They called it Checagou. That is a word that means wild onions. Every year, it was hard to live here in winter. It was snowy. It was cold. There were no plants to pick. Then the first plant that grew was the wild onion. In early spring the Native Americans ate it. So this was the place of the wild onion. No one planted it. It grew naturally.

There were grassland and forests. There were many animals. The people lived by hunting. They fished, too. And in summer they grew food. They planted vegetables. In summer they would prepare for winter. They knew it would be cold and snowy. They would be able to track rabbits then. And there would be deer. But they would not have as much food. There would be no plants growing in winter.

In summer, the families would move to a village. They would build homes. They would build the homes together. They were large. A family could have many people in one home. The families would fish and grow food. People in the village helped each other.

Then in winter they would leave the village. They would build homes in the woods. Each family would build its own home. They would take animal skins with them to help make their homes. They would use branches to make a kind of tent. Then they would cover the walls with those skins to keep them warm. They were skilled at building those homes.

They would hunt for food. Sometimes they would move their home in winter. They would move to where they could find more animals to hunt. It was hard to get the food they needed. So when they found the wild onions they knew it soon would be better weather. They would have more food. They would be able to join their friends and family at the summer village.

CHART WHAT YOU LEARN

Make a chart. Show what the people did in summer in one column. Show what they did in winter in another column.

Write a summary of your chart. What does it show about how people lived here in the past?